

English 263

Jonathan Burton, ENGL 263, Fall 2001, Shakespeare I
English 263 — Shakespeare I
Professor Jonathan Burton
TTh 11:15-12:30
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Fall 2001, West Virginia University
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Shakespeare Now and Then

An Amazon Queen, a Welsh sorcerer, a mischievous sprite, and a cross-dressing twin. These are just a few of the characters we'll encounter in this introduction to the drama of William Shakespeare. In this class we will read comedies, tragedies, romances, and histories. And we'll approach each play with using three interanimating methodologies. We'll begin by examining the language of the plays, familiarizing ourselves with Shakespeare's idiom before engaging in close readings of the plays' rich, figurative language. Next we'll consider the plays in their historical context, concentrating on issues of monarchy, gender, and English nationhood. Finally, we will approach the plays as performance-scripts, discussing the various dilemmas of theatrical production raised by Shakespeare's plays from the sixteenth through the twenty-first centuries.

Thus we will pursue two lines of questioning: What did Shakespeare's plays mean in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England? And what do Shakespeare's works mean in the world today?

Required Text

Greenblatt, Stephen, et. al. *The Norton Shakespeare*

Course Requirements and Grading

Nine Plays
Six 2-page assignments (60%)
Group Performance (10%)
4-page Performance Narrative (20%)
Class Participation (10%)

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are granted a maximum of three absences during the course of the semester. If this limit is exceeded your final grade will be lowered one mark per absence. Any student who misses six classes will be dropped from the class. If you arrive after I take attendance, you are responsible for informing me of your presence at the end of class. Two tardies will be counted as an absence.

Participation

The quality of this class is dependent on your informed participation. I expect you to complete assignments before class and to contribute to class discussions and exercises. Failure to participate will result in a grade reduction.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

August

- 21 Introduction
- 23 Midsummer 2.1 Key Themes: obedience, duty, matrimony
- 28. Midsummer 3.3
- 30. Midsummer **Dialectical Notes**

September

- 4 Antony 2.1 Key Themes: duty, excess, otherness,
- 6 Antony 3.4
- 11 Antony
- 13 Measure 2.1 Key Themes: piety, responsibility, sex
- 18 Measure 4.2
- 20 Measure **Director's Notes**
- 25 Richard II 1.4 Key Themes: divinity, growth
- 27 Richard II 3.4

October

- 2 Richard II
- 4 1 Henry IV 2.4 Key Themes: performance, duplicity, honor
- 9 1 Henry IV 3.1 **Minor Character Study: Lady Mortimer**
- 11 1 Henry IV **Performance 1: 5.3**
- 16 Merchant 2.6 Key Themes: blood, faith, conversion, money
- 18 Merchant 3.5
- 23 Merchant **Performance 2: 4.1.220-389**
- 25 Hamlet 1.3 Key Themes: vengeance, piety, self-reflection
- 30 Hamlet 3.1

November

- 1 Hamlet 4.3 **Concordance Assignment**
- 6 Hamlet **Performance 3: 4.5.92-214**
- 8 Twelfth Night 1.5 Key Themes: masquerade, patriarchy
- 13 Twelfth Night 3.4
- 15 Twelfth Night **Performance 4: 3.4.195-359**
- 27 Tempest 1.2 Key Themes: class, colonialism, matrimony
- 29 Tempest 3.2 **Traveler's Narrative and Scene**

December

4 Tempest **Performance 5: 4.1. 163-262**

6 Conclusions **Performance Narratives and Outstanding Movie Reviews**

Submission of Assignments

1. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified.
2. Late submissions will not be accepted without a documented excuse of illness or familial emergency.
3. All assignments are to be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins.
4. Assignment lengths should be considered as minimums.
5. It is highly recommended that you keep a photocopy of every assignment that you submit.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Please note the University definition of plagiarism, as explained in the Undergraduate Catalog: "To take or pass off as one's own the ideas, writings, artistic products, etc. of someone else; for example, submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment, a report, notebook, speech, outline theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or in part, from the work of others, whether such source is published, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper" (p. 52). If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, collaborative projects, documentation of sources, or related issues, please feel free to ask.

Suggested Websites

<http://www.bardweb.net/index.html> for synopses, biography, language, and other links

<http://www.concordance.com/shakespe.htm> for a concordance of the works of William Shakespeare

<http://daphne.palomar.edu/shakespeare/> for a page of Shakespeare links

<http://www.shakespeares-globe.org> for the official site of the Globe Theater (including pictures)

Learning Environment

WVU is committed to social justice. I support that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestion as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700)

Assignments

8/30 **Dialectical Notes** for Midsummer

9/20 **Director's Worksheet** for Measure for Measure

10/9 **Minor Character Study:** How is Lady Mortimer significant to the play as a whole? How does she influence the way we see other characters in 1Henry 4? How might she be presented

onstage? Why?

11/1 **Concordance Assignment** for Hamlet: (choose word or words)

11/29 **Historicist Analysis:** How do sixteenth and seventeenth century travelers' narratives affect the way in which we read *The Tempest*?

12/6 **Performance Narrative**

Questions for Performance Narrative

1. What happens in this scene?
2. What is the mood of this scene?
3. What motivates the characters — what do they want from one another?
4. What advice can we give the actors in this scene for indicating these motives?
5. What important performative options were available to you and/or your group? What choices were made and why? What readings of character, action, and so on were enabled (or disabled) by your choices
6. What are the most important lines or speeches? How would they be said?
7. How does this scene develop the themes of the play?
8. How does this play develop, complicate, or even contradict themes found elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays?

Movie Review: Choose any of the following films available in Colson AV Library and answer the questions below in an essay of no less than 600 words. This assignment may be handed in any time during the semester before the end of classes.

A Midsummer Night's Dream Peter Hall (1969), Joseph Papp (1982), or Michael Hoffman (1999)

The Merchant of Venice Jonathan Miller (1980)

Richard II Michael Bogdanov (1990)

Henry IV Michael Bogdanov (1994)

Chimes at Midnight Orson Welles (1968)

Antony and Cleopatra Trevor Nunn (1972) or Jonathan Miller (1980)

The Tempest John Gorrie (1980) or George Schaefer (1988)

Hamlet Michael Almareyda (2000) or Franco Zeffirelli (1990)

Twelfth Night Trevor Nunn

1. What was immediately striking about the look of the film?
2. What were the sets like? How did they contribute to the film?
3. What kinds of sound were you aware of (including silences and non-vocal noise)?
4. Did you notice anything about the lighting?

5. Did any costumes stand out as especially significant? In what way?
6. How would you describe the pace of the film?
7. What moments gave you particular pleasure or unease?
8. In what ways, if any, did the director's interpretation differ from what you had expected? Which elements of the production did s/he most emphatically employ to convey that interpretation? Was the text of the play cut or altered in any way? What were the effects of this change?
9. How would you describe the ways in which the director used the camera to block scenes, focus attention, or otherwise shape the play?
10. Comment on casting, including gender, race, age, body types, and agility.
11. If you were to use a photograph one moment to sum up the production, what would it be?
12. What were the director and cast trying to accomplish? Did they succeed or fail?

Be sure to include the name of the director and the date of the film somewhere in your review.