

ENGLISH 495, SEC. 1

THE SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP

Fall 2001

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Grades

This workshop requires no writing. But it does require ATTENDANCE and COOPERATION. Perfect attendance and full cooperation in your group assignments and a positive attitude will result in an A. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Three unexcused absences will lower your grade to a B (or C, depending on circumstances). Four unexcused absences results in failure of the course.

I expect you to put in an average of two to three hours each week outside of class working on scenes and characters and exercises. For many weeks early in the semester, a single hour will probably suffice. Later, especially if the class chooses a public performance, you will need to devote more time. Please anticipate spending more than the 2 hours per week during the last couple of weeks. You will discover ample compensation in the rewards of the concluding exercise and its preparation.

Schedule

The workshop meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:20 PM in 46C Stansbury Hall.

Week 1 - Aug 21 and 23

Theoretical Background:

- Modes of Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance
- Theory of Multiple Intelligences and Emotional Intelligence
- Shakespeare in Performance in the Classroom

- Theoretical Issues of Self and Performance
- Warming up and Passing the Energy
- "How ya' doin'" exercise: Getting on your feet and cooperating
- 4.1 from ADO: rapid delivery without compromising meaning or emphasis: Shakespeare, the artist of surprise

Week 2 - Aug 28 and 30

- "Bare-bones" exercise: The Beating Heart of It
- Reading scripts carefully, looking for sub-texts and "story."
- Punctuation exercise: Punctuation does matter

Week 3 - Sep 4 and 6

- Paraphrasing : Writing and Speaking exercise, in groups
- Repeat
- Work on Tableaux & "most important line" exercise
- Rehearse a scene, sitting first, paraphrasing lines, talking over the scene, speaking the verse, then rehearse standing

Week 4 - Sep 11 and 13

- Rehearse a scene: sit first, paraphrase, then, talking over the scene, decide what story the scene is telling.
- Rehearse standing, using whatever it takes to tell the scene's story.
- Rehearse a scene: sit, paraphrase, talk over the scene, decide the scene's story, discuss how the scene's story works into the play as a whole, that is, what the play's "through-line" is.
- Rehearse standing, using whatever it takes to tell the scene's story, keeping in mind what the "through-line" of the play is.

Week 5 - Sep 18 and 20

Follow through on Week 4

Week 6 Sep 25 and 27

- Rehearse a scene: sit and paraphrase, talk over the scene, decide on the scene's story. Then each student should "tell" his/her character's story in the scene, connecting that story with the character's story in the play.
- Discuss how each character's "story" fits into the "through-line" of the play.
- Rehearse standing, using whatever it takes to tell the scene's story, keeping in mind the through-line of the play.
- Rehearse a scene standing. Emphasize blocking as cues to meaning.
- Variant Scenes: How the same scene may be interpreted in different ways
- The Infinite Variety of Shakespeare

Weeks 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, the Concluding Week 15 - Oct 2 - Dec 6

The Final Exercise: a series of workshops leading up to a final performance in week 15, integrating all the performative lessons assimilated throughout the course. This exercise may be only a private event, just for ourselves; or it may be performed for the English 150 classes, or it may be a public performance, with an invited audience. The choice is yours. Also, the final performance may be either a redaction of an entire play or a series of scenes from several plays, or a combination of the two formats. That choice is yours also.