

THEA 4140
Shakespeare: Fall 2026
Monday/Wednesday 12:45pm – 3:40pm
RTFP 127

Instructor: Sarah Rutan

Office Hours: 11:30am-12:30pm M/W RTFP 232 (Appointments Appreciated)

E-mail: Sarah.Rutan@unt.edu

Textbook: Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Physical edition recommended; free open-source digital editions acceptable)

Description:

Discovering a closer relationship, understanding and ease with Shakespeare are the primary focus of this class, which includes Breaking down Shakespeare's language through primary, secondary and tertiary methods, developing rehearsal techniques for the actor, cultivating a sense of curiosity and equivalency with this 450+ year old language, exploring all aspects of poetic rhetoric, and using the fundamental techniques of character and scene building. Acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances.

Objective:

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

*Breakdown the poetic language of Shakespeare's text

*Apply the advanced processes of acting fundamentals/realism work

*Enhance their observation, curiosity and self-reflection/analysis of their acting instrument in this specialized form

Attendance:

Attendance and punctuality reflect professional theatre standards. Because this course functions as an active performance lab dependent on partner work and ensemble participation:

- Absences: Students are allowed up to three (3) absences during the semester. Upon accruing a fourth (4th) absence, the maximum achievable final grade in this course will drop to a D.
- Tardies: Class begins promptly at 12:45pm. Three (3) tardies equal one (1) absence.
- *Please arrive on time, dressed appropriately for physical work, and ready to rehearse.*

Disability Accommodations:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodation anytime, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323 or <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>

Major Assignments:

Synopsis Project

Richard III Unit

Monologues 1 & 2

Final Scenes

Monologue/ Scene Work:

Your work in class on monologues and scenes will be based on:

- level of preparation (appropriate set, costume, props...work outside of class)
- level of memorization
- clarity of given circumstances /text analysis
- ability to engage in and explore techniques discussed in class

Breakdown PACKETS:

Every performance assignment (Richard III, Monologue #1, Monologue #2, Final Scene) requires a complete Text Breakdown Packet including:

- Primary Breakdown list - 20pts
- Secondary Breakdown - 20pts
- Tertiary Marked- 10pts
- Iambic Pentameter marked (if applicable)- 20pts
- Punctuation marked- 10pts
- Actor Sheet (Given Circumstances/personal and shared)- 20pts

*****Presentation/Packet Rubrics can be found on our Canvas Page - under each Assignment*****

Grading:

Synopsis Assignment: 300pts (100pts x 3 plays)

Richard III-

Breakdown/Actor Sheet- 100pts

Monologue #1:

Presentation- 100pts

Breakdown/Actor Sheet - 100pts

Monologue #2:

Presentation- 100pts

Breakdown/Actor Sheet- 100pts

Final Scene:

Presentation- 100pts

Breakdown/Actor Sheet- 100pts

TOTAL POINTS: 1000

A: 1000-900

B: 899-800

C: 799-700

D: 699-650

F: 650 or Below

Weekly Schedule*:

Wk 1: Syllabus & Opening Lecture

Wk 2: Richard III Lecture & Assignment

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Breakdown Lecture

Wk 3: Iambic Pentameter

Poetic Rhetoric/Punctuation Dance

Wk 4: Packet Work day

Richard III Packets Due/Monologue #1 Assigned

Wk 5: Synopsis #1 Due/Synopsis #2 Assigned/Monologue #1 Tablework

Packet Work Day

Wk 6: Monologue #1 Coaching Sessions

Wk 7: Monologue #1 Coaching Sessions round 2

Wk 8: Monologue #1 Presentations/Monologue # 2 Assigned

Synopsis #2 Due/Synopsis #3 Assigned/Monologue #2 Table work

Wk 9: Monologue #2 Coaching Sessions

Wk 10: Monologue #2 Coaching Sessions round 2

Week 11: Monologue #2 Presentations/Assign Final Scenes

Synopsis #3 Due/Final Scene Tablework

Wk 12: Work Day

Final Scene Meetings

Wk 13: Final Scene Coaching Sessions

Wk 14: Final Scene Coaching Sessions round 2

Wk 15: Final Scene Work Week

Wk 16: FINALS WEEK- Final Scene Presentations

****Schedule subject to change. All changes will be communicated in a timely manner***

1st line Mondays, 2nd line Wednesdays...only 1 line? All Week! Due Dates in BOLD