

**English 304: Shakespeare's Tragedies and Poetry**  
**Spring 2013**  
**Meets TR 3 - 4:15 pm BAL 2064**

**Instructor:** Megan Mize

**E-mail:** [mmize@odu.edu](mailto:mmize@odu.edu) (Please do not *expect* responses after 5 pm or on the weekends.)

**Office:** MediaPark, BAL 2019\*

**Office Hours:** T, 4:20 - 5:20, BAL 2027 (following TR's class, I have another at 4:20).

**Course Website:** Please bookmark this site for the semester

"To die: to sleep; No more; and by a sleep to say we end The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation Devoutly to be wish'd." *Hamlet* (3. 1)

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine the history, cultural context, and literary conventions of the Early Modern Period, which informed William Shakespeare's writing. We will begin our discussions by reading Shakespeare's poetry. Our poetic readings will include *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, and selections from the *Sonnets*. We will then turn our attention towards Shakespeare's tragedies, studying three examples: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*. Our analyses will question the meaning and purpose of these genres, the use of drama and poetry as entertainment and propaganda, the role of gender in Early Modern drama and society, and the meaning of authority in Shakespeare's world. These plays and sonnets are concerned with the behavior of individuals and their communities, exploring social constraints and the conflicts they present for individual identity construction.

You'll be expected to exercise your objective critical thinking skills as you read, analyze, and discuss a variety of plays. Most of the works we read will be discussed in detail in class; in regards to the plays, we will try to maintain a scene-by-scene progress. Class discussion is essential; hence, it is imperative to keep up with the readings in order to participate. You are expected to attend every class and contribute questions, comments and ideas. An additional goal is demonstrating your analytical skills through a brief presentation and literary analysis paper.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Introduce students to, and familiarize with, major examples of Shakespeare's tragedies and poetry.
2. Expose students to cultural and historical contexts and implications of Shakespeare's developing and poetic and dramatic skills.
3. Help students learn and practice contemporary critical-theoretical methods of literary analysis.
4. Consider why we continue to read and discuss Shakespeare's work.

**Texts:**

**We will be referring to the texts every class, so have some means of accessing them.**

All of our texts may be found here: <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Foyer/plays/>

- If you chose not to buy a hard copy, you must have a way to access the texts in class (via laptop, tablet, smart phone, etc.) as we will have cause to refer to specific passages in the texts.

If you do not have an electronic means of accessing the texts, you will need to purchase either hard copies of the individual works (easily found via *Amazon* or *half.com*).

- If you really want to work with a standard edition, then purchase:  
*The Riverside Shakespeare*. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans, et al. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

Additional reading may be assigned; these will typically be in pdf. form.

### **Assignments and Grades:**

You are required to perform one interpretative presentation and submit one brief critical research paper, a midterm exam, and a final exam. Furthermore, you must also attend and participate in each class session through preparation, class discussion, completing in-class writing activities, and reading quizzes. Students are expected to carefully read and analyze all assigned work prior to class, and to actively participate in all class exercises and discussions. Please note participation in class is a significant portion of your semester grade.

Reading Quizzes	20%
Interpretative Presentation w/ Paper (4-5 pages typed)	20%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%

### *Extra Credit Opportunities:*

We will be part of a pilot study regarding gamified “student success strategies” learning environment. In short, the environment provides activities for students to learn skills like note taking, critical reading, using campus academic resources, work/life balance, stress, etc. There will be three ways of receiving extra credit, which will be discussed in a later handout, which will also be shared on the course website.

### **Grading Scale:**

A 100-93	B+ 89-88	B- 82-80	C 77-73	D+ 69-68	D- 62-60
A- 92-90	B 87-83	C+ 79-78	C- 72-70	D 67-63	F 59 – lower

## **POLICIES**

### **Attendance:**

Daily attendance and participation are vital for your success in this course. It is your responsibility to come to every class prepared and to participate in class activities. You will need to sign in either **before** or **after** class, *not while I am lecturing*. Also, **do not sign in for**

**someone else**, especially if that person is not actually present. This is a violation of the honor code and will be reported. Promptness is necessary for my class, as tardiness disrupts the class environment.

Regular attendance is vital for success in the course. Missing more than 4 classes will result in a grade reduction; missing more than 25% of the meetings can result in failure of the course. Allowances will be made for ODU approved athletic, scholarly events, military service, as well as illness/emergencies, providing documentation is provided in a timely fashion. Students are responsible for the information given and work due when absent. In other words, absence is not an excuse for late work.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's work (writing, research, ideas, etc.) without appropriate acknowledgement. In other words, plagiarism occurs when a person attempts to use someone else's work as his or her own. *This is a form academic dishonesty and as such is a serious offense.*

Should I discover that a paper contains plagiarism, I will give that assignment on automatic zero. *Whether intentional or accidental, plagiarism will be reported to the English Department and the Honor Council. This action is non-negotiable.*

However, the use of another's work is acceptable so long as you properly credit the source and *clearly indicate* that these ideas are not your own. If you are not certain whether a citation is necessary, it is better to err on the side of the caution. When in doubt, always cite. Just always keep in mind that citation alone is not enough to avoid plagiarism.

### **Late Work:**

Late classwork and homework *will not be accepted*. Please note, if you miss a reading quiz, you will not be able to make it up, unless the absence is excused.

For the formal paper, in the case of an emergency, *you must notify me as soon as possible* as well as attach a documented reason for the assignment's tardiness. If you discuss the situation with me beforehand, I *may* make an exception. If I do make an exception for your paper, the grade will drop by a letter for every day that it is late. If you have not approached me in advance of the due date, it is unlikely that I will allow an extension.

### **Paper:**

In this course, you are required to submit a brief, but polished critical research paper. The final copy must be *typed, meet the page count, and be on time* or it will receive an **automatic F**. These will be submitted online, via Blackboard's SafeAssign.

## **15 Week Class Schedule**

*The following schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to alter and adapt the schedule as necessary in order to best serve the needs of the class. I will announce such changes prior to the classes affected. It is your responsibility to be informed about such changes. Also, please expect to participate in brief writing exercises during each class or reading quizzes, which may be unannounced.*

**WEEK 1:**

- 1/ 14 Introduction to Course and Policies
- 1/ 16 Early Modern England Overview

**WEEK 2:**

- 1/ 21 Shakespeare Biography
- 1/ 23 Poetic conventions: *Rape of Lucrece*

**WEEK 3**

- 1/ 28 ~~*Rape of Lucrece*~~ Snow Day
- 1/ 30 ~~*Rape of Lucrece*~~ Snow Day

**WEEK 4**

- 2/ 4 ~~*Venus and Adonis*~~ *Rape of Lucrece*
- 2/ 6 ~~*Venus and Adonis*~~ *Rape of Lucrece*

**WEEK 5**

- 2/ 11 *Venus and Adonis*
- 2/ 13 *Venus and Adonis*

**WEEK 6**

- 2/ 18 ~~Student Presentations~~ Sonnets (Selections)
- 2/ 20 ~~Student Presentations~~ Sonnets (Selections)

**WEEK 7**

- 2/ 25 Student Presentations
- 2/ 27 Student Presentations/ Exam Review Midterm\*

**WEEK 8**

- 3/ 4 Midterm
- 3/ 6 Shakespeare's Tragedies: Background and Theory

**WEEK 9**

- 3/10 - 3/14 SPRING BREAK

**WEEK 10**

3/ 18 - Class Cancelled (Conference)

3/ 20 - Class Cancelled (Conference)

**WEEK 11**

3/ 25 *Othello*

3/ 27 *Othello*

**WEEK 12**

4/ 1 *Othello*

4/ 3 *Othello*

**WEEK 13**

4/8 *Macbeth*

4/10 - *Macbeth*

**WEEK 14**

4/ 15 *Macbeth*

*Titus Andronicus\**

4/ 17 *Titus Andronicus* Discussion

**WEEK 15**

4/ 22 Student Presentations

4/ 24 Student Presentations/ Exam Review

**FINAL EXAM**

5/1 Exam Times 3:45-6:45pm