

**Texas A&M University-Texarkana**  
**English 312: Shakespeare**  
**Course Syllabus Spring 2012**

**Instructor:** Dr. Doris Davis  
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**Course Number:** English 312  
**Course Title:** Shakespeare  
**Time:** TR 4:00-5:15

**Catalog Description:** This course offers a study of the author's plays with special attention devoted to major and better-known works.

**Texts:** *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Second Edition. ISBN: 0-395-75490-9

**Student Learner Outcomes:**

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to

(1) develop an awareness of the scope and variety of Shakespeare's sonnets and plays (comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances) through reading representative works and by explaining the historical development in assigned papers and exams

(2) obtain and display knowledge of literary terminology by applying it in papers and on exams to the literature read and discussed

(3) assess the style, theme, properties, and effectiveness of Shakespeare's works by writing analytical papers on selected pieces

(4) articulate an informed response to Shakespeare by reading examples of his works and by applying a critical approach to these works in assigned papers

(5) develop an aesthetic appreciation for Shakespeare by reading highly regarded examples as measured by class discussions and written assignments.

(6) understand Shakespeare's works as expressions of individual and human values in historical and social contexts by evaluating the importance of literary contextual issues in exams and papers.

## Requirements:

- A. **Two tests.** A test may be made up only if you have received permission for rescheduling prior to the test.
- B. **Written Work:**
- (1) Explication of sonnet. Select a sonnet on the syllabus and write a two-page, double-spaced explication—about 500 words—no secondary sources required.
  - (2) Three explications of passages. Select three passages (probably soliloquies) to explicate. Your explication should explain the significance of the passage and relate it to the play as a whole—about 500 words each—no secondary sources required.
  - (3) Explication of a scene. Select one scene to explicate. Your explication should explain the significance of the scene and relate it to the play as a whole—about 500 words—no secondary sources required.
  - (4) An analytical paper of 2000 words with appropriate secondary sources focused on a play listed on the syllabus. Your thesis must be approved.
- C. **Class presentation.**

**You must submit all written work to turnitin.com to receive a grade. The enrollment password is TBA.**

## Final Grade:

The final grade is an average of the requirements as follows:

Two tests	= 50%	500 points
Written Works	= 40 %	400 points
[Explication of sonnet		25 points]
[Explication of passages	25 points each x 3 =	75 points]
[Explication of scene		50 points]
[Analytical Paper		250 points]
Presentation		
(with partner)	= 10%	100 points
Total		1000 points

A = 900-1000 points; B = 800-899 points; C = 700-799 points; D – 600-699 points

In determining your grade for the course, I will also consider class attendance and participation. Both are important. Absences typically result in a lower final grade because you have missed important information. Bring your book to class. Do not leave class except for an emergency. Be on time. No phone calls. Be professional.

### **Academic Honesty Statement**

Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and copying or undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty, and may be grounds for a grade of “F” in the course and/or disciplinary action. The student is responsible for reading and understanding the University Policy on Academic Integrity. Do not copy material from the internet or any other source without documentation. This act constitutes plagiarism.

If you use another writer’s words (phrases or sentences), you must use quotation marks and indicate the source. Also identify the source of any ideas you gain from reading secondary sources.

**Disability Accommodations** Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M Texarkana Disability Services Office by contacting Mr. Carl Greig: 903-223-3062.

**E-Mail Statement:** After applying to and being accepted into a program by Texas A&M University-Texarkana, an individual will receive an A&M-Texarkana e-mail account. Instructors and university officials will deliver official university correspondence to this account. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via his or her university e-mail account, and each individual must check his or her official A&M-Texarkana e-mail account completely and frequently. Faculty members and students must use their university e-mail accounts when communicating about coursework.

### **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| January 19 | Introduction to class; view A&E’s <i>Biography of Shakespeare: A Life of Drama</i>                  |
| January 24 | Lecture: Review of Biographical Record<br>Read selected Sonnets (1593-1609): 15, 18, 29, 30, 33, 55 |
| January 26 | Lecture: Historical Background<br>Continue Sonnets: 64, 67, 71, 73, 97, 116, and 130.               |
| January 31 | Lecture: Theatrical Setting<br>Read <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> (1592-94)                           |
| February 2 | <b>Explication of Sonnet due</b><br>View BBC production of <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>              |
| February 7 | Lecture: Linguistic Technique<br>Read <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> (1595-96)                    |

- February 9     Lecture: Stylistic Technique  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, cont.
- February 14    *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, cont.  
**Explication of Passage I due**
- February 16    Read *Romeo and Juliet* (1595-96)  
 Lecture: Shakespeare's Text and Bibliographical Terminology
- February 21    *Romeo and Juliet*, cont.  
 February 23    *Romeo and Juliet*, cont.  
**Explication of Passage II due**  
 Write explications on different plays.
- February 28    Read *Henry IV, Part I* (1596-97)  
 Continue *Henry IV, Part I*
- March 1        Continue *Henry IV, Part I*  
**Explication of Passage III due**  
 Write explications on different plays.
- March 5        View parts of *Henry V* (You are not required to read this play.)  
**March 8        TEST I**

**March 12-16 Spring Break**

- March 20       Read *Hamlet* (1600-1)  
 March 22       **Explication of Scene due**  
 Write explications on different plays.
- Lecture: Artistic Development  
 Continue *Hamlet*

- March 27       **Thesis for Analytical Paper due**  
 Continue *Hamlet*
- March 29       Continue *Hamlet*

**You must make an appointment for a conference about your analytical paper: April 4-8.**

- April 3        *Twelfth Night* (1601-2)  
 April 5        Continue *Twelfth Night*
- April 10       Continue *Twelfth Night*  
 April 12       Read *Macbeth* (1606)
- April 17       Continue *Macbeth*  
 April 19       Continue *Macbeth*

April 24	<b>Analytical Paper due</b> Read <i>The Tempest</i> (1611)
April 26	Continue <i>The Tempest</i>
May 1	Continue <i>The Tempest</i>
May 3	Continue <i>The Tempest</i>
<b>May 8</b> <b>schedule</b>	<b>TEST II (tentative date); test may be given during final examination schedule</b>

**A Presentation Schedule will be provided.**

## Assignments

### General Information on Papers

The paper assigned for this class offers you the chance to write about plays **on the syllabus** that interest you. Papers demand that you think critically and organize your ideas clearly and effectively. The following comments are generally applicable to all my courses in literature.

While you will use secondary sources (including those in our text and beyond), above all papers should reflect your own ideas and responses to the literature. I strongly urge you to think for yourself and base your papers on your own analysis. (Consider using the library early in the semester for academic sources and inspiration. It has a lot of books! Going there may be an enlightening experience.) The ASK Center is also available to help you.

Use MLA (Modern Language Association) style for documentation. To quote from the work itself—the primary or secondary source—place the page or line number in parentheses after the quote. Use page numbers for prose, line numbers for poetry. For example: In “Life in the Iron-Mills,” Rebecca Harding Davis creates an atmosphere of gloom. As the story opens, the sky before morning is “muddy, flat, immovable” (2411). Place the author’s last name in the parentheses if the source of the quoted material is unclear. For instance: Bell Hooks write, “To speak then when one was not spoken to was a courageous act” (73). Or: “To speak then when one was not spoken to was a courageous act” (Hooks 73).

Remember that quotations are most effective when brief and few. You should have a reason to quote. You should not quote long passages or material that would be just as effective in your own words.

All secondary material—including **words and ideas**—must be documented. Documentation means putting quotation marks around words you are quoting and indicating whose words these are. (University policy mandates a failing grade for any plagiarized work—whether it be in the form of phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas.)

Each paper should have a controlling idea—a **thesis**. A thesis statement should appear in the first or second paragraph. It need not be formally stated as in—”The purpose of this paper is to . . .”–

but it should indicate what you intend to accomplish. Your paper should offer more than a plot summary.

### **Finding a thesis**

First, select a play that interests you. (If you didn't like it the first time you read it, why spend time rereading it and reading about it?) Your paper will reflect a critical approach to the play—such as feminist, psychological, Marxist, or formalist, etc. Whatever approach you take, you'll want to consider the theme(s) of the play you are analyzing. Your purpose in the paper is to contribute to the reader's fuller understanding of the play—possibly to offer an interpretation of the ambiguities and subtleties of literature and language—but at any rate to point out something about the piece that interests you.

Try to avoid the obvious in developing a thesis. Consider the following thesis on the poet Robert Frost: "Frost often writes about nature in his poetry." This is not a good thesis because anyone reading the poems easily realizes this fact. It is not a claim that anyone would deny. It doesn't offer the reader any insight. But it's a beginning. The next step is to focus more narrowly. You may find it helpful to ask yourself some questions about the work. For example, "What philosophical ideas do Frost's nature poems reveal?" Or, "How does Frost modulate his tone in the nature poems?" Or, "What use does Frost make of dialogue in the nature poems?" Asking questions such as these will allow you to use what is self-evident to develop a more interesting thesis. The point is that good essays often don't start with intricate ideas, but develop through the writer's sensitive use of the obvious.

There is a Selected Bibliography in your text on pages 2021-34. Additionally, there is an overview of Shakespearean criticism (pages 27-54) explaining some of the major critical approaches to examining the plays. All secondary sources should be from the

### **Presentation**

With a partner, present a 15 minute presentation on one of the topics listed below. You should prepare a power point presentation and provide the class with a handout. The grade will be shared. Possible topics:

- (1) Elizabethan clothing
- (2) outsiders: witches, criminals, and vagabonds
- (3) travel and exploration
- (4) military
- (5) degree and rank in Elizabethan England
- (6) houses and furnishings
- (7) falconry and hunting of deer and other animals
- (8) food, alehouses, taverns, ordinaries
- (9) music
- (10) dance
- (11) Elizabethan money
- (12) London: city wall, aldermen and lord mayor, lord mayor's show and other spectacles, guilds
- (13) the plague in London, especially in 1563-64, 1592, 1599, and 1603
- (14) marriage arrangements and customs

(15) village and countryside: village fields, manorial court, village common and enclosure question, field crops, work animals

(16) education

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