

RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
School of American & International Studies
LITR 244-01: Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare with a Difference

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Office Hours: MR 3:30-5:00

Term: Spring 2011
Class Hours: MR 2-3:30pm
Location: B-124
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Catalog Course Description:

Open to all students who wish to develop greater understanding and critical appreciation of Elizabethan theater practices, Shakespeare's development as a dramatist, and his contributions to the development of the western imagination. Lectures and discussions will emphasize the treatment of Shakespeare's plays as text and script. The course will include the viewing and discussion of key 20th century expositions of Shakespeare's plays through cinematic and video media.

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This course aims to familiarize students with the works of Shakespeare and his inheritors through an exploration of four plays (*Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and their varied afterlives. The focus of the course will be "Shakespeare with a Difference," meaning that we will examine 1) how cultural difference is represented in these plays and 2) how various cultures have interacted with early modern texts that differ quite radically (historically and geographically) from their own. We will begin the course by looking at early modern notions of authorship as they relate to performance and printing practices. Next, we will read *Titus Andronicus* as we interrogate how its stage history has variously performed its characters' national, racial and gendered identities. We will read and discuss the complicated nature of using Shakespeare on pages, stages and screens in order to "perform identity." Are these performed identities Shakespeare's? Are they ours? Are they attempts to represent (and thereby domesticate) selves radically other than our selves? Building on this idea of "performing identity" through Shakespeare, we will move on to look at *Othello*. After surveying some of Shakespeare's sources, we will consider the play's afterlife, particularly as it was performed in the minstrel shows of the nineteenth century. After dealing with *Othello*, we will engage with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as we discuss the cultural uses of comedy as a genre and humor as a vehicle for critique. Finally, we will take a look at Shakespeare's late romance, *The Tempest*, a play taken up by many in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a metaphor for colonialism. We will end by reading two texts that refigure Shakespearean characters and themes in contemporary, international, intercultural performance contexts (Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* and Kalyan Ray's *Eastwards*). We will pay close attention to the aesthetic and political implications of such appropriations.

Course Goals: In this course, students will learn about Shakespeare's cultural and historical context; they will also learn how this context has been adapted and revised in subsequent eras (through various media). Students will become familiar with early modern printing practices and how these shape our contemporary, multimedia reception of Shakespeare's plays. Students will also consider the differences between Shakespeare on the stage, the page and the screen. Furthermore, students will be able to articulate, in developed prose, how these differences make a difference in the globalized world with which our students participate.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes: Students will learn a series of 30 literary terms and figures (e.g. iambic pentameter, zeugma, apostrophe, soliloquy, colonialism). Students will learn historical background information about the early modern world (e.g. theatrical conventions, religious conventions, social conventions, aesthetic conventions). Students will be exposed to and become familiar with various methodological approaches to the study of literature (e.g. character criticism, new historical criticism, performance criticism, postcolonial criticism, feminist criticism, Marxist criticism and poststructuralist criticism). Students will illustrate mastery of readings, concepts and terms through regular quizzes. Students will also demonstrate their familiarity with key concepts through their performance on a midterm and a final exam. Students will illustrate their ability to synthesize these ideas with research of appropriate materials (i.e. information literacy) through regular essay writing (both online and on paper). Finally, students will also show their understanding of Shakespeare's texts through performance—either live or through edited video.

Experiential Component: This course will include a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom. It is this component that is too often missing from Shakespeare courses. Students are required to participate in the performance of a scene from one of the plays we study. These performances may be either live or digital. Performances and videos will require *at least* five hours of preparation. Acting/Editing tutorials/workshops will be offered at times outside of class. There will also be a short screening/performance that all students are required to attend. This exercise will require a short, reflective write-up.

Required Texts:

- William Shakespeare. The Arden Edition (3rd Series) of *Titus Andronicus*
- William Shakespeare. Bedford/St. Martin's editions of *Othello* and *The Tempest*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (recent editions)
- Aimé Césaire. *Une Tempête*.
- Kalyan Ray, *Eastwords* (students must purchase **online**)
- Students are required to read, **print**, annotate, and bring to class, all articles uploaded to **Moodle**.

Participation/Attendance: This class will not be possible without your participation. Unlike some courses, the success of this course depends on your contributions, your labor, and your perspective. Each class meeting will cover a wide range of material. The lessons of this course build cumulatively, so any absence threatens to quickly push you far behind. Students should come to class having printed out and read all required reading. Students should take notes while actively and courteously listening to and engaging with the professor and their peers. Any student discovered to be off-task (as determined by the professor) will be *marked absent*. Using technology to virtually exit the class will always constitute an *absence*. Coming to class after I've taken role or leaving before the class is over will constitute an *absence*. Students can miss two classes with no questions asked. A third absence lowers the student's grade (by 1/2 a grade, 5%). A student absent four times in one semester cannot earn higher than a C+ (79%). If a student is absent five times, s/he automatically fails the course. **Please** do not e-mail me about your attendance. There are **no excused absences** in college (you are **already excused for two absences**), so do not offer "notes" from doctors, lawyers or parents. College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observance.

Papers: No late papers will be accepted. As Hamlet tells us, “The readiness is all.” Your essays need not be perfect, but I do expect them to be on time. If you are struggling with a project, let me know **in advance**, and we can arrange an extension (**really, please just ask**). All papers are to be typed and formatted according to the most recent MLA guidelines: <http://www.mla.org/>. Students may also use the Chicago Style. See the Chicago Manual of Style for the most recent guidelines: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

For additional help in writing papers, I encourage you to visit our **Center for Academic Success**. **Amanda Lentino** and **Caitlin Vogel** have both taken and done very well in my course. I recommend that you see them if they’re available. The CAS’ helpful website can be found here: <http://ww2.ramapo.edu/academics/cas/>.

For assistance/guidance in writing papers for literature courses, you can also use the following helpful link:

<http://phobos.ramapo.edu/majors/literature/homeEssaysLitCourses.htm>

Plagiarism: ‘Plagiarism’, etymologically, means *kidnapping*. Do not steal the brainchildren of others. Students who engage in plagiarism will suffer the consequences set forth by the college. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, see one of your instructors, a tutor, or go visit this training module offered by our library:

http://library.ramapo.edu/captivate_tutorials/citation/citation.htm

This course will be powered by **TurnItIn.com**’s plagiarism detection technology.

Note: This course follows standard Ramapo College policy for Electronic Forms of Communication, Academic Integrity and Students with Disabilities. For details, please refer to the Academic Review Committee Website at <http://ww2.ramapo.edu/arc/>.

Disabilities/Accommodations: If you feel you might need any accommodations in order to succeed in this course, please let me know privately as soon as possible. Also, you should contact the Office of Specialized Services at 201.684.7514 (voice), 201.684.7092 (TTY), or oss@ramapo.edu (email).

Requirements/Grades

Your performance in this course (and your experience of this course) will be assessed through course blogs, class discussion, regular quizzes, an essay, a midterm (with an essay component), a performance, and a final exam (with an essay component). Your weighted grade in the course will be determined according to the following schema:

Essay:	10%	Performance Project:	10%
Midterm+ Essay:	25%	Quizzes:	10%
Final + Essay	35%	(class/blog) Participation:	10%

Course Blog: There will be an online component to this course. We will be utilizing Moodle. You can logon to Moodle here: <https://moodle.ramapo.edu/> Students will be required to regularly post comments and feedback through this site’s forum. I will also use this site to post readings, make announcements and give student feedback.

Course Satisfactions: GE-TOPICS ARTS AND HUMANITIES, MJ-INTL-Area Studies-Europe, MJ-INTL-Intl Comparative 'West, MJ-LITR-Litr Prior To 1800

PROSPECTIVE SCHEDULE: *(subject to change at the professor's discretion)*

Week Zero: Course Introduction

1/20 M: Introduction to Course

Week One: Reinventing Notions of Authorship

Bristol, M. "Shakespeare: the Myth"
Lakoff, G./Johnson, H. *Metaphors We Live By* (excerpt)
Barthes, R. "Death of the Author"

1/24 M: Introductions/Intentional Fallacy/Authenticity

1/27 R: Introductions/Metaphoricity/The Author Function

Week Two: Different Shakespeares, Shakespeare and Difference

Shakespeare, W. *Titus Andronicus* (Acts I & II)
Palfrey, S. excerpt from *Doing Shakespeare* (Intro/Ch.1)

1/31 M: Shakespeare's Self-differing Corpus/Palfrey

2/3 R: Elizabethan Representations of Rome/Shakespeare "Means By" Rome

Week Three: Performing the Other

Shakespeare, W. *Titus Andronicus* (Acts III)
Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words* (Lectures I-IV)

2/7 M: Performativity

2/10 R: Citing Early Modern Notions of Self and Other

Week Four: From Ancient to Early Modern: Italy's "Renaissance"

Shakespeare, W. *Titus Andronicus* (Act IV-V)
Quinn, A. *Figures of Speech*

2/14 M: Finish *Titus*/The Italian Renaissance, Neoplatonism and Early Racism

2/17 R: *Figures of Speech*

Week Five: Un-Mooring Origins

Shakespeare, W. *Othello* (Acts I & II)
al-Wazzan, H.
(Africanus, J.L.) “Description of Africa” (excerpt)
Cinthio *Hecatommithi* (excerpt)

2/21 M: *Othello*’s Historical “Origins”/Early Modern Moors

2/24 R: Travel Narratives and Problems in Historiography

Paper One Due

First Acting/Video Editing Workshop

Week Six: Reinventing Othello & Race

Shakespeare, W. *Othello* (Act III, IV, & V)

2/28 M: Race, Structure and Signification

3/3 R: Film Screenings: Excerpts from Orson Welles’ *Othello* (1952), Laurence Olivier’s *Othello* (1965) Janet Suzman’s *Othello* (1987); Jeffrey Sax’ *Othello* (2001), Nelson’s *O* (2001) and Bhardwaj’s *Omkara* (2006); Fred Wilson’s *Speak of Me As I Am* (2003)

Second Acting/Video Editing Workshop

Week Seven: *Othello* and the Minstrel Tradition

Lott, E. *Love & Theft* (excerpt)

Rice, T.D. *Otello: A Burlesque Opera*

Do Mar, A. *Desdemonum: An Ethiopian Burlesque, in Three Scenes*

3/7: M: *Othello* and Minstrelsy: Representing “Authentic” Blackness

3/10 R: **Midterm Exam**

Week Eight: SPRING RECESS

Week Nine: Shakespearean Comedy

Shakespeare, W. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (whole play)

3/21 M: “Green Worlds,” Theatre, and the Reconstitution of Social Norms

3/24 R: Plays about Plays about Plays

Performance Event

Week Ten: Athenian Patriarchy and Amazonian Matriarchy

Pastor, G. & Howard, S. "Female Attachments and Family Ties" (selections)

3/28 M: Policing Female Desire

3/31 R: Elizabeth and the Amazons; Screening *A Dream in Hanoi* (2002)

Week Eleven: Tempestuous Subjects

Shakespeare, W. *The Tempest* (Acts I-III)

Strachey, W. from *True Reportory of the Wrack*

4/4 M: Strachey, *The Tempest*, and the New World

4/7 R: Screenings: Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991), Jarmann's *The Tempest* (1979), Wilcox' *Forbidden Planet* (1956), and Bender's *The Tempest* (1999)

Week Twelve: Ariel and Caliban Learn to Curse

Shakespeare, W. *The Tempest* (Acts IV-V)

Pastor, G. & Howard, S. "The Challenge of Postcolonial Criticism"

Hulme, F. & Hulme, P. "Nymphs and Reapers: The Discursive Con-texts, etc."

4/11 M: Masters and Servants; Colonialism and Its Discontents

4/14 R: Counternarratives from Imperialism to Empire

Week Thirteen: Adaptation and Intercultural Performance

Césaire, A. *Une Tempête*

Garland-Thomson, R. "The Cultural Work of American Freak Shows"

4/18 M: Négritude, Reappropriation and the Trickster Figure

4/21 R: Constructing and Displaying the Bodies of Monstrous Others (from Caliban to Kanye); Screening: Fusco & Gomez-Peña's *Couple in a Cage* (1993)

Week Fourteen: Shakespeare in India

Ray, K. *Eastwords*

4/25 M: Speaking Back to Mr. Willyum

4/28 R: Merchant & Ivory's *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965)

Week Fifteen: Final Exam Review

5/2 M: Finish Discussion of *Eastwords*; Exam Preparation

Week Sixteen: Final Exam