

English 311: Shakespeare

Professor Gretchen Schulz

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Texts:

I have ordered the Signet editions of the plays identified on the syllabus below. They are easy to handle, of course, and they are full of good supplementary material. You may use other scholarly editions of the plays if you wish (after you check out their scholarly quality with me), but just be aware that if you do so, you may have some trouble finding the pages of passages we discuss in class and you also may have to borrow a Signet occasionally in order to read any supplementary material which I might assign. Neither is an insuperable problem.

Class Schedule:

Aug. 29 introduction to the course
31 A Midsummer Night's Dream

[live performances of Love's Labour's Lost and The Merry Wives of Windsor by the Atlanta Shakespeare Company, the former on Friday, August 31, the latter on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday; attendance optional]

Sept. 03 LABOR DAY

[pizza and video of A Midsummer Night's Dream on Tuesday evening, September 4; viewing required then or on your own]

05 MND

07 MND

10 Much Ado About Nothing; student-facilitated discussion begins

[pizza and video of Much Ado About Nothing on Tuesday evening, September 11; viewing required then or on your own]

12 MAAN

14 MAAN

17 preparation for Scenes Day

19 preparation for Scenes Day

21 SCENES DAY (MND, MAAN)

24 The Merchant of Venice

26 MOV

28 MOV; FIRST ESSAY DUE (MND, MAAN, MOV)

Oct. 01 Henry the Fourth, Part One

[pizza and video of Henry the Fifth on Tuesday evening, October 2; viewing optional]

03 1HIV

05 1HIV

08-09 FALL BREAK

10 The Comedy of Errors
12 COE

[live performance of Richard the Third by the Georgia Shakespeare Festival Company, a production running from 10/11 through 11/5; attendance optional]

15 Twelfth Night
17 TN
19 TN

[live performance of The Comedy of Errors by the Oxford College theater program on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, October 18, 19, and 20; attendance required, preferably on Friday when there'll be a panel discussion]

22 Julius Caesar
24 JC
26 no class; SECOND ESSAY DUE (MOV, IHIV, COE, TN, JC)

[pizza and video of Macbeth on Sunday evening, October 28, or Monday evening, October 29; viewing optional]

29 Macbeth
31 M

[live performance of Macbeth by the Atlanta Shakespeare Company on Thursday evening, November 1; attendance required then or on your own]

Nov. 02 preparation for Scenes Day

05 Hamlet
07 H
09 SCENES DAY (TN, JC, M)

[pizza and video of Hamlet on Sunday evening, November 11, or Monday evening, November 12; attendance required then or on your own]

12 H
14 H
16 Othello

[live performance of The Complete Works of William Shakespeare by the Oxford Ensemble of Shakespearean Artists, on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday evening, November 15, 16, or 17; attendance required]

19 O

21-23 THANKSGIVING BREAK

26 King Lear
28 KL

[live performance of King John by the Atlanta Shakespeare Company on Thursday evening, November 29; attendance required then or on your own]

30 KL

[pizza and video of King Lear on Sunday evening, December 2; viewing optional]

Dec. 03 preparation for Scenes Day
05 The Tempest

[pizza and video of The Forbidden Planet on Wednesday evening, December 5, or Thursday evening, December 6; viewing optional]

07 T

10 last day of class; SCENES DAY (H, O, KL)

[pizza and video of either Throne of Blood or Ran, the wonderful Japanese versions of Macbeth and King Lear, your choice, on Monday evening, December 10; viewing optional]

12 reading day; THIRD ESSAY DUE (JC, H, O, M, KL)

17 possible MAKE-UP ESSAY due on any of the plays about which you have not yet written

19 FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, 9:00-12:00

Course Requirements:

The successful completion of English 311 will require the following of each student enrolled in the course:

1. close reading of the plays assigned;
2. viewing of four live productions of the plays; viewing of three film productions of the plays; viewing of other live or film productions of the plays or related work will be optional;
3. viewing of scenes from the plays assigned, archived on our Shakespeare website;
4. frequent intelligent contribution to class discussion of the plays;
5. facilitation of class discussion of the plays three times during the semester;
6. participation in presentation of scenes from the plays three times during the semester;
7. submission of three 1000-word critical and/or creative essays on the plays at intervals throughout the semester;
8. taking of a final exam to demonstrate the analytical skills developed during the semester and the attendant thorough-going familiarity with the plays assigned.

Course Objectives:

The primary objective of the course is enhanced appreciation of the work of the man who deserves his reputation as the greatest playwright in the world. By the end of the semester, each student will have studied up to a dozen of Shakespeare's comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances in a depth sufficient to reveal the wonders of their artistic achievement and their philosophical and psychological implications (for their own time and for all time). Each student also will have had a chance to discover how other students in the class have responded to the same material, through discussions evoking and modeling that rich variety of response which is one of the greatest pleasures of work with these plays, this playwright. Opportunities to write about the plays will further each student's understanding and enjoyment of them. And numerous opportunities to see full-length productions of the plays, both on stage and on film, along with scenes from the plays archived in our Shakespeare website, will do the same, as will three opportunities to stage (and act in) scenes from the plays before the members of the class.

Besides promoting enhanced appreciation of Shakespeare and his plays, the course will also promote the larger purposes of the liberal arts education, enabling each student enrolled to develop those skills deemed particularly important in such education, namely his or her ability to read closely and analytically,

to think critically and creatively, and to write persuasively, selecting, organizing, and presenting evidence sufficient to support meaningful theses in clear, correct, and effective prose, acknowledging any sources used with appropriate documentation. Class discussion will develop each student's ability to articulate his or her views aloud. And the opportunity to facilitate class discussion will develop each student's ability to encourage others to express their views, as well, so all may collaborate in a mutual effort to achieve their objectives or goals. All of these skills should prove enormously useful in the rest of the student's academic endeavors and in his or her career, and all of them should enrich the student's life immeasurably, too.

Policy on Attendance:

You may have two absences with no penalty (though you will be considered responsible for work done or due in class on any day you miss for any reason and responsible for informing yourself about any assignments or announcements made on days which you miss). Absences three and four will count one point each off of your final grade in the course. Absences five and six will count two points each off. Further absences will count three and one third points each off of your final grade. Only significant illness, major emergency, or required religious observance will excuse an absence. You should inform me about the latter ahead of time.

Policy on Late or Missing Work:

Only significant illness or major emergency will excuse late written work. Work whose lateness is unexcused will lose one letter grade for each calendar day it is late. After four days, unexcused late work will not be accepted at all and will receive a zero. And note that such a zero may not be made up with a make-up essay. Only essays actually submitted and graded may be made up with a make-up essay.

A student who misses scheduled facilitation of class discussion and who has a valid excuse for doing so will be allowed to make up that facilitation at a later date. (Note, though, that a student who knows he or she will miss facilitation should make every effort to recruit another facilitator to take his or her place.) A student who lacks a valid excuse for a missed facilitation will receive an F in that portion of the class participation grade (see below).

A student who misses scheduled participation in a scene or scenes from one of the plays and who has a valid excuse for doing so will be required to write a short essay on the scene or scenes involved to make up for the missed presentation. A student who has no valid excuse for missing a Scenes Day presentation may not write such an essay and will receive an F in that portion of the coursework (see below).

Note that students are expected to follow instructions asking them to meet with their partners to prepare for facilitation of class discussion and for Scenes Days. Students will be asked to report (on their honor) whether they have met as required or not. Anyone who has missed such a meeting without a valid excuse for doing so will have his or her grade for that portion of the coursework penalized (see below).

Determination of Final Grade:

You will be graded (in part) on three essays (of a minimum of 1000 words each). You must submit these essays in accordance with the schedule of due dates indicated on the syllabus. Each of these essays will be worth 18% of your grade in the course.

Should you be dissatisfied with your performance on any one of these essays, you may submit a fourth essay, a make-up essay, on any play we have read about which you have not already written. This make-up essay will be due (as indicated) on Monday, December 17, by 4:30 p.m. I will count your best three essays towards your final grade.

The course will conclude with a final exam which will be worth another 18% of your grade.

Another 18% of your grade will be based on the frequency and quality of your on-going class participation and the quality of your facilitation of class discussion upon the occasions when you are required to facilitate.

A final 10% of your grade will reflect the enthusiasm and intelligence of your participation in the presentation of scenes from the plays to the rest of the class.

You may also earn up to two points of extra credit (to be added to your average in the course) by seeing live or film productions of Shakespeare plays or Shakespeare-related plays beyond those required for the course. Some live productions (beyond those required) will be available to you in the area, and film versions of most of the plays we read and of related material are available on campus or will be made available. You may also rent film versions on your own. You will earn 1/2 point for each production you see in any form. Just keep track of what you see (and when) and turn in a list at the end of the semester.

Note that throughout the semester and at the end I will be assigning grades based on the plus/minus grading system.

Note, too, that the Honor Code will apply to every assignment in this class as well as to your statements that you have or have not met with your partners to prepare for facilitation of class discussion and Scenes Days as required. Your name on an assignment or statement will constitute acknowledgement that you have done that assignment or made that statement in accordance with the dictates of the Honor Code.