

English 303: Shakespeare's Histories and Comedies

SUMMER 2009

May 11th – June 28th

Section 32819

Meets MW

6:45 – 9:55 pm

BAL 2068

Instructor: Megan Mize

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Office Hours: MW 6:00 -6:35 pm, or by appointment

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“Lord, what fools these mortals be!” [*A Midsummer Night's Dream*](#) (3. 2. 115)

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the history, cultural context, and theatrical conventions of the Early Modern Period, which informed William Shakespeare's writing. We will examine selections of the English History Plays, including *Richard II*, *Henry IV part 1* (both from his second tetralogy), and *Richard III* (from his first tetralogy). Then we will turn our attention towards Shakespeare's comedies. Our comedic readings will include *Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, and *Merchant of Venice*, representing the comedic genres of farce, romantic comedy and problem comedy respectively. Our analyses will question the meaning and purpose of history, the use of history as entertainment and propaganda, the role of women in Early Modern drama and society, and the meaning of authority in Shakespeare's world. These plays are concerned with the fulfillment and happiness of individuals and their communities, offering insight into how society can and should construct itself for the betterment of all its citizens.

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. 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 literary research paper.

Texts and Materials:

Required: *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans, et al. 2nd ed.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

(Bring to every class)

Suggested:

Collegiate Dictionary

Thesaurus

A handbook modeling MLA in-text documentation style

Assignments and Grades:

You are required to submit one polished 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%
Research Paper (5-8 pages typed)	20%
Course participation (class discussion, homework and other class activities)	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

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.

Attendance is mandatory. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for missed material. Absence on the date an assignment is due does not excuse you from turning in the assignment; the assignment must at least be submitted to me via email by the start of class time. As this is an accelerated summer course, you cannot miss many classes. If you miss **more than one class, it will result in an automatic failure**, as each class is three hours.

You are only guaranteed an excused absence if you can present a doctor's note, a jury summons, or other such documentation.

Class Notes:

I typically display my personal lecture notes for your convenience so that you may follow along visually as I lecture. I type all my notes because, honestly, my handwriting is often difficult to decipher, even for me. However, I do **not** post my notes on Blackboard. This is college, and if you want the information I am providing in class you need to be pro-active and write the notes down yourself. If you miss class, you should ask a classmate for the information.

Students with Special Needs:

In accordance with ODU policy, any students with disabilities who are taking this course and may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to soon make an appointment with Disability Services, 1525 Webb Center, 683.4655, disability@odu.edu. There, you can register for support services if you have not already done so. If you already have a letter of accommodation, it must be provided to me before classroom accommodations will be allowed.

Honor System:

Each student must abide by the honor system of Old Dominion University. You may obtain a copy of the Student Handbook at the Honor Council office in the Webb Center, Room 2129 or at http://www.ode.edu/AO/student_serv/hc/.

ODU'S Honor Code:

We, the students of Old Dominion University, aspire to be honest and forthright in our academic endeavors. Therefore, we will practice honesty and integrity and be guided by the tenets of the Monarch Creed. We will meet the challenge to be beyond reproach in our actions and our words. We will conduct ourselves in a manner that commands the dignity and respect that we also give to others.

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 class-work 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. You are responsible for printing

out your paper, as I will not do it for you. 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 polished critical research paper. The final copy must be **typed, meet the required word count, and be on time** or it will receive an **automatic F**.

Since your paper is longer than a single page, you need to staple them (do this **before** class, as I won't carry a stapler). If your work is not stapled, I am not responsible for missing pages.

Please keep copies of all of your work.

Format:

The paper must be typed, using Times New Roman, 12 point font, in black ink. Your lines must be double-spaced. Also, your margins must not be larger than 1" on the top and bottom, and 1.25" on the left and right sides. Each paper must have page numbers in the top right corner, although the number should not appear on the first page of your paper, nor should it appear on the cover page. Finally, you need to include a cover sheet in the following format:

Paper's Title (An original and interesting title – do not simply use "Paper 1")

Your First and Last Name

Class Number

Instructor's Name (Ms. Mize)

Date

Word Count

Writing Tutorial Services: Consider bringing drafts to the trained tutors at WTS, in BAL 6015. This is a free service to all ODU students. Appointments are required. You may contact WTS at 683-4019 or <http://web.odu.edu/AL/wts/wts.htm>.

7 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. Please note, we will be moving quickly so stay on top of the reading!

WEEK 1:

5/ 11 Introduction to Course / History of Elizabethan Theatre/ Conventions
5/ 13 Shakespeare Biography/ Background for History Plays

WEEK 2:

5/ 18 Richard II*
5/ 20 Richard II cont. / Henry IV part 1

WEEK 3

5/ 25 MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS
5/ 27 Henry IV cont */ Richard III

WEEK 4

6/ 1 Richard III*/ Wrap –up Histories / Midterm Review
6/ 3 Midterm Exam

WEEK 5

6/ 8 Comedic Conventions/ Taming of the Shrew*
6/ 10 Taming of the Shrew cont.

WEEK 6

6/ 15 As You Like It*
6/ 17 Merchant of Venice* / Paper Due

WEEK 7

6/ 22 Merchant of Venice cont. / Final Exam Review
6/ 24 Final Exam

**FINAL EXAM BEGINS
AT THE START OF THE ASSIGNED EXAM PERIOD**

6/24 Exam Starts at 6:30 p.m.