



EN213: Shakespeare I

Prof. Shannon E. Kelley

English 141 | Fall '14 | M/Th 2:00 – 3:15
Fairfield University CNS 305

Office hours: DMH 111
F 9:30 – 11, or by appointment
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I will be away from email during university holidays and weekends. I appreciate your patience; I will reply to your email during the business week.

Course description, goals, and student learning objectives

EN213, *Shakespeare I*, is designed to introduce English majors to the plays of Shakespeare that were written and performed in the last two decades of the sixteenth century. During this time, we see the wane of Queen Elizabeth's nearly 45-year reign. The Queen's life influences these plays indirectly, for Shakespeare chose to pen histories and comedies. History plays are case studies in kingship centered on the fifteenth-century War of the Roses, a lengthy civil war between the Lancasters and the Yorks. It was Tudor destiny to resolve this messy and bloody conflict (or so the people were told) when Henry Tudor ascended the throne post-Bosworth Field in 1485, a date which also identifies the very beginning of the English Renaissance.

However, because Elizabeth Tudor chose to remain unwed (constituting a succession crisis for the duration of her reign), the plays must always be seen as undermining the political history they support. The politics of the Queen's sexuality drive all constructs of gender and sexuality in the period's art, nowhere more so than Shakespeare's plays, which had to pass royal censorship. So the comedies, which support conservative happy endings in more ways than one, also do a marvelous job showcasing brilliant, articulate women who very often perform the role of men flawlessly. These cross-dressing heroines (Viola, Rosalind) always glance backward to the Queen.

There are two common obstacles to enjoying Shakespeare: fear and boredom. To remove fear and boredom, our course will require engaged participation during discussion, short, low-stakes writing assignments, and performance opportunities and close-reading drills during group work in class. All classroom **activities**, student assignments, and **grading** or assessment foster **One of three** essential course goals:

- **Appreciating literature**

- What makes Shakespeare so popular and powerful? Is it the British Empire and the Anglophone literary canon? Has he become outmoded in today's world, or does he continue to appeal to your generation? Only you can answer the last question. But first we should decide as a class why some artistic works are considered timeless and priceless. Here we will identify moments in Shakespeare's plays that stimulate us to think, to feel, to weep, to laugh, and to make meaning out of life. Appreciating literature begins with an emotional response, but it needs to go far deeper. From 'this is why it

worked for me,' you need to get to 'this is why it appeals to audiences across centuries.'

- Analyzing complex ideas: close-reading
 - Shakespeare never intended his audience to comprehend every single word in his plays. His plays sold out for the same reason that summer blockbusters sell tickets. It is our job to find out why the plays were enormous successes. To do so, we will read key moments of dialogue and analyze them together by asking two questions: 1) what is the literal meaning, and 2) what is the figurative meaning?
 - We will also attack scenes by asking performance-based questions: 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 are key lines or speeches? How should they be read? 5) How does the scene develop or undermine themes of the play?
 - We will do so many close-reading drills that you will become an expert by the end of the term! To determine meaning we will also periodically perform sections of the plays, and watch dvd's of performances.
 - Appreciating literature requires knowing or establishing criteria for aesthetic evaluation (what constitutes good art?) that requires close reading skills. If one criteria of canonical literature is that people enjoy it, I hope that we learn to enjoy Shakespeare together.
- Developing writing and oral skills through research
 - Our digital humanities project (MoEML) allows you to learn skills, including –
 - Demonstrate ethical use of library sources
 - Evaluate sources of information
 - Analyze, summarize, and synthesize information from diverse sources
 - Communicate information and conclusion to others through writing and brief oral presentation
 - Revise and edit writing
 - Appropriately cite sources of information

Course assessment

Mini-exams. There will be two short, mini-exams for this class. You will be tested on identifying lines, describing themes of certain passages, and writing short answers to various questions.

Short Essays. You are required to write two 1-2 page essays. Details of the assignments will be handed out in advance.

Theater Project. You are required to complete a theater project that asks you to stage a particular scene in a group. Details of the assignment will be handed out in advance. You have the opportunity to pick your own scene from across all course readings during the term.

MoEML. The course has a digital humanities project contributing to the Map of Early Modern London at the University of Victoria. Ultimately you will co-author an essay on an early modern London site of recreation. We will spend time nearly every week working on this assignment. Its weight is 35% of your grade.

Class Participation and Attendance. I record attendance every day. I also call on all students in class. When I call on you I expect that you have fulfilled the required reading for the day and that you have your book in hand. If you do not have your book on any day, you will not receive credit for attending class.

Grading Scale:

A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D	69-60
F	59-

Under no circumstances will I speak to a parent about a student's private information, performance in the course, assessment in the course. Do not distribute my contact information to your parents or therapist in order to be excused for absences or to receive extensions on late work.

It is each student's responsibility to manage his or her grade book. Students receive the grades that they earn; grades are objective, fair, and based on years of experience in this field.

Weight of individual course assignments:

FINAL staging	15
Group work essay	5
Found monologues	5
Mini-exam 1:	15
Mini-exam 2:	15
MoEML poster:	5
MoEML reflection:	5
MoEML draft 1:	5
MoEML draft 2:	20
Class participation	10

Total: 100 pts.

Late Work:

All written work and oral presentations are due during the class period. Late work is not accepted. You must clear a work extension due to illness with me *before* the due date of the assignment.

Class Participation:

In addition to participating in constructive class discussions, you are required to practice healthy classroom decorum: arrive on time, turn off cell phones, resist the urge to check social networking websites, etc.

Attendance:

Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your professor and your classmates. Personal situations and required university events may arise that, on a rare occasion, make it impossible for you to be in class. Remember, however, that is why a few absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies.

You are allowed two unexcused absences from class. Following that, your final letter grade drops two percentage points for each successive absence. I reserve the right to adjust your final grade for repeated tardiness, or unpreparedness.

It is your job to ask the professor what work was missed and to complete it promptly. This policy excludes officially required release time for students participating in University-sponsored events; the notification of such release time must issue in advance of the missed classes from the appropriate University source.

On occasion, I will conduct a random survey of course textbooks. If you do not have your course textbook you do not receive credit for being in class for that day. A laptop or smartphone does not constitute a course textbook.

Course textbooks:

EN213 has one required book for purchase at the campus bookstore, David Bevington's *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*.

Schedule of course readings**First class: threshold concepts**

Sept 4 Syllabus overview, Introduction to Shakespeare, MoEML project

Homework: read "Coping with Hitchhikers and Couch Potatoes on Teams;" prepare essay and turn in essay on Monday, 9/8.

History: what makes a good king? Is kingship a performance?

What makes a good king? A heroic king? A tyrant? Are we (peasants) allowed to judge the king? Should subjects rebel? When is war justified? To whom is the king held accountable?

Sept 8 *I Henry IV*, acts 1-3

Due: essay on "Coping with Hitchhikers and Couch Potatoes on Teams"

In-class activity: choose a Falstaff, the life of the party

In-class activity: stage Falstaff's entrance 1.2

- Sept 11 *I Henry IV*, acts 1-5
 In-class activity: annual Falstaff competition
- Sept 15 *I Henry IV*, acts 1-5 cont.

Looking for Richard

- Sept 18 *Richard III*, acts 1-3
 In-class activity: the seduction of Anne
- Sept 22 *Richard III*, acts 1-5
 In-class activity: murder of Clarence
 In-class activity: post-nightmare soliloquy of Richard
- Sept 25 *Richard III* acts 1-5 cont.
 Looking for Richard, Al Pacino's documentary on staging Shakespeare's play

Agincourt!

- Sept 29 MoEML library session: meet with Curtis Ferree in library room 114
- Oct 2 *Henry V*, acts 1-3
- Oct 6 *Henry V*, acts 1-5
- Oct 9 **Mini-exam: the history plays**
- Oct 13 **NO CLASS – COLUMBUS DAY**
- Oct 16 Walk-in library research session with Curtis Ferree in room 114
 (Professional travel to the *Sixteenth Century Society* conference)

Happy endings – gender as a performance

How do courtship and marriage differ? What do we mean when we say that gender is a performance? Do these plays propose successful relationships or happy endings? Are comedies as philosophical as histories or tragedies?

Do romcom's require zero brain power?

Twelfth Night: sibling rivalry and absent fathers

- Oct 20 *Twelfth Night*, acts 1-3
 DUE: MoEML collaborative draft 1 with bibliography (see assignment rubric)
- Oct 23 *Twelfth Night*, acts 1-5
- Oct 27 *Twelfth Night*, cont.
 In-class activity: MoEML draft time

A problem comedy

- Oct 30 *The Merchant of Venice*, acts 1-3

In-class activity: Portia and the casket

Nov 3 *Merchant*, acts 1-5

Due: Found monologue essays

Nov 6 *Merchant*, cont.

In-class activity: MoEML draft time

The iconic greenworld

Nov 10 *As You Like It*, acts 1-3

Nov 13 *As You*, acts 1-5

Nov 17 *As You*, cont.

In-class activity: MoEML draft time

Consent obliterated: the final comedy

Nov 20 *Measure for Measure*, acts 1-3

Nov 24 *Measure for Measure*, acts 1-5

Nov 27 **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS**

Dec 1 **Comedy mini-exam**

In-class activity: group work in class to prepare MoEML posters

Dec 4 Student evaluations

In-class activity: group work in class to complete MoEML posters

Dec 8 **DUE: MoEML group presentation**

DUE: Collaborative MoEML encyclopedia entries, final version

DUE: Individual MoEML reflective essay

Thursday, December 11, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. During our course exam time, student groups present final projects by staging a self-selected scene (with minimal guidance from professor) from a comedy. See further instructions and grading rubric.