

English 21900
Shakespeare's Other Worlds

Fall 2009
Section 02—MWF 12-12:50, Friends 208
Section 05—MWF 2-2:50, Friends 302

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MW 3-4:30, Tu 1-2 and by appointment



Panorama of London by Claes Van Visscher, 1616

Shakespeare was early modern England's greatest playwright—but he never wrote plays about his own time and place. Yet his work was extremely relevant to his own period, and it still has something to say about our own. In this course, we will examine Shakespeare's many "other worlds," the other places and times he treats in his plays and poems. As we visit these other worlds, we will discover how Shakespeare uses different locations to create comparisons and encourage critique, both of the worlds of the plays and the world outside the theater. During Shakespeare's time, England's world was expanding with new knowledge of distant places and strange peoples. How did this new knowledge of the world affect England's self-image? What can Shakespeare's works tell us about his world and ours? Ben Jonson famously said of Shakespeare, "He was not of an age, but for all time." In this course, we will test that theory by asking how Shakespeare's "other worlds" were relevant to his own age and what they have to show us about our own time.

Course Text

- *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al., second edition (2008)
- Supplementary materials to be handed out in class.

Requirements

1. Consistent attendance. The attendance policy is outlined below. Please read it carefully.
2. Active participation. This is a discussion-based course. Its success depends on *your* ideas, *your* questions, *your* insights, and *your* enthusiasm. I expect all members of the class to participate actively and often.
3. Written assignments. There will be several writing assignments in this course, including two short essays (2-3 pages each) and one longer essay (7-8 pages). Further instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class.

4. Final Exam. The final exam will test your ability to read and comprehend Shakespeare's language and to recognize and analyze major themes in his works.

Grade Breakdown

Participation: 20%

Short essays: 15% each (total 30%)

Essay: 30%

Final Exam: 20%

Attendance Policy

You are allowed **five** absences, no questions asked—use them carefully. Beginning with the sixth, however, your **final course grade will drop one full letter grade** for each additional absence (eg, from B+ to C+, or A to B). Students who miss eight classes before the withdrawal deadline (Nov. 6) will be automatically dropped from the course. Students whose accumulated absences total eight or more before the end of the semester **will not pass the course**. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. If you are seriously ill or need to attend to a personal emergency, you obviously won't be penalized. Please speak with me beforehand (or as soon as possible) regarding exceptional circumstances.

Please arrive on time to class. Tardiness is a huge distraction for me and for the rest of the class. For that reason, **three** tardies will result in one absence.

You are responsible for all materials and assignments given the day you miss class. **Please make arrangements with your classmates to borrow notes and for information on assignments.**

This class will focus on the text; without the text in front of you, you will be at a disadvantage. Coming to class without your text is equivalent to you not being here. If I see that this is a repeated problem, I will count you as absent each day you come to class without your book.

Attendance is a requirement for this course, but it is the bare minimum. Class operates on the active participation and engagement of all students. Your participation in our meetings weighs heavily in your grade; I expect all students to be active members of our class community.

Essay Policy

Complete guidelines for essays will be handed out with the first essay assignment. At this point, however, please note that **all work you turn in must be typed, stapled, double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman Font with no more than 1.25 inch margins.**

Late paper policy: Due dates for written work are listed below in the class schedule. Final drafts will be marked down a third letter grade for each day it is late (an A paper would become an A-, an A- a B+, etc.). If you are having trouble meeting the deadline of an assignment, please speak with me. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, but I can't help if you don't ask.

I encourage you to take advantage of all the resources available to you when working on writing assignments: meeting with me during my office hours, actively discussing your ideas in section, and visiting the Writing Center to work on your paper in a one-on-one conference.

Plagiarism: Any incident of academic misconduct will be taken very seriously and treated in accordance with the guidelines stipulated in the Ithaca College Student Policy Manual, section 7.1.2.6. These guidelines are available at: <http://www.ithaca.edu/link_index.php?url=http://www.ithaca.edu/attorney/policies/vol7/Volume_7-70102.htm&source=handbook>. See also the College policy on plagiarism in the Policy Manual, section 7.1.4.1, available at <http://www.ithaca.edu/attorney/policies/vol7/Volume_7-70104.htm>.

Simply put, I expect all of your work for this course to be your own. Any ideas from other people must be used and cited correctly.

**I take course requirements and policies very seriously. You should, too.
Get to know this syllabus, and refer to it throughout the semester.**

Class Schedule

Readings and assignments listed next to a date are due for that class period. I expect that you will read the critical introduction to each play for the first day of discussion on that play.

Week 1

W Aug. 26 Introduction to Shakespeare's theater.

F Aug. 28 Shakespeare's London.
Norton General Introduction, pages 1-30

Week 2

M Aug. 30 Sonnets 1, 3, 15, 17, 25, 29, 39, 62, 73, 112, 130, 138 + three of your own choosing

W Sept. 2 Early Modern Map Culture
Norton Appendix, pages 1839-1848
Sonnets 7, 9, 27-28, 50-51, 67-68, 80 + three of your own choosing

F Sept. 4 Sonnets 23, 30, 43, 59, 106, 146 + three of your own choosing

Week 3

M Sept. 7 **NO CLASS—Labor Day**

W Sept. 9 *Venus and Adonis*, lines 1-852

F Sept. 11 *Venus and Adonis*, lines 853- end

Week 4

M Sept. 14 *As You Like It*, Act 1

W Sept. 16 *As You Like It*, Act 2
F Sept. 18 *As You Like It*, Act 3
 Short Essay #1 Due

Week 5
M Sept. 21 *As You Like It*, Act 4

W Sept. 23 *As You Like It*, Act 5

F Sept. 25 Sonnets 20, 33-34, 147
 “A Lover’s Complaint”

Week 6
M Sept. 28 *Richard II*, 2.1.31-68, *1 Henry IV*, 1.1-1.2

W Sept. 30 *1 Henry IV*, 1.3-2.4

F Oct. 2 *1 Henry IV*, 2.5-3.3

Week 7
M Oct. 5 *1 Henry IV*, Act 4

W Oct. 7 *1 Henry IV*, Act 5

F Oct. 9 *1 Henry IV*

Week 8
M Oct. 12 *2 Henry IV*, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 4.3, 5.5, Epilogue

W Oct. 14 Early Modern Print Culture
 “The Dream of the Master Text” in Norton General Introduction, pages 67-74

F Oct. 16 **NO CLASS—Fall Break**

Week 9
M Oct. 19 *Henry V*, Act 1

W Oct. 21 *Henry V*, Act 2

F Oct. 23 *Henry V*, Act 3

Week 10
M Oct. 26 *Henry V*, Act 4

W Oct. 28 *Henry V*, Act 5

F Oct. 30 Early Modern “Others”
The Merchant of Venice, 1.2, 2.1, 2.7
Sonnet 127

Week 11

M Nov. 2 *Othello*, Act 1

W Nov. 4 *Othello*, Acts 2-3

F Nov. 6 *Othello*, Acts 4-5

Week 12

M Nov. 9 *Othello*
****Long Essay Due****

W Nov. 11 *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 1

F Nov. 13 *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 2
Sonnet 129

Week 13

M Nov. 16 *Antony and Cleopatra*, Acts 3-4

W Nov. 18 *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 5

F Nov. 20 *Antony and Cleopatra*
****Short Essay #2 Due****

Nov. 21-29—Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

M Nov. 30 *The Tempest*, Act 1

W Dec. 2 *The Tempest*, Act 2

F Dec. 4 *The Tempest*, Act 3

Week 15

M Dec. 7 *The Tempest*, Acts 4-5

W Dec. 9 *The Tempest*

F Dec. 11 Odds and Ends

FINAL EXAMS: Section 02—Friday Dec. 18 1:30 pm-4 pm
Section 05--Wednesday Dec. 16 7:30 am-10 am