

English 495

William French, English 495, Fall 2002, Shakespeare Seminar

ENGLISH 495, SEC 2

SHAKESPEARE GOES TO THE MOVIES:

THE SHAKESPEARE ON FILM WORKSHOP

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Text

Kenneth Rothwell, A History of Shakespeare on Screen, 1999. Paper.

Grades

The workshop requires two papers. The first will be a performance review of one of the films we view. The second paper will require both viewing and research. You will view a film, develop a thesis, do library and internet research, review the film, and write your paper. This paper may be done as part of a group effort, in which research is shared by the group.

The workshop also requires ATTENDANCE. Attendance with no more than one unexcused absence and "A's" or "B's" on the two papers will earn a final grade of "A." Attendance with no more than one unexcused absence and "C's" on the papers will earn a final grade of "B." Attendance with no more than one unexcused absence and unsatisfactory papers will yield a final "C."

Three unexcused absences will lower your grade by one letter. Four or more unexcused absences result in failure of the course. In other words, you may have two unexcused absences without penalty; more than two unexcused absences will affect your grade negatively.

Schedule

The workshop meets ten Tuesday evenings, 7:00 PM - 9:50 PM, on the following dates:

Aug 20

Brief meeting to take role. Attendance is unnecessary if you notify me otherwise that you plan to attend the course.

Aug 27, #1

Rothwell, Chapter 1

Introduction to the course; Brief Primer on film theory; History of Shakespeare on Film and Video; "Tickling Commodity"; Shakespeare Derivatives; Tips on Viewing; Previews; Shakespeare on Silent Film

Sep 3, #2

Rothwell, Chapter 10

Trevor Nunn's Twelfth Night (1996-Helena Bonham Carter): Showing and Telling, or Showing and Not Telling: The Directorial Dilemma

Sep 10, #3

Rothwell, Chapter 2

Mankiewicz's Julius Caesar (1953-Marlon Brando, John Gielgud): Screenplays vs. Texts and Adaptations

Sep 17, #4

Rothwell, Chapter 5

Jane Howell's Winter's Tale (1981-Anna Calder-Marshall-Prod. Jonathan Miller for BBC Shakespeare Plays): Shakespeare made for Television

Oct 1, #5

Rothwell, Chapter 10

Kenneth Branagh's Much Ado about Nothing (1993-Branagh, Emma Thompson): Branagh and Popular Film Culture

Oct 22, #6

Rothwell, Chapter 4

Scenes from several versions of Shakespeare's history plays, including Welles' Chimes at Midnight (1966-- American Shakespeare Speaks at the Cinema), Richard II (1979, dir. Cedric Messina for the BBC Shakespeare Plays, w/ Derek Jacobi and John Gielgud), Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2, (1980, dir. Cedric Messina for the BBC Shakespeare Plays, w/ Jon Finch and David Gwillim: Shakespeare made for Television); Kenneth Branagh's Henry V (1989): Popular Shakespeare Explodes on Film in the Nineties)

Oct 29, #7

Rothwell, Chapters 3 and 6

Hamlet, version yet to be selected: "Who's There?, or Shakespeare on Film Explores the Big One

Nov 5, #8

Rothwell, Chapters 7 and 8

Scenes from a variety of Hamlet films, to be selected

Nov 12, #9

Rothwell, Chapter 10

Parker's Othello w/ Laurence Fishburne (1995): Shakespeare in the Open

Market, PC, Accessible, and Realistic

Nov 19: #10

Rothwell, Chapters 4, 5, and 9

Four Othellos: Welles (1952); Burge (1965); Miller (1981): Exploring Other

Versions of Shakespeare's Moor; and O, Hollywood appropriates Shakespeare

Students are expected to have covered the assigned reading in Rothwell in preparation for each class meeting.

Each class meeting will begin with a brief lecture on the film (or films) to be viewed.

Then the film will be shown, sometimes with clips from other versions worked in.

The remaining time will be used for discussion. The whole experience will be informal and relaxed and as pleasurable as possible. The purpose of the course is to help you to enjoy Shakespeare on film, and therefore Shakespeare in performance as well as Shakespeare on the page. However, to help you become a more informed viewer of Shakespeare on film, and therefore of film generally, the course will

demand intellectual effort on your part. You will need to learn some basic concepts about film production and technique and film history.

I reserve the right to alter the film selections at any time during the course, with at least a week's notice.

The "performance review" will be at least three pages long, but not more than five (roughly 1200 to 1500 words). It will involve a minimal amount of research: You will need to seek out two or three reviews of films and/or critical essays in books and journals on the subject of Shakespeare on film or film theory or on the play you are writing about. It will be a brief formal exercise designed to help you become a more critical, informed viewer.

You may also choose to keep a journal of your viewing experiences: I would welcome a record of your responses as an index of your interest in and commitment to the course.

The whole concept of movies is fundamentally Egyptian: Movies are dreams.

Pyramids. Great rivers of sleep. Film is more than 20th century art. It's another part of the 20th century mind. It's the world seen from inside.