

# ENGLISH 205: Introduction to Shakespeare

## Fall 2016

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**Dr. Christopher L. Morrow**

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm  
Wednesday, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
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or by appointment

**Email:** [cl-morrow@wiu.edu](mailto:cl-morrow@wiu.edu)

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**Meeting Times:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm, Simpkins 014.

*A person may sleep many years at the fountain of learning, and yet awake no physician.*  
Mary Trye, *Medicatrix*, (1675)

*The remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he really is very good,  
in spite of all the people who say he is very good.*  
Robert Graves, qtd in *The Observer* (1964)

### Course Description and Objectives

If you have ever waited with “bated breath,” complained that your roommate has “eaten you out of house and home,” or felt like a class was going to last “forever and a day,” you have quoted Shakespeare. Despite living over 400 years ago, Shakespeare remains one of the most influential English writers. His words and phrases have crept into our daily lives, his works regularly appear on big and small screens, and adaptations of his works appear in every medium, including comic books, television shows, and board and video games. This course will provide an introduction to the dramatic works of William Shakespeare through focused reading and discussion of 6 representative plays. We will consider these plays both as texts to be read and scripts to be performed as well as how they reflect their time period. By examining cinematic adaptations, we will also examine and discuss the continuing relevance these plays have in modern society.

The goal of this course is not to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the works of William Shakespeare. Rather, through this course, students will gain an increased knowledge of a selection of plays from the major genres in which Shakespeare wrote, exposure to and familiarity with the early modern English language, and an understanding of early modern England. Ultimately, this course will provide students with the necessary tools to continue reading, discussing, and enjoying Shakespeare on the page and the screen beyond the confines of the classroom.

### Required Texts:

Please purchase the following books. If you already own a complete anthology of Shakespeare or single volume editions, you are welcome to use alternate editions. If you use alternate editions, your text might differ and you won't have access to the same supplementary materials. You are still responsible for any assigned supplementary materials (such as introductions).

Shakespeare, William. *Cymbeline*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2011. Folger Shakespeare Library.

---. *Henry V*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Washington Square Press, 2004. Folger Shakespeare Library.

---. *Macbeth*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Washington Square Press, 2004. Folger Shakespeare Library.

---. *The Merchant of Venice*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2009. Folger Shakespeare Library.

---. *Much Ado About Nothing*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Washington Square Press, 2009. Folger Shakespeare Library.

---. *Othello*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Washington Square Press, 1993. Folger Shakespeare Library.

\*Any additional readings will be provided on WesternOnline.

### **Bring Appropriate Book(s) to Every Class**

#### Recommended:

Writer's handbook such as Hacker's *Pocket Style Manual* or Graff & Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say*.

### **Course Requirements & Assignments**

**Participation (10%):** Discussion in this course relies on strong, nuanced, and consistent participation from each student in the class. Therefore, I expect students to have read and reflected on the assignment in advance and to come to class prepared to discuss it. Students are required to participate in discussion regularly by answering questions, posing questions, and making analytical comments. The quote, question/comment assignment (see below) is designed to provide you with discussion material. Participation will be evaluated using the following general criteria:

- A: Student contributes *daily* and *significantly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
- B: Student contributes *regularly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
- C: Student contributes *sporadically* and/or always actively focuses on class discussion.
- D: Student contributes *rarely* and/or often does not stay actively focused on the discussion.
- F: Student does not contribute and regularly does not stay actively focused on the discussion.

I do not expect nor require students to have the "right" answer or to provide ground-breaking analysis but merely to engage in the process of discussing and analyzing the literature. Remember that quality is better than quantity, but quantity is better than no quantity. I will generally (but not always) rely on voluntary participation. Depending on the level of class participation and how well the class is keeping up with the reading, I may also give announced or unannounced objective reading quizzes covering the reading assigned for that class period. These quizzes will be figured into the participation grade.

**Quote, Question/Comment (15%):** Like many skills, critical reading and analysis are two that improve with practice. Because you will be analyzing literature throughout this course, it is essential to practice analysis regularly. Therefore, for each class meeting, students will:

- 1) identify and cite a significant discussion-worthy quote from the day's reading,  
AND
- 2) formulate a critical/analytical comment or question about the reading.

The question or comment can be focused on the quote, but it is not required. Students will submit their quote, question/comment to WesternOnline before class and are also required to bring a written copy to class. This assignment formalizes (and rewards) work you should already be doing to prepare for class discussion. A detailed prompt with instructions for how to submit to WesternOnline will be provided. This assignment will not be accepted late.

**DUE: Per class period unless otherwise noted in calendar.**

**Exams (20% each; 40% total):** There will be a midterm and a final exam, each covering approximately one half of the course. The exams will be derived directly from the readings as well as class lecture and discussion. Each exam will consist of objective and analytical sections. These exams typically focus heavily on explaining/defining terms and on identifying and analyzing quotes. Therefore, I recommend students take careful notes on terms and pay close attention to quotes discussed or examined in class.

**Midterm Exam: October 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Exam: December 15<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 am**

**Formal Writing Assignments:** For this course, each student will complete 3 formal writing assignments. While brief descriptions can be found below, detailed prompts for each will be circulated in class and/or available on WesternOnline. Each essay must conform to MLA guidelines for format, in-text citation, and the works cited page.

***Film Attendance and Review (5%):*** Celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death, there will be a film series dedicated to Shakespearean adaptations. These viewings will take place on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm in the Sandburg Theater in the WIU Student Union. Students will be required to attend 1 of the 4 viewings and then write a 2-3 page reflection and review of the film. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Screenings:

*Much Ado About Nothing*, September 7<sup>th</sup>

*Henry V*, October 5<sup>th</sup>

*Macbeth*, November 9<sup>th</sup>

*Hamlet*, December 7<sup>th</sup>

**Review Due: No Later than December 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.**

***"Translation" of Shakespeare (10%):*** For this assignment, each student will "translate" a selected passage (35-50 lines) from Shakespeare into contemporary language being as faithful to the original meaning as possible. This will be a line-by-line translation and will be accompanied by a 2-3 page reflection and explanation of your translation.

**DUE: September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

***Critical Essay (20%):*** Each student will write a 4-5 page literary analysis/interpretation essay that advances a contestable and significant argument regarding the play being analyzed.

Pre-writing: There *may* be pre-writing assignments (such as topic paragraph, thesis sentence, outline, etc.) for this essay. Failure to complete these assignments will result in a penalty to the final paper grade.

Rough Drafts: We will be peer-reviewing this essay. Therefore, you must bring a complete, typed, rough draft that meets the minimum length requirements for the assignment to peer review day. If you fail to do so, the highest grade the final draft can receive is a D.

**Rough Draft DUE: November 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Draft DUE: November 17<sup>th</sup>**

**OPTIONAL: Creative Analysis/Performance Project (up to +3%):** Students will have the opportunity to complete an additional critical or creative project for a bonus of up to 3% to the final grade. A detailed prompt will follow.

### Distribution and Grading Scale

Participation	10%
Quote, Question/Comment	15%
Film Attendance and Review	5%
“Translation” of Shakespeare	10%
Critical Essay	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

<b>A</b>	93-100%	<b>B+</b>	87-89%	<b>C+</b>	77-79%	<b>D+</b>	67-69%	<b>F</b>	0%-59%
<b>A-</b>	90-92%	<b>B</b>	83-86%	<b>C</b>	73-76%	<b>D</b>	63-66%		
		<b>B-</b>	80-82%	<b>C-</b>	70-72%	<b>D-</b>	60-62%		

### Course Policies

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is not only mandatory but essential for success in this course. Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis and will be held accountable for any material covered in class, including class discussion, announcements, and any changes to the reading schedule and assignments. Students are responsible for getting information and class notes from a fellow classmate. Preparation is a crucial part of attendance. Therefore, students are required to bring the appropriate text to every class meeting.

Each student is allowed *four* absences for any reason -- ranging from illness to oversleeping. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. As such, students are not expected to document these absences, nor does documentation “excuse” the absence. Allowances may be made in extreme circumstances that necessitate missing multiple days. These circumstances will need to be documented, and you must contact me as soon as possible.

#### Possible Attendance/Preparation Penalties:

- Failure to bring the appropriate text to class will result in a 5% penalty to the participation grade.
- After four, each subsequent absence will result in a 3% penalty to the final grade.

- Students who miss more than 8 total classes will receive an automatic F for the course.

**Tardiness:** I am not bothered by individuals who are occasionally late for class or must occasionally leave class early – the key word being *occasionally*. However, if you anticipate that you must consistently arrive late or leave early, you need to replace this course with another.

If you arrive after I take roll, it is your responsibility to speak with me after class to ensure I record your attendance. If you do not speak with me, you may be counted absent. If you miss more than half of the class due to tardiness or leaving early, it will count as an absence.

**Late Work:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date and will be submitted in print in class and electronically via WesternOnline. Late assignments incur a 5% penalty for every calendar day. If you need an extension, send an email request (prior to the due date) stating the specific reason for the extension request. In the event that you submit the printed copy outside of class (i.e. under my door, etc.), it is your responsibility to confirm that I received it. Individual quote, question/comment entries and the film review will not be accepted late.

**Email:** Email correspondence is a quick and easy way to communicate during this semester. I will use it frequently to communicate with the class, and I encourage you to use to it contact me to set up an appointment, ask questions, make comments, etc. I do consider email to be formal communication so I expect emails to be properly addressed, to maintain a professional tone, and to be grammatically correct. If your question or request is too large to be handily resolved over email, I will ask you to set an appointment to discuss it in an individual conference. Do Not Use WesternOnline email – I will not check that email regularly.

**Office Hours:** Students are encouraged to visit during office hours. These are available to use without setting an appointment. Additionally, if I am in my office, feel free to drop in to see if I am available to meet. If you are not able to meet during office hours, please email me with a couple of potential times, and we can schedule an appointment.

I always enjoy speaking with students about their writing, the readings for the course, or literary topics large or small! Additionally, if you are working on a paper and have questions or would like feedback, I am happy to work with you on your paper at any stage of the writing process.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** Scholastic dishonesty of any kind on any assignment undermines the quality of education at WIU and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This includes cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, and plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty of any kind will result in an F in the course and will be reported to CAGAS. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I will also be happy to answer any questions you may have. You should also consult the University policy at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

**Students with disabilities:** In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at **309-298-2512**, [disability@wiu.edu](mailto:disability@wiu.edu) or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify me as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

**Classroom Behavior:** Students are expected to behave with respect toward the course, their fellow students, and the instructor. We will be reading a variety of pieces which contain subject matter that

may be deemed offensive to some people, such as profanity and depictions of sex and violence. I expect students to be able to discuss this material in a mature way and maintain an appropriate demeanor during class. If you have extenuating circumstances with encountering this material, please set an appointment with me immediately.

Private conversations and other disruptive behaviors interfere with teaching and learning and will not be tolerated. Continued disruptive behavior can result in an assigned classroom seat, penalty to final grade, and/or expulsion from the class for the day or the semester.

**Electronic Devices:** Laptops and tablets are acceptable for note-taking and consulting electronic versions of required readings as long as the technology does not become a distraction.

Cellphones, which can play a valuable role in the event of an emergency, should be set to vibrate at the beginning of class. If you need to take a call, you are welcome to step outside of class briefly. Texting, emailing, social media, and non-class related activities are strictly prohibited and will negatively affect your grade. After an initial warning, violation of this policy will result in dismissal from the class and a 15% penalty to your participation grade per instance.

**University Writing Center:** The UWC is available to assist you with general and specific questions on any of the writing assignments for this course. Consultants can provide another voice on your writing at any stage in the writing process from brainstorming to polishing the final product. Please call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. A visit to the UWC should be a supplement to rather than a replacement for talking about your paper with me.

**WesternOnline:** We will be using WesternOnline for the online submission of formal essays and for providing electronic access to course documents. If you need help using WesternOnline, please let me know.

**Title IX Announcement:** University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: [http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

**Students' Rights and Responsibilities:** For information, visit [www.wiu.edu/provost/student/](http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/)