

English 452: Shakespeare

Spring 2021

Professor Mark Netzloff

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*Class will meet asynchronously on Canvas

Texts (feel free to use other paperback editions):

Shakespeare, Four Comedies (Bantam) [for Midsummer Night's Dream and The Merchant of Venice]

---. Four Tragedies (Bantam) [for Hamlet and Othello]

---. Henry V (Pelican)

---. Julius Caesar (Oxford)

---. The Tempest (Folger)

Other materials posted on Canvas

Course Description:

This course provides an introductory survey of Shakespeare's works through a study of seven plays: A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Henry V, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, and The Tempest. Our selections cover the major genres of Shakespearean drama as well as the stages of his theatrical career.

Complementing our close reading of the plays, we will also be situating the texts in relation to their literary, theatrical, and historical contexts. Because Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance rather than publication, we will often focus on the cultural importance of the early modern theater. In addition, we will examine the ways these texts have been reinterpreted over time by looking at the plays in performance and on film.

Required course work:

Reading questions (set of 5 short-answer questions; 7 in all; 1 per play, or every two weeks) – 40%

Class discussion posts (15 in all; 1 per week; 300 words each) – 40%

Short paper (4-5 pp. min; posted on Canvas) – 20%