Syllabus for ENGL 157: Introduction to Shakespeare

COUPLES AND FAMILIES
IN COMEDY, TRAGEDY, AND ROMANCE

Section 01: Tue/Thu, 9:30-10:50 am (L 306)

COURSE OVERVIEW. This course is an introduction to Shakespeare designed for students who are not English majors but who have perhaps read one or two plays in high school, seen some interesting film versions (or maybe only Shakespeare in Love or O), and want to read and see more. We will focus on the plays as literature to be read and discussed, as theatrical scripts for realization in a performance setting, especially in recent and classic film versions of the plays, and as reflections of Renaissance/Early Modern culture.

This course satisfies 3 hours of the University core requirement in literature and fine arts. PLEASE NOTE: this course does NOT satisfy the English major Shakespeare requirement or any other English major requirement. It does count toward the English minor and the School of Education English concentration.

Syllabus

1. Objectives. The principal objectives of the course are as follows:
   - to introduce you to Shakespeare and the drama of the English Renaissance, via the topic of couples and families in six Shakespeare plays
   - to engage you in thoughtful reflection and discussion of the issues raised by the plays

2. Books. There are seven set books:

3. Attendance. The work we do in class, including lecture and participation, is essential for this course. Attendance will be taken at every class. “Absent” means not attending at all or attending for less than 30 minutes. “Half absent” means you attend for only half the period. Six absences, for whatever reason, will result in your grade being reduced by one letter (e.g., from A to B). Additional absences will result, at my discretion, in your grade being reduced further, up to and including an F.

4. Code of conduct. Every member of the class is expected to enter fully into the spirit of the course and to comply with the following code of conduct:
   - Avoid absences.
   - If you miss a class, in whole or in part, try to let me know in advance. Do not wait until the next class before you get the notes and handouts. Obtain them from another member of the class, or ask me for any handouts you missed.
   - Arrive in class punctually and remain until the end of the period.
   - Be attentive and alert throughout the period.
   - Treat everyone in the classroom with civility and respect.
   - Refrain from private conversation – even if it is about the works on the syllabus – and from any other activity that interferes with the concentration of anyone in the room or disturbs the class as a whole. (Please deep all mobile phones, pagers, alarms, etc, turned off in class.)
   - Do the homework and be ready to discuss the assigned readings and study questions in class.
   - Carry out all classroom exercises and contribute constructively to discussion.
   - Hand in assignments on time.
   - Stay in touch with me and with the course.
   - Keep current with all information and instructions pertaining to the course, including possible changes to this syllabus and schedule.

5. Formal assignments. There will be three take-home papers: the first based on *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*, the second based on *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and the third based on *Othello* and *The Winter’s Tale*. There will also be an optional project, which will be described near the middle of the course. In addition, there will be a Blackboard posting and responses to two other postings for each play. There will be no midterm or final exam.
6. **Grade.** Your grade for the course will reflect the standard scale: A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = 0-59%. The grade will be calculated as follows: 25% for each of the three papers; 15% for postings; 10% for participation and general conduct (see point 4). If you do the optional project, the overall grade as just described becomes 80% of the course grade, and the project counts for the remaining 20%. Furthermore, excessive absences and academic dishonesty will reduce your grade (see points 3 and 7).

7. **Academic dishonesty.** We can all learn from each other, and you are encouraged to discuss the course with fellow students and with others. However, in the final analysis, the work on which you are graded must be your work. It is University policy to prohibit all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism: taking credit for someone else’s ideas or work. This policy applies not only to the student who is academically dishonest, but also to anyone in the course who knowingly aids and abets such dishonesty. Any violation of this policy will result in an F for the assignment in question. Two such violations will result in an F for the course.

8. **Contact.** My office is N-427, on the fourth floor of the N wing. Office tel: 773-298-3233 (24-hour voicemail). Email: boyer@sxu.edu. Web page: http://english.sxu.edu/boyer. Office hours are Monday and Tuesday, 2:30-4:00. I am available at other times by appointment.

**Schedule**
(subject to change)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Start - End</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>preliminaries and introduction</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Aug 31, Sep 2</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 7, Sep 9</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 14, Sep 16</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sep 21, Sep 23</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sep 28, Sep 30</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 5, Oct 7</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 12, Oct 14</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 19, Oct 21</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 26, Oct 28</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 2, Nov 4</td>
<td>Othello</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 9, Nov 11</td>
<td>Othello</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 16, Nov 18</td>
<td>Othello</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 23, Nov 29</td>
<td>The Winter’s Tale</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Nov 30, Dec 2</td>
<td>The Winter’s Tale</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dec 7, Dec 9</td>
<td>course review</td>
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Blackboard posting due by midnight on the Wednesday before the underlined date; 2 responses to postings due by midnight Friday.

First paper due: Oct 7 (in class)
Second paper due: Nov 11 (in class)
Optional project due: Dec 7 (in class)
Third paper due: Dec 16 (12 noon in my office)

Class does not meet on November 25 (Thanksgiving)
SOME KEYS TO SUCCESS AS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT

From Jim Burke, School Smarts: The Four Cs of Academic Success (Heinemann, 2004, pp. 5, 13)
(The Four Cs are Commitment, Content, Competencies, and Capacity)

Academic “Habits of Mind” Needed to Succeed at the Postsecondary Level
From a joint report of the California Academic Senates, representing faculty from California community colleges, state colleges, and universities:

BROAD INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES
• Exhibit curiosity
• Experiment with new ideas
• See other points of view
• Challenge your own beliefs
• Engage in intellectual discussions
• Ask provocative questions
• Generate hypotheses
• Exhibit respect for other viewpoints
• Read with awareness of yourself and others

CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS
• Ask questions for clarification
• Be attentive in class
• Come to class prepared
• Complete assignments on time
• Contribute to class discussions

ADDITIONAL COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS
• Respect facts and information in situations where feelings and intuitions often prevail
• Be aware that rhetorics of argumentation and interrogation are calibrated to disciplines, purposes, and audiences
• Embrace the value of research to explore new ideas through reading and writing
• Develop a capacity to work hard and to expect high standards
• Show initiative and develop ownership of your education.

Two Kinds of Readers
(quoted by Burke from his own The Reader’s Handbook: A Student Guide for Reading and Learning, Great Source, 2002, p. 49)

There are two kinds of readers: active readers and passive readers. Passive readers let a writer’s words wash over them without giving much thought to what the words mean. As a result, passive readers can find themselves drowning in a sea of words. Active readers, on the other hand, take control of what they’re reading—from the very first page. They think about what a writer has to say, and at the same time they think about their own responses to the reading. Active reading means asking questions, agreeing and disagreeing, and applying what you’ve learned from reading to your own life. An active reader interacts with the writer.