

**English 204 Selected Shakespearean Plays****Required books**

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Gail Kern Paster and Skiles Howard. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 1999.

William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, ed. Reuben Brower. New York and Harmondsworth: Signet edition/New American Library/Penguin-Putnam. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. 2002.

William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, 1*, ed. Maynard Mack. New York and Harmondsworth: Signet edition/New American Library/Penguin-Putnam. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. 1998.

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Kenneth Myrick. New York and Harmondsworth: Signet edition/New American Library/Penguin-Putnam. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. 1998.

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest, A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2000.

**Recommended Books**

Joseph Gibaldi. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Fourth Edition. New York: MLA, 1995.

Diana Hacker, *The Bedford Handbook*, Third edition. NY: St. Martin's Press,

**Meeting Place and Time**

204-01 and 204-02	King 106	M 7:30-8:20 p.m.
204-01	King 237	WF 10:00-10:50 a.m.
204-02	King 341	WF 2:30-3:20 p.m.

**Instructor's Office and Office Hours**

Rice 107	Mon.	8:45-10:00 p.m.
	Wed.	3:45-4:15 p.m.
	Thurs.	4:00-5:30 p.m.
	Fri.	3:45-5:00 p.m.
	And by appointment	

**Course Objectives**

1. To read, study, discuss, and appreciate a range of five Shakespeare plays (including comedies, tragedies, history) with a focus on performance choices and critical methods and theories.
2. To learn how to consider Shakespeare texts as scripts and explore them with an eye to performance issues and how performance choices shape a range of meanings.
3. To experiment with performance choices through scene work (putting on scenes, discussing scenes) to learn how ideas can be expressed using scripts and physical choices, interpretative acts.
4. To study scripts in relationship to video representations of the scripts.
5. To develop a critical and theoretical sensibility by reading critical essays that exemplify particular schools of criticism and theory.

6. To develop writing skills in critical, interpretative, and analytic discussions of particular plays as well as in comparing and synthesizing views of several works.
7. To build skills in attending Shakespeare plays with an appreciation for performance choices.

### **Course Requirements**

#### *1. Attendance and participation, 15%*

Attendance is required and more than three absences will result in a lowered grade. After six absences, students may not pass the course unless all other work is outstanding. Authorized absences may be given for required off-campus activities for another course; for serious medical conditions (proof of doctor's appointments needed); for serious family emergencies. Absences due to optional trips for family events, for athletic events, for theatre activities, for everyday illness, and the like will not be authorized, and will count among the three allowed absences

Participation will be graded on the basis of strength and consistency of position papers, contributions to in-class discussions and impromptu scenes, fine questions, helpful comments, responsiveness to others, contribution to the building of a community of learning, collective efforts. Generally, participation in class discussions will be important, but students may have many ways to contribute to a community of learning and the group production of knowledge.

#### *2. One in-class scene and scene journal 20%.*

The scenes will be fully memorized, and involve costumes, props, a set, and other production needs. The scene journal will be due one week following the scene performance. The journal will include a log of activities, actually written after each rehearsal and a long commentary containing the following elements (they do not have to be in this order, but should be addressed):

- a. A character study -- as much as you can possibly deduce from the entire script about your character. Please note exactly what the others say about the character. Posit for yourself the character's gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, color, class, status, experiences, education, occupation, views, personality, etc. Consider ways to develop your character: what do they wear most of the time; how do they move, sit, smoke, use their voice, etc. What are your character's objectives in the play and in the scene? How does your character use language in a distinctive way? Give your character a distinctive way of moving, sitting, using hands, gesturing. Describe all that and show where in the script you find evidence for your choices.
- b. Scene analysis -- what are the given circumstances in your scene, what conditions obtain for the characters (what has happened and what is the situation); what problems face the characters. In your scene, what are each character's objectives and how are the character's objectives pursued, frustrated, redefined, re-pursued through the course of the scene. Where are the conflicts and accords, discoveries and changes? What does this scene accomplish for the play, in terms of plot, character, situation, and theme?
- c. Finding signals for performance choices: where are the major scripted signals you must observe? What kinds of signals demand definite, specific choices? What signals indicate an optional choice must be made but do not show exactly how to make the choice? What other signals do you find for choices you need to make about costume, props, blocking, line readings, characterization? What choices do you make that can be supported by the script although the script does not indicate such choices? Are you making choices for your scene that work there but would not work if the scene were performed with the rest of the play? What is your justification for doing that?

d. The scene journal will also include a discussion of what you learned from performing the scene and the discussion following the scene.

Also, following the performance, the group will lead the class in a discussion of the scene.

At the close of the journal, each person will submit a self-evaluation and an evaluation of other scene members.

The grade will be based on:

1. Group performance: degree of preparation, extent of work, thoughtfulness and coherence of scene; contribution to class study of the script and theoretical issues. Everyone will be given the same grade here. 40%
2. Journal and individual work: your own degree and extent of preparation and performance. Skill is not so much the issue as energy, thoughtfulness, creativity, clarity of goals, physicalizing ideas, good discussion of character and scene. Your journal will be an important element in assessing your preparation, ideas, and understanding. 30%
4. Averaging the evaluations of your scene partners regarding your work. 20%
5. Leading discussion following your scene. 10%

### 3. *Midterm paper, 20%*

The midterm (8 pages) can be on one or more of the plays from the first half of the course, but not one in which you performed a scene. The midterm should address critical readings, either assigned or others you locate, or theatre history, or particular performances viewed. All papers must show some engagement with criticism, theory, or performances and will not be simply your own responses to the work, although certainly your own interpretations and analysis will be most central to your essay.

Proposals for midterms will be due on Fri. March 7; a second generation draft will be due on Wed. March 12, and the midterm itself will be due on Wed. March 19.

All papers must conform to the rules for format and documentation as laid out in the *MLA Handbook*.

### 4. *Final project, 25%*

The final assignment may be a final paper (10-12 pages), final scenes (two scenes for each person) or another group or individual project. All final projects must be based on the plays from the second half of the semester.

If you do not write a paper and want to do a scene or project, you must rewrite part of your midterm paper if it earned less than an A-. You must turn in your rewrite by Monday, May 3 at the very latest (the sooner the better, but this is the FINAL deadline), having discussed the rewrite you will do beforehand with the instructor (sign up for an office appt. to do that).

You must declare if you will do a final paper or project or scene by Mon. Apr. 7. If you write a paper, or do a project, you will submit a proposal for your paper or project by Friday, April 25. The proposal will include an abstract of your main ideas, a plan for the research and writing or other work, a reading list of sources or references to be used, and any questions for the instructor to help you with. Required conferences will be held on all proposed topics that weekend and into the next week (April 25-29), if possible.

All final scenes will include a scene journal and self and group evaluation. A written report must accompany all projects, and all papers must include some research using theory or practical criticism. All papers must conform to the rules for format and documentation as laid out in the *MLA Handbook*.

### *5. Position papers, 20%*

Several 2-3 page position papers will be used for in-class discussion of assigned articles or other topics. The instructor will write very brief evaluations on the position papers; 1 is poor; 2 is fine; 3 is excellent. You will keep your position papers in a portfolio, and hand them in as a group to be graded at midterm time and at end of the semester. They will be given a letter grade as a collective product. The portfolios will be graded with an eye to completeness (how many were done), timeliness (on time), quality and consistency of work. Depth of thought, variety in approaches, excellence of writing and extent of work will be considered. Every week there will be one position paper required; you may choose among various options most weeks; occasionally there will be only one option.

### **Style and Format for Papers**

All papers must be printed with 1" margins on left and right sides, and double spaced. You are welcome to recycle paper, with something else printed on one side. Be sure to buy and use a handbook on grammar if you have any problems with either format or rules of grammar and punctuation.

### **Deadlines**

All position papers are due in class on the day assigned. If you have notes ready and show them to me, I will accept printed work 9 p.m.. Otherwise, all deadlines for all written work will be at 9 p.m. on the day due. All deadlines are final, and no extensions will be given after a deadline. Extensions *before* the deadline will be given for the following reasons:

1. Serious work crunch; show me the syllabi for other courses and your other papers and tests due the same day. This must be done more than a day ahead.
2. Serious problems with finishing work due to prolonged illness. Show me evidence of need for medications, doctors.
3. Serious family problems; I will need proof of needed trips home.
4. Extensions will normally be for two to three extra days, until the next class meeting. No prolonged extensions are possible.

Late papers will receive lowered grades; the grade will be lowered .15 for each day late. Two days late will mean that a paper that would have earned an 4.00 will receive 3.85; three days late, a 4.00 paper will earn 3.60; and so on.

### **Performances and videos**

For all the plays, videos will be shown (usually on a Sunday afternoon from 1:30-4 p.m. in 050 Mudd. If you cannot attend the showing, which will be more enjoyable with an audience), you may view the videos in AV, but they will be on reserve in the Reserve room of the library. Attendance at all the video showings is optional, but strongly recommended and you will find that viewing the videos adds greatly to your enjoyment and learning. I would like to see everyone attend at least two of the five videos and will take attendance to see who does come. Attendance at videos will be considered as part of your participation grade.

For three of the plays, we will have live performances to attend. Of those three, two will be required. Those two will be the OC production of *Merchant of Venice*, on the first weekend in May (May 1-4) and the Great Lakes Festival (Cleveland) production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, during the first week of May (we are scheduled to attend on Thursday night, May 1). The OC show will be very inexpensive and the GLTF show will cost \$11 plus some money for the bus trip. Total to be announced.

The third play, the most expensive and furthest away, will be the most exciting. We have thirty tickets (and can possibly get more) to attend a Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Coriolanus*, on tour from England. The lead is played by Gregg Hicks and some outstanding London critics have singled out his performance as the best Coriolanus they have seen yet. The ticket price is \$30 (student discount, no less) and added to that will be the cost of the bus. Total amount to be announced. This show will be on Saturday, March 8 at 1:30 and we'll leave Oberlin that a.m. so you can get to Ann Arbor in time for lunch. This will be a very special trip and I hope you will begin to save your extra money for it! I will need a commitment from you very soon as the funds are due in Ann Arbor rather quickly.

*Part One: Introduction to Course through A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Mon.	Feb.	3	Course organization Reading scripts for performance choices No assignment
Wed.	Feb.	5	Finding Critical Performance Signals Read <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Acts 1 and 2 Preparation Paper with examples of signals
Fri.	Feb.	7	Studying Meter as a Performance Signal Read <i>MND</i> Act 3, 4 In class work: Scanning assigned sections

**Part Two: Focusing on *Midsummer Night's Dream***

Mon.	Feb.	10	Lecture on <i>MND</i>
Wed.	Feb.	12	

**Special Session: Library Resources for Researching  
Performance and Criticism**

Heather Smith, Reference Librarian in  
Library, room TBA

Fri.	Feb.	14	No class (make up classes on following weekend)
Sun.	Feb.	18	Video showing of <i>MND</i> Mudd 050, 1-4 p.m.
Mon.	Feb.	17	Lecture on <i>MND</i> on video
Wed.	Feb.	19	<i>MND</i> Act 5, focusing on Issues of Comedy and Tragedy in The Play in the Play
Fri.	Feb.	21	<i>MND</i> scenes
Sat.	Feb.	22	Make up class for Feb. 14: <i>MND</i> Criticism
OR			
Sun.	Feb.	23	Make up class for Feb. 14: <i>MND</i> Criticism ERES reading: Hendricks, Margo. " 'Obscured by Dreams': Race, Empire, and Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> ," <i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i> 47 (1996): 37-60. 23 pages Skiles, Howard. "Hands, Feet, and Bottoms: Decentering the Cosmic Dance in <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> ," <i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i> 44 (1993): 325-42. 17 pages.

**Part Four** **Readying *Coriolanus***

Mon.	Feb.	24	<i>Coriolanus</i> lecture
Wed.	Feb.	26	<i>Coriolanus</i> discussion
Fri.	Feb.	28	<i>Coriolanus</i> discussion; scene journals for <i>MND</i> due
Sun.	Mar.	2	Video showing of <i>Coriolanus</i> , Mudd 050 1-4
Mon.	Mar.	3	Lecture: <i>Coriolanus</i> as treated by the BBC
Wed.	Mar.	5	<i>Coriolanus</i> scenes
Fri.	Mar.	7	<i>Coriolanus</i> criticism: (ERES readings) Adelman, Janet. " 'Anger's My Meat': Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in <i>Coriolanus</i> ," <i>Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays</i> . Eds. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980. 129-49. 20 pages. Cavell, Stanley. "Who Does the Wolf Love?" <i>Coriolanus</i> and Interpretations of Politics," <i>Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1987. 143-77. 34 pages.
Sat.	Mar.	8	1:30 p.m. <i>Coriolanus</i> at The University of Michigan, performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company with Gregg Hicks as <i>Coriolanus</i>
Mon.	Mar.	10	Discussing the RSC <i>Coriolanus</i>

**Part Five** **Working on Midterm Writing**

Wed.	Mar.	12	Midterm panels on midterm paper drafts, scene journals due for <i>Coriolanus</i>
Fri.	Mar.	14	Midterm conferences
Sat.	Mar.	15	Midterm conferences
Sun.	Mar.	16	Midterm conferences

**Part Six** **Appreciating Shakespeare's History Plays: *Henry IV, 1***

Mon.	Mar.	17	<i>Henry IV, 1</i> lecture
Tues.	Mar.	18	Midterm conferences
Wed.	Mar.	19	<i>Henry IV, 1</i> discussion (Midterm papers due)
Fri.	Mar.	21	<i>Henry IV, 1</i> discussion
(Spring Break)			
Mon.	Mar.	31	<i>Henry IV, 1</i> on video
Tues.	Apr.	1	<i>Henry IV, 1</i> video showing, Mudd 050
Wed.	Apr.	2	<i>Henry IV, 1</i> scenes
Fri.	Apr.	4	<i>Henry IV 1</i> criticism <i>Greenblatt, Stephen</i> . "Invisible Bullets," <i>Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social in Renaissance England</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. 21-65; 166-175. 44 pages. <i>Howard, Jean and Phyllis Rackin</i> , "The Henry IV Plays," <i>Engendering a Nation: A feminist account of Shakespeare's English histories</i> . London and New York: Routledge. 1997. 160-185; 22-24. 25 pages.

**Part Seven Encountering *The Tempest***

Mon.	Apr.	7	<i>The Tempest</i> lecture
Wed.	Apr.	9	<i>The Tempest</i> discussion, scene journals due for <i>Henry IV, 1</i>
Fri.	Apr.	11	no class, instructor at conference (make up class at end of semester)
Sun.	Apr.	13	<i>The Tempest</i> video showing, Mudd 050, 1-4
Mon.	Apr.	14	<i>The Tempest</i> on video and movies
Wed.	Apr.	16	<i>The Tempest</i> discussion
Fri.	Apr.	18	<i>The Tempest</i> scenes
(Mon.	Apr.	21	Start <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , lecture 1)
Wed.	Apr.	23	<i>The Tempest</i> criticism Assignments TBA

**Part Eight Confronting *The Merchant of Venice***

(Mon.	Apr.	21	Start <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , lecture 1)
Fri.	Apr.	25	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> discussion
Sun.	Apr.	20	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> video, Mudd 050, 1:30-4
Mon.	Apr.	21	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> lecture on videos
Wed.	Apr.	23	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> discussion
Fri.	Apr.	25	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> criticism, ERES readings Gaskill, Gayle. "Making <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> Palatable for U.S. Audiences," <i>The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays</i> . Eds. John W. Mahon and Ellen Macleod Mahon. New York and London: Routledge, 2002. 375-86. 12 pages. Sinfield, Alan. "How to read <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> without being heterosexist," <i>Alternative Shakespeares, Volume 2</i> . Ed. Terence Hawkes. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. 122-39. 18 pages. Scene journals due for <i>The Tempest</i>
Mon.	Apr.	28	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> lecture
Wed.	Apr.	30	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> scenes

**Part Nine: Production emphasis**

Thurs.	May	1	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> at the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, 7:30 p.m.
Fri.	May	2	Discussing the GLTF's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Fri-Sun	May	2-4	<i>Merchant of Venice</i> , Hall Auditorium
Mon	May	5	Discussing Paul Moser's OC <i>Merchant of Venice</i>

**Part Ten: Final Presentations**

Wed.	May	7	Final scenes or presentations
Fri.	May	9	Final scenes or presentations
Sat.	May	10	Final scenes or presentations (make up class for Fri. Apr. 11); course evaluations due/
Wed.	May	14	Final examination, 7 p.m. for 204-01 (final papers and final scene journals due)

Thurs. May 15 Final examination, 2 p.m. for 204-02 (final papers and final scene journals due)