2014

425 525-01 Shakespeare

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What materials do I need?

Please bring to class the text required by the daily reading schedule, or as directed.

What are the goals for this course?
In this class we will engage a wide range of Shakespearean texts, including drama from four genres (comedy, tragedy, history, and romance). The course will emphasize cultural, historical, and philosophical elements in the texts, focusing especially on problems associated with reading, interpretation, and performance. We will consider characters’ interpretive practices (reading texts, reading one another), characters’ performances (to one another, to an audience), and our own reading and performative practices. We will also use the works as a reflective tool for strengthening your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Discussions will play a key role in each class session and will be supplemented with presentations by the instructor (as well as by other class members) on major topics related to Shakespeare’s life, the sixteenth century, and Renaissance literary genres, tropes, and language.

What assignments will I complete this semester?
A student’s grade in this class will be based on the successful completion of the following assignments:

for undergraduate students—

- textual quizzes, occasional short writing 10%
- thesis exercise (2) 5%+5%
- group presentation of a play/discussion 30%
- final exam 15%
- final essay 25%
- participation 10%

for graduate students—

- textual quizzes, occasional short writing 5%
- thesis exercise (2) 5%+5%
- group presentation of a play/discussion 30%
- final exam 15%
- final essay 25%
- participation 5%
- presentation on scholarly article 10%

What policies should I follow for written work?
All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the scheduled day. Any work turned in after this time will be considered late and will be lowered by 1/3rd of a letter grade. For each additional day late, assignments will continue to be lowered by 1/3rd of a letter grade. Completion of all formal essays and exams is required for a student to pass the course successfully. Assignment sheets for the formal essays will describe more explicitly their specific requirements, including grading criteria and format requirements. Formal essays should be typed and double-spaced.
How will attendance affect my final grade?

Attendance is expected by all students for all classes. If you find that you need to miss a class due to what we could both agree is an emergency, contact me via email or by phone as soon as possible. You will still be responsible for all assigned work and material covered during class, so it is important that we are both clear on how you will meet these responsibilities. Three absences are set aside for emergencies, and these will not count against your grade. A fourth absence will result in your entire final grade being lowered by a third of a letter grade, and each additional absence will result in your final grade being lowered by an additional third of a letter grade. Be aware that excessive absenteeism will result in a student failing the course. Excessive lateness to class may also result in an absence being recorded.

What does participation and preparation mean for this class?

Participation in this class, especially discussions, requires active contributions on your part. Much of our work will be collaborative in nature, and each student is expected to have completed all readings and writing assignments before class. Completion of readings means having engaged the material carefully and thoughtfully enough to participate meaningfully in class activities. You should come to class having formed questions about and reactions to the texts, as well as having prepared analytical comments to offer, whether in front of the whole class, in in-class writing, or during small group work.

What do grades mean in this class?

Assignments will be graded with the following letter grades:

- **A+** 97-100%  
- **A** 93-96%  
- **A-** 90-92%  
- **B+** 87-89%  
- **B** 83-86%  
- **B-** 80-82%  
- **C+** 77-79%  
- **C** 73-76%  
- **C-** 70-72%  
- **D+** 67-69%  
- **D** 63-66%  
- **D-** 60-62%  
- **F** 59% and below

- **A** work shows exceptional mastery of course materials and exemplary analytical and presentation skills.  
- **B** work shows good, thoughtful understanding of course materials and above-average analytical work.  
- **C** work shows adequate, though not distinctive, understanding of course materials and average analytical work.  
- **D** work shows poor understanding of course materials and incompetent critical analysis.  
- **F** work shows no serious engagement with course materials or analytical tasks.

What will the final exam in the course cover?

Occasional in-class quizzes will allow you to show your mastery of the assigned readings (characters, places, and plot points), as well as the historical, literary, and linguistic information we have covered. The final exam will cover similar material, along with essay questions that ask you to engage our class texts critically and in conversation with one another. Questions on the exam may also include identification and discussion of passages, multiple choice and short answers related to characters, places, and plot points, and definitions of terms. Some textual material on the exam may not have been discussed explicitly in class, so it is important to complete all readings for the assigned days.

Why should I be aware of Xavier’s plagiarism policies?

Presenting others’ writing as your own will result in an F for the course as well as notification of the Dean. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of any written or electronic material or service in any way. Some of the writing in this class asks you to analyze texts without the use of secondary sources (your own analysis), and other writing will require you to bring in (and to cite) outside sources. We will discuss methods of citing sources in class, but if you have any questions concerning the university’s policy on plagiarism, please see me. The difference between quality research and plagiarism can sometimes be as simple as the clarity and quality of one’s citations: making clear where your ideas come from. Building on others’ ideas is fundamental to effective academic scholarship, but providing clear acknowledgment of those ideas is crucial. If you have any questions concerning the university’s policy on plagiarism, please see me and take advantage of the “Preventing Plagiarism” tutorial available at the xututor website.
What other resources are available to aid my success in 425?

I am happy to meet with you to discuss your work and the course in general, whether this is regarding your brainstorming ideas, the readings, or the writing you are doing. If my office hours are not convenient for you, please email me and we will set up another time to meet. I also encourage students to make use of the resources at the Writing Center. The Center offers free tutors who can help you at any stage of the writing process. They will not, nor will I, simply proofread an essay, however. If there are questions you have concerning grammar or technical presentation of your writing, you are welcome to ask me; I can review key points and direct you to effective handbooks. You can call 745-2875 to set up an appointment with the Writing Center.