COURSE OVERVIEW. This course is an introduction to the study of Shakespeare designed for upper-level English majors and minors. We will approach Shakespeare’s plays through the lens of New Historicism, a theoretical/methodological approach developed by Stephen Greenblatt and others in the 1980s and still influential in the study of Shakespeare and Early Modern literature. The theme of the course is “staging gender and politics.” After considering Shakespeare’s world and theatre, we shall use a close reading of several plays and New Historicist essays by Greenblatt and others to explore such questions as these: How does Shakespeare perceive gender? How does he perceive politics? How do gender and politic relate to each other? Is violence inherent in politics? In gender relations? As we work through the plays, careful attention will be paid to the different contexts – genre (comedy, tragedy, romance), Early Modern history and culture, modern critical and performance traditions, and current teaching issues – in which the topics of gender and politics occur.
Syllabus

Dr. Norman Boyer: N427, (773) 298-3233
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Learning Goals

– you will become familiar with several Shakespeare plays from a variety of genres
– you will gain an understand of the importance of performances as interpretations of play texts
– you will investigate the role of gender and politics in these plays and to consider what those roles tell us about the cultural, social, and political contexts in which the plays were written and originally performed
– you will gain an understanding of how critical works from New Historicism and related critical approaches can help us in this investigation and of how those works differ from critical works following different critical approaches
– you will gain analytical and research skills for interpreting literary and critical texts
– you will further your development of informed habits of thought, research, discussion, and writing

Specific 300-level Guidelines, Research Levels, and Requirements Met for New English Major

– Guideline #1: Study of a single author: Shakespeare
– Guideline #4: Emphasis on a specific contemporary theory/method: New Historicism
  Research Level #4: Demonstrate the ability to formulate the basis of critical controversy and/or disagreement in the sources on a topic, and to apply that disagreement in the exploration of a topic.
– E-portfolio: The two papers from this course are to be included in your English E-portfolio.

Texts

-- Stephen Greenblatt, Shakespearean Negotiations (U of California P)
-- Gordon Harvey, Writing with Sources (Hackett)
-- Additional readings available on Blackboard

Course Policies

1. Class attendance is required. If you must miss, email me first. You have one “free” absence; more--without prior consultation with me-- will result in the lowering of the final grade. However, up to five absences can be made up by submitting a 2-page paper on some aspect of the work being discussed for each class that you miss. Retellings of the work are not acceptable; you must discuss an issue related to the work. Use the study questions and our major general themes for ideas.
2. Class begins promptly at 9:30 and ends at 10:50. You are expected to be here on time and remain for the entire period. Leaving the classroom during class is extremely rude and insulting to the instructor and your classmates.

3. No late work will be accepted after 10 am Thursday May 10, except for late final exams, which will not be accepted after 10 am Monday May 14.

4. I will give incompletes only by student request and only for verifiable illnesses or other personal or family emergencies at the end of the semester.

5. Plagiarism (failing to give credit for the words, ideas, or images of others) will not be tolerated. You will fail the paper and most likely the class. Your case may also be sent to the department and/or the University for possible further disciplinary action, which can be as severe as expulsion from the University. See Writing with Sources.

5. Use the *MLA Handbook* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* for essays. See *Writing with Sources*.

6. Papers and take-home exams must be submitted as Word documents, either as attachments or in some other manner.

**Course Requirements and Grade**

- 20% *Titus paper*: a short paper (4-5 pages) linking *Titus Andronicus* and critical essays
- 30% *Course paper*: a paper of 10-12 pages utilizing sources, on a topic approved by the instructor
- 15% *Midterm exam*: an take-home essay
- 15% *Final exam*: passages to be commented on
- 10% *Discussion leading*: each class member will lead one or two discussions of a critical essay
- 10% *Other*: short informal writing assignments (generally brief in-class writing); class participation–individual and collaborative

**Schedule of Readings (listed) and Major Assignments (underlined and bold):**

1. 1/9  Introduction to the course
    1/11  *Titus Andronicus* act 1; *Norton Shakespeare (NSh)* 1-24

2. 1/16  *Titus Andronicus* acts 2-5; *NSh* 30-41
    1/18  Mullaney, “The Place of the Stage” (Blackboard [Bb]); *NSh* 3281-3301

    1/25  *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, acts 1-2; *NSh* 41-57

4. 1/30  *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, acts 3-5; *NSh* 57-65
    2/1  Dent, “Imagination in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; Montrose, “Shaping Fantasies” (both Bb)

5. 2/6  *No class–Professional Development Day.*
    *Titus paper (4-5 pages) due as Word file by 5 pm Tuesday 2/6*
    2/8  *Henry IV Part 1*, acts 1-2
6  2/13  Henry IV Part 1, acts 3-5  
    Greenblatt, “Invisible Bullets” (ShN 21-65); Kastan, “‘The King Hath Many Marching in His Coats’” (Bb)  

7  2/20  Twelfth Night, act 1; Jones and Stallybrass, “Introduction: Fashion, Fetishism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Europe” (Bb)  

8  2/27  Greenblatt, “Fiction and Friction” (ShN 66-93); Davis, “Women on Top” (Bb)  

9  3/6  Hamlet, acts 1-2; Mack, “The World of Hamlet (Bb), pp. 191-196 (end of first full paragraph)  

10  3/20  Hamlet, 4.5 to end; Mack, pp. 203-213  
    Greenblatt, “Speaking with the Dead”; Showalter, “Representing Ophelia” (both Bb).  
    **Midterm essay due as Word file.**  

11  3/27  Othello, act 1; NSh 25-29  
    3/29  Othello, acts 2-3  

12  4/3  Othello, acts 4-5  
    4/5  No Class – Easter Holiday  

13  4/10  Greenblatt, “The Improvisation of Power”; Newman, “‘And wash the Ethiop white’: Femininity and the Monstrous in Othello” (both Bb)  
    4/12  King Lear, acts 1-2 (read the conflated version beginning on p. 2479)  

14  4/17  King Lear, acts 3-4; NSh 65-76  
    4/19  King Lear, act 5; Calderwood, “Creative Uncreation in King Lear” (Bb)  

15  4/24  Strier, “Faithful Servants: Shakespeare’s Praise of Disobedience” (Bb)  
    4/26  The Tempest, acts 1-3; Thomas, “Conjuring and the Magical Tradition” (Bb)  

16  5/1  The Tempest, acts 4-5;  
    **Course paper (10-12 pages) due as Word file by 9 am Monday May 7.**  

    **Final Exam: due as Word file by 10 am Thursday May 10.**