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Tues. 3:40-5:30, Fri. 4:40-5:30
Classroom SF901
Fall 2002

Shakespeare

Throughout this semester we will be returning to the Elizabethan/Jacobean world of Renaissance England. This world differs from our contemporary situation here in Taiwan, so we will at times need to address the social, political, and cultural environment in which William Shakespeare lived and wrote. Because you need to know the basic facts of Shakespeare's life and times, each of you will be required to read an encyclopedia article or a general introduction to Shakespeare (like the one found in *The Riverside Shakespeare* on pages 1-25). We will be reading seven plays in a roughly chronological order, including examples of his comedies, tragedies, and histories: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Each play must be read carefully because the mid-term and final exams will test your memory of the plays' texts. Our class **may** be web-assisted so that we can go beyond the walls and boundaries of the traditional classroom.

I view your reading list for this course as a set of scripts—texts not meant to be primarily read (though that is what we will do), but rather **performed** for an audience. After all, the script is only the first step of realizing a play in production. After the playwright writes it, directors interpret it; actors and actresses make the characters flesh and blood; set designers, costumers, and light designers create the illusions we accept in seeing a theatrical performance; finally, critics interpret the playwright's—and a given production's—meaning. Accordingly, this course will go beyond an emphasis on texts alone, so you can expect to be called upon to read aloud, offer opinions, and move around at a moment's notice. I strongly recommend that you watch videotapes, VCDs, or DVDs of the plays we are reading this semester. This may be done either in groups or individually, and videotapes can be seen in the Multimedia Center (on the first floor). This class, then, will give you a set of techniques for reading and considering Shakespeare's plays within their context.

In his plays and poetry Shakespeare often asked more questions than he answered, so half of the delight of reading Shakespeare's works involves allowing yourself the challenge of experiencing those questions head-on and considering them in light of your own views and experiences. In an effort to assist you with this, I will expect you to join in our classroom discussions and offer your own opinions. Also, I will ask each of you to join a small group, with about three or four of your classmates, to discuss and "act" out the plays we are reading. Your group will be expected to give a presentation (about fifteen minutes) before the whole class in which you discuss and analyze in detail one aspect of the play or a character being considered.

I strongly recommend that you read from *The Riverside Shakespeare* (either the first or second edition). If you have New Arden editions of the plays, they are also acceptable alternatives; if you intend to read other editions, please come talk to me first.

Hopefully, you will make this course YOUR course, and it will become discussion based, rather than a series of lectures by a more-than-bald professor. As you either know already or will soon discover, this class will be your class: it will be run as democratically as possible, with you and your classmates making many pedagogical decisions. I see my role in this course as that of an informed facilitator: I will offer a general format for the course but will allow you liberties in choosing the directions we will go. I cannot stress fervently enough the importance of active discussion and participation for this class. You must commit yourself from the onset to actively discussing the various dramatic texts that we will be reading. Your reactions—both emotional and cognitive, both immediate and those that follow your close reading and reflection—will be the basis for our classroom discussions. You must share your unique approaches, understandings, and questions about the plays we will be reading. Plays are open to many possible interpretations, so the more viewpoints you and your classmates hear and express, the more options we as a class can explore. Therefore, your constant and active participation is **required** throughout the course. The success of this class will ultimately depend upon you.

As you may already have guessed, because you are both a teacher and a student in this class, your attendance is required for all class sessions. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each period; if you are not present at that time but come late, it is your responsibility to make sure you receive partial credit for your attendance. Students who are often late for class or miss three or more classes will have their final course grade significantly lowered.

I believe students should be encouraged to write well in all of their English classes. Papers must exhibit good ideas and good writing.

Short Writing Assignments

One of your short writing assignments is a one page typed summary of an article about one of the plays we read this semester. I am going to insist that your article be an essay from a periodical, not a chapter or essay from a book. You can find articles about Shakespeare in journals in our library, for example in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Studies in English Literature*, *PMLA*, or *ELR (English Literary Renaissance)*. Be sure to include as part of the assignment the full bibliographic information in the correct MLA format. Also, when you turn in your summary, please include a copy of the original essay.

Grades

Quizzes, short assignments, presentations, and participation 33.3%

Midterm exam 33.3%

Final exam 33.3%

Plagiarism

I would like to remind you of the importance of doing your own work throughout the semester. Presenting other people's writing and ideas as though they are your own is a serious error. Intentional and unintentional plagiarism are not acceptable and will jeopardize specific paper or journal grades, as well as the final grade for the course.

Tentative Calendar

Sept.	17	Introductions
	20	Shakespeare's life and times
	24	Life and Times
	27	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> (1594)
Oct.	1	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
	4	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
	8	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
	11	<i>Richard III</i> (1592-3)
	15	<i>Richard III</i> ; summary of Shakespeare's life and times
	18	<i>Richard III</i>
	22	<i>Richard III</i>
	25	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1595-6)
	29	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Nov.	1	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
	5	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
	8	<i>Hamlet</i> (1600-1)
	12	Mid-term exam
	15	<i>Hamlet</i>
	19	<i>Hamlet</i>
	22	<i>Hamlet</i>
	26	<i>Hamlet</i>
	29	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (1601-2)
Dec.	3	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
	6	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
	10	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
	13	<i>King Lear</i> (1605)
	17	<i>King Lear</i> ; summary of critical essay from periodical
	20	<i>King Lear</i>
	24	<i>King Lear</i>
	27	<i>King Lear</i>
	31	<i>Winter's Tale</i> (1610-11)
Jan.	3	<i>Winter's Tale</i>
	7	<i>Winter's Tale</i>
	10	<i>Winter's Tale</i>
	14	Final Exam
	17	Final Exam