

English 422
Fall 2018
Terry Reilly

Shakespeare: History Plays and Tragedies
TR 9:45-11:15
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Texts: *The Riverside Shakespeare 2nd edition.*
The Bedford Companion

28 August. Introduction.

30 August – 13 September. ***Richard III.***

18 September – 2 October. *The First Part of Henry IV.*

4 October – 18 October. ***Henry V.***

23 October – 8 November. ***Hamlet***

13 November – 27 November. King Lear

29 November – 6 December **Othello**

Antony and Cleopatra or Titus

Andronicus if we have extra time.

December 7 is the last day of class. The final exam period will be sometime between December 11-15.

Grades will be based on the following:

1). The class after the end of each play, you should pass in a 1000-1500 word (4-6 page paper in #12 font) essay which answers one of the questions from the attached list (or you can write your own question). Each essay should cite passages from the play, access at least one critical source, and include a Works Cited page. At the end of the course, you should have written five (or six) essays on five (or six) *different* questions. You may pass in one paper one class late. I will drop the lowest grade.

2). To fulfill the O/2 requirement, you need to do two oral class presentations, one individually (5-10 minutes) and one as part of a group (8-10 minutes). Your topic can come from the attached list, or you can develop your own (check with me first). Instructor Evaluation and Feedback will be provided for all presentations.

Grades:

Class attendance and participation	25%
Class presentations	25%
Essays 5 @ 10% each	50%
Extra credit essay	10%

English 422

Fall 2017

Possible essay questions

- 1). Discuss Shakespeare's use of pre-battle speeches and ways that content and style suggest the outcomes of the battles.
- 2). Discuss the concept of honor and "honesty" in a play. One possible research paper topic is a specific focus on ways that these concepts differ in the history plays and the tragedies.
- 3). Discuss representations of female characters in a history play, with particular attention to active vs. passive roles.
- 4). Discuss Shakespeare's representations of a king. In a broader sense, what constitutes a "good" king in the plays we have read? How do customs such as primogeniture and divine right of kings help shape both concepts of character and the trajectories of the plays?
- 5). Discuss the concepts of "unrest" and "recuperation" as they occur in a history play.
- 6). Discuss ways that stagecraft influences interpretations of history in a play we have read.
- 7). Discuss the interplay of history and fiction in a play. To what extent does Shakespeare fictionalize history and/or historicize fiction?
- 8). Discuss clownish or comedic figures in a play, particularly as they relate to the king.
- 9). Discuss ways that minor characters (minor, as we discussed is a relative term, so as minor as you want them to be) help to shape and/or frame moral questions in a play.
- 10). Discuss representations of social, spiritual, and/or intellectual outcasts. How does the characterization of these outcasts help shape our sense of normative authority in the plays?

11). Discuss ways of determining truth in a play, with particular attention to ocular and/or aural evidence and proof. What similarities and/or differences do you observe in the way "truth" is perceived in the play.

12). Discuss ways that soliloquys function and "perform" in a play. What are the basic similarities and/or differences you see among soliloquys (structure, form, content, source) in different plays?

13). Discuss the concepts of "agents" and "agency" (as a broader term for more specific acts such as spying, bi-level speeches, gossip, rumor, etc.) as they relate to, and perhaps reveal, both the motivation and manipulation of characters in a play.

14). Discuss ways that storytelling and the exchange of written documents (letters, etc.) help both to shape issues in a play and to influence the trajectory of the action. Discuss representations of "writing" in the plays. What purposes does "writing" serve, and to what extent can these references to "writing" be seen as self-reflexive or self-referential?

15). Discuss the significance of female mortality in a tragedy. Do you think that the deaths of all (with the exception of Bianca in Othello) of the female characters is intrinsically related to Shakespeare's "tragic" vision and/or vision of "tragedy?" If so, how?

16). Begin by discussing types and forms of madness in a play and then follow up with an analysis of how "madness" helps both to structure the play and to critique the sociocultural environment in which it occurs. A focus on ways that emotions such as love, jealousy, envy and other emotions lead to madness may be helpful in your discussion, but certainly not mandatory. How is madness related to the concept of "tragedy" in this or other specific plays?

17). Discuss Shakespeare's treatment of time in a play. A focus on constituent features and characteristics of time in the histories--such as differences between historical and mythic time, workday time and holiday time, or the different metaphoric systems used to conceptualize time--may be helpful.

English 422
Fall 2017
Possible class presentation topics

The War of the Roses
Richard III
Richard II
Henry IV
Henry V
Henry Percy
Harfleur
Agincourt
Revenge Tragedy
Ghosts
Saxo Grammaticus
Iconography
The Shakespearean stage
Stagecraft
Specific Theatrical Companies
Moors
Patriarchy
Primogeniture
Bastardy
Fools
Geoffrey of Monmouth
Raphael Holinshed
Aristotelian tragedy
Philip Sidney's view of tragedy
Inns of court
Law courts (Church Courts, Exchequer, Star Chamber, etc.)

A literary or historical source for a play.

- 1). Raphael Holinshed. *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*
- 2). Edward Hall. *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York*
- 3). *A Mirror for Magistrates*

- 4). Thomas Nashe. *The Unfortunate Traveller*
- 5). Samuel Daniel. *The Civil Wars*
- 6). John Foxe. *Acts and Monuments*
- 7). King James I. *Basilikon Doron*
- 8). King James I. *Daemonology*
- 9). Philip Stubbes. *The Anatomy of Abuses*
- 10). Philip Sidney. *The Defense of Poesy (An Apology for Poetry)*.
- 11). George Puttenham. *The Art of English Poesy*.
- 12). George Swetnam. *Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*.
- 13). William Harrison. *Description of England*.
- 14). Giovanni Cinthio. *Gli Hecatommithi*.
- 15). Thomas Rymer. *A Short View of Tragedy*.
- 16). Thomas Wilson. *The Art of Rhetoric*.
- 17). Roger Ascham. *The Schoolmaster*.
- 18). Robert Filmer. *Patriarcha*.
- 19). *Tottel's Miscellany*
- 20). John Lyly. *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*.
- 21). Thomas Hoby (trans.). *The Book of the Courtier*
- 22). Francis Bacon. *Essays*
- 23). John Hardyng. *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*
- 24). *The War of the Roses*
- 25). *Contemporary views of madness*
- 26). *Moors and Africans in Tudor/Stuart England*
- 27). *The Chronicles of Matthew Paris*.
- 28). *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir and His Three Daughters*
- 29). *The Tales of Mucedorus in Philip Sidney's Arcadia*
- 30). *The Lawes Resolution of Womens Rights*
- 31). Niccolo Machiavelli. *The Prince*.
- 32). Erasmus. *The Praise of Folly*
- 33). Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. *Gorboduc*
- 34). Ben Jonson. *The Masque of Blackness*
- 35). Thomas Dekker. *The Gull's Hornbook*
- 36). Baldesar Castiglione. *The Courtier*