ENGL 3306: Shakespeare—The Major Works

Dr. Mark Womack
Spring 2007

Required Texts:
The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare, 2nd edition, Russ McDonald (2001)

You will need a fully annotated one-volume Shakespeare for this class. I recommend the Complete Pelican Shakespeare, but you may substitute another edition with my approval. If your edition doesn’t have adequate footnotes, I won’t approve it. Editions likely to meet my approval include: The Norton Shakespeare, The Riverside Shakespeare, or The Complete Works of Shakespeare (edited by David Bevington).

Course Policies
You must attend all of every class. Failure to attend constitutes grounds for failing the course. I make no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences; an absence is an absence. Your first absence will not directly affect your grade; starting with the second absence, each day you miss will reduce your final average in the course by 10%. Three tardies equals one absence. Leaving class before I dismiss you counts as a tardy. I will provide a signup sheet at the beginning of each class session; it is your responsibility to sign the sheet each day. It is also your responsibility to find out, from your classmates, what you miss when you are not in class.

I calculate your final grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz Average</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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I give quizzes on each week’s reading during the first 5 minutes of class; if you miss the first 5 minutes of a class, you miss that quiz. Missed quizzes cannot be made up for any reason. When calculating your quiz average, I will drop your lowest score. I will also ask for 2 short critical essays. The performance project will involve groups of students performing 5 minute scenes.

Any assignment not submitted on time receives a zero. I never give “make up” or “extra credit” assignments. I discuss grades only in private, and only forty-eight hours (at least) after I have returned an assignment.

If you cheat, you fail the class. Make sure nothing you submit to me could be construed as plagiarism or collusion. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please consult with me.

Course Description
What’s the big deal about Shakespeare? Why have so many people loved his plays so much for so long? I believe that we value Shakespeare so highly because he creates such extraordinarily complex, rich, and intense experiences for audiences. In this course, we will investigate how Shakespeare’s plays generate such experiences. We will spend most of our time analyzing how Shakespeare’s extravagantly beautiful language works its magic on us. We’ll also give lots of time to thinking about how these plays work as theatrical entertainments. We won’t use the plays as excuses to talk about other things, like social injustices or the meaning of life.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

T Jan. 16: Class Cancelled

T Jan. 23: Introduction

T Jan. 30: *Taming of the Shrew*

“Shakespeare, ‘Shakespeare,’ and the Problem of Authorship”: *Bedford Companion*, (BC) chapter 1 (11-28)

T Feb. 6: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

“Shakespeare’s Dramatic Language” *BC*, 2 (36-58)

T Feb. 13: *The Merchant of Venice*

“Theater à la Mode” *BC*, 3 (79-98)

T Feb. 20: *1 Henry IV*

“Performances, Playhouses, and Players” *BC*, 4 (109-26)

T Feb. 27: *Henry V*

“Shakespeare’s Reading” *BC*, 5 (145-62)

T March 6: *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*

“What is Your Text?” *BC*, 6 (194-210)

ESSAY 1 DUE

T March 20: *Hamlet*


T March 27: *Hamlet*

“Gender, Family, Society” *BC*, 8 (253-77)

T April 3: *Othello*

“Politics and Religion” *BC*, 9 (303-25)

T April 10: *King Lear*

“Shakespeare in Performance” *BC*, 10 (353-82)

T April 17: *Macbeth*

T April 24: *The Winter’s Tale*

ESSAY 2 DUE

T May 1: PERFORMANCE PROJECTS

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 12-17