

ENGH 322 / Spring 2012 / Robinson A 111

Robert Matz

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Required Text:

The Norton Shakespeare, ed. Greenblatt et al.

Course description:

Shakespeare wrote most of his comedies and histories during the same period, the last years of the 1590s and the first years of 1600s, but the two genres may seem very different: comedies are funny and fanciful, histories serious and realistic. We'll see in this course that Shakespeare's comedies and histories actually have a lot in common. The comedies speak to serious and real life concerns, while Shakespeare frequently conceives of history through the narrative patterns and concerns of comedy. In fact, one of Shakespeare's most famous comic characters, Falstaff, appears in both a comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and, where we'll meet him, in the Henry IV history cycle. In addition to these considerations of Shakespeare's genres and their significance, we'll also focus on careful close reading of the plays, on their language, on the social, political and cultural contexts in which they were produced, and on possibilities for performance. Toward our consideration of the plays in performance, we'll attend two professional theatrical productions, one of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and a second, very different one that bends tragedy into comedy: [Hamleccchino: Clown Prince of Denmark](#).

Course requirements:

Blackboard postings, quizzes, three exercises, attendance Shakespeare Theatre's [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) and at the Faction of Fools' [Hamleccchino: Clown Prince of Denmark](#), one essay, a midterm and a final.

Course Schedule

Date	Reading	Postings	Events
T Jan. 24	None		Course Introduction
R Jan. 26	None		Historical Introduction
T Jan. 31	Comedy of Errors, acts 1-3	A-B	
R. Feb. 2	Comedy of Errors, acts 4-5	C-D	

T Feb. 7	No reading		Discuss exercises
R Feb. 9	Two Gentleman of Verona, acts 1-2	E-F	
T Feb. 14	Two Gentleman of Verona, acts 3-4	G-H-I	
R Feb. 16	Two Gentleman of Verona, act 5	J-K-L	
See Two Gentlemen of Verona Feb. 16 @ 8:00 PM , 17 @ 8:00 PM, 18 @ 2:00 PM or @ 8:00 PM, 19 @ 2:00 PM or @ 7:30 PM			
T Feb. 21	No reading	M-N-O	Discuss Two Gentlemen Performance
R Feb. 23	Midsummer Night's Dream, acts 1-2	P-Q-R	
T Feb. 28	Midsummer Night's Dream, acts 3-4	S-T-U	1st exercise due by this date
R March 1	Midsummer Night's Dream, act 5	V-W X-Y-Z	
T March 6	Midterm		
R March 8	No class (if no snow days; credit for seeing Two Gentlemen of Verona and Hamlecchino: Clown Prince of Denmark)		
			Spring Break
T March 20	Measure for Measure, acts 1-2		
R March 22	Measure for Measure, acts, 3-4	A-B	
T March 27	Measure for Measure, act 5	C-D	2nd exercise due by this date

R March 29	Richard II, acts 1-2	E-F	
T April 3	Richard II, acts 3-4	G-H-I	
R April 5	Richard II, act 5	J-K-L	
T April 10	1 Henry IV, acts 1-2	M-N	
R April 12	1 Henry IV, acts 3-4	O-P	
T April 17	1 Henry IV, act 5; 2 Henry IV, act 5, scenes 3 to 5 only	Q-R-S	
R April 19	Henry V, acts 1-2	T-U	3rd exercise due by this date / Essay assigned
T April 24	Henry V, acts 3-4	V-W	
R April 26	Henry V, act 5	X-Y-Z	
See Hamlecchino: Clown Prince of Denmark Thursday April 26 @ 8pm, Friday April 27 @ 8pm, Saturday April 28 @ 2pm or Saturday April 28 @ 8pm			
T May 1	Discuss Hamlecchino		
R May 3	Course wrap up		Essay due

Course Assignments:

Exercises: Do 3 out of 5 of the following exercises. Each exercise should be 1 to 1 - 1/2 pages long (make sure your name, etc. takes up very little room at the top of page 1; a title isn't needed, but if you choose to provide one, no spacing down after it 1/3 of the page). You can do the exercises in any order and hand them in at any time. However, you must have one exercise done by Feb. 28, the second by March 27 and the third by April 19. You are welcome, however, to hand in your exercises before any of these dates (e.g., you could do all 3 exercises by Feb. 21, though I wouldn't recommend it). Because there is already a great deal of flexibility in these due dates, I will not accept a late exercise under any circumstances. E.g. if by Feb. 28 I don't receive a first exercise from you, and then you give me 3 exercises on March 1 I will only count you as having done 2 exercises, because you missed the deadline for the first.

Instructions are on line for each exercise; click on the relevant link below. Some of these assignments may be unfamiliar, so we will devote one class day (Feb. 9) to discussing how to approach them. In addition, I strongly suggest coming to see me if you have questions about how to proceed.

1. [Closereading](#)
2. [Textual cruxes or variations](#)
3. [Words, Words, Words](#)
4. [Reading Around](#)
5. [SparkNotes](#)

Blog Posts: Threads: Each student is responsible for two 250-300 word blog posts that make an argument about the text in order to initiate discussion about some aspect of it. Responsibility for these threads is designated by the first letter of your last name. See the schedule of readings above for your specific dates. This response should be posted on our [Coursekit class site](#) by 9:00 pm the day before the designated class.

Blog Posts: Comments Each student is responsible for 12 responses to the above. You must provide at least six responses by the beginning of spring break (Monday, March 12 @ 9 am). Responses can be to the original posting or to other responses about it. If you post after we've had a class on the particular text, you can also bring in class lecture or discussion, but make sure you are responding to the on line dialogue, not to class alone. Discussions will close one week after they start. Postings should be around 50 words--you don't need an extended argument, but "you're wrong" or "great point" will not qualify. Please treat fellow posters with the same respect and seriousness on line as you would in class.

Postings: Evaluation: I will evaluate postings--both originating threads and responses--based on your consistent and rich participation in the on line dialogue. I will not grade individual postings, however. Here is the scale I will use, based on 100 points total.

For each of 2 originating threads missed: -20 points

For each of 12 responses missed: - 4

For example, someone who missed no originating threads and 3 responses would score 88 or 88%, a B+. I reserve the right to adjust grades up or down based on the quality of what's posted.

Quizzes: There will be 10-14 in class quizzes, given at random. Quizzes cannot be made up. The quizzes will test that you've done the reading and achieved a basic understanding of it.

Essay: This course will have one 5-7 page essay, assigned on April 19 and due on May 3. The essay will allow you to write on a topic that encompasses 2 plays. I also want you to draw on and develop material from lectures.

Midterm: The midterm will test your knowledge of the plays and the ideas presented in class about them. It will cover all the reading up to spring break. If you do not consistently do the reading and come to class, you will have a hard time doing well on the midterm.

Final: The final will test your knowledge of the plays and the ideas presented in class about them. It will cover all the reading up to the end of class, and be given on Tuesday, May 15, from 10:30-1:15 p.m. If you do not consistently do the reading and come to class, you will have a hard time doing well on the final.

Here is how I will weight the assignments:

3 Exercises @ 6% = 18%

Postings = 12 % (see above for how grade is calculated)

Quizzes = 20% (based on points achieved/total points of all quizzes)

Essay 15 %

Midterm 15 %

Final 20 %

Course Policies

Late work (postings, exercises and essay): Since there is a lot of flexibility in the assignments for this course, I will not accept late postings or exercises. Late essays will be graded down one half grade for each day late. For serious circumstances come see me.

Class attendance: For many reasons, you will not do well in this class if you do not attend consistently.

Readings: Readings are due on the date listed. Come to class not only having read the assignment, but having reflected on it with curiosity and imagination. You will be a better reader if you always read with a pen or pencil in hand and annotate your text with questions and ideas. For this reason, electronic editions of texts should not be used. You do not need to use the Norton Shakespeare if you have another hard-copy, annotated edition.

While this class will be more heavily lecture-driven than many courses in the English major, we will have time in each class for questions and discussion. So come ready to talk as well as listen.

Email: Email is great for setting up meeting times and asking simple questions. However, please do not email about anything more complex, such as questions about an idea for an assignment (come to office hours) or why you can't complete an assignment (come to office hours). Anything more than a simple question should be handled in person or (in a pinch) on the phone.

Emailing formal written work: Please do not email me exercises or your essay (as attachments or otherwise), unless I have given you permission in advance to do so.

Electronic devices in class: You may use a laptop/tablet in class for the purpose of taking notes, if you okay it with me first. There is no reason to have phones out during class, and if I see one I will ask you to put it away. Please also turn off your cell phones before class.

Paper Standards:

Formal assignments (exercises and essays) should be typed with standard margins, spacing and type size. They should be carefully proofread and neatly presented. Coursekit blog postings

can be more informal (abbreviations, some proofing errors) as long as they remain readable and substantive in content.

Paper Helps:

I encourage you to come see me at my office hours or to make an appointment to see me. When we meet, try to have a draft of the paper you are working on. This will give us something more concrete to talk about. There is also available a [Writing Center](#) at Robinson A114 that can provide you with further individual attention to your writing. I encourage you to take advantage of this excellent facility.

I would also suggest that you give yourself plenty of time to work. Writing a paper at one sitting is, for most people, unpleasant, and the results are not likely to be satisfactory. Start early!

Plagiarism:

Since this class emphasizes the development of your own close reading and interpretive skills, you are not encouraged to consult secondary sources. If you do choose to look at such work, however, you must cite, using a standard citation format, all the articles, books or other sources that your own writing draws on, either directly or indirectly. Such sources include (but are not limited to) introductions to editions of the texts we're reading, any kind study aid or internet resources.

Also note that uncited sources will constitute plagiarism even if they ended up in your work without your conscious knowledge (e.g. you forgot you read the material; you confused your own notes with notes on a source), since part of the scholarly responsibility that comes with using secondary sources is keeping track of which words or ideas were yours and which came from a source. If you do not wish to take on this responsibility then you should not consult secondary sources.

I will take all suspected cases of plagiarism to the Honor Committee.

Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Resources

Note: some of the sites are useful and interesting, but not authoritative

[EEBO \(off campus\)](#)

[Open Source Shakespeare](#)

[Early modern literature](#)

[Shakespeare's life and works](#)

[Guide to British Monarchs](#)

[Historical Coinage](#)

[Historical Currency Value](#)

[Early modern culture](#)

[Early modern clothing](#)

Please come see me if you have any questions about grading, the syllabus or the class. I look forward to having the chance to meet you. Best wishes for a good semester!