

Shakespeare

Litt-3205-001

Fall 2014

Monday / Wednesday 6:00-7:50 pm; there is not enough time
Meeting in C-012

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Office Hours: MW 2:15-3:30; F 10:15-11:15; and by appointment
I'm on campus most days

This course is designated W2; we'll be talking about writing, a lot

Required Texts

Complete Sonnets. Dover Thrift ISBN 10: 0486266869

The Tempest. Dover Study ISBN 10: 0486478076

Measure for Measure. Dover ISBN 13: 9780486408897

Troilus and Cressida. Folger ISBN 13: 978-0743273312

Henry IV, part I. Dover Thrift ISBN 10: 0486406601

Hamlet. Dover Study ISBN 10: 0486475727

Macbeth. Dover ISBN 13: 9780486478074

Taming of the Shrew. Dover Study ISBN 10: 0486475808

Virginia Tuftes. *Artful Sentences: Syntax as Style*. ISBN-13: 978-0961392185 {One of the best texts I've read in a long time.}

Class Blog

<https://blogs.stockton.edu/nightshakes/>

Goals & Focus of Course

The first goal of this course is to enable all participants to engage in close and intelligent reading of Shakespeare's work. Appropriate biographical, historical, and cultural details will be discussed along with various critical and theoretical approaches. We will consider the intrinsic artistry of Shakespeare's work, striving for careful and sensitive readings. The second goal is to present our good readings through sharp, intelligent, well-constructed prose. Put on your thinking caps; the expectations for this course are very high.

Course Policies

Excellent attendance is mandatory. More than 4 absences and your grade will drop one full letter grade; more than 5 and it will drop two. Understand that assignments cannot be well done at the last moment. I intend to rigorously enforce the due dates in this syllabus. You will need to plan accordingly. If you need extra help, ask for it. E-mail is an excellent way to contact me.

All writing should be error-free. Proofread effectively for typographical, spelling, mechanical, and grammatical errors. I will mark down substantially for such errors. It is the good logic of your writing that I want to critique. Proofread and revise vigorously.

Some assignments will be handed in on well printed paper; others may be sent to me as readable word-processed attachments: keep alert for the way each assignment should be submitted. It is not my responsibility to make sure that you have handed in all assignments: it is yours.

Email

Email is the best way to contact me. Please remember to provide a coherent subject line. Also, remember to include your name in the text of the email.

Academic Honesty

The Literature program expects students to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. Please review Stockton's Academic Honesty Policy found in the Student Handbook; make yourself familiar with the penalties for violations and your rights as a student. All work that you turn in must be your own. Please be aware that plagiarism (one form of academic dishonesty) includes, but may not be limited to, using all or part of a source, either directly or in paraphrase, either intentionally or unintentionally, whether that source is published, or online, or taken from a fellow or former student, without proper acknowledgment. If you are found to have plagiarized, intentionally, or unintentionally, you will face serious consequences, as follows:

1. If this is the first time you have been found to plagiarize, you will receive an "F" for that paper or assignment and/or for the course.
2. For second offenses of plagiarism, you will receive an F for the course.
3. Whenever possible, a student who is found to have plagiarized a paper or assignment, in full or in part, should meet with the professor of the class for which the paper is written in order to review and discuss the plagiarized work.

Additionally, in accordance with Stockton College policy, literature faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Provost of Academic Affairs. Students may be subject to discipline by the college, such as being placed on academic probation or expulsion.

If it is the final assignment that is plagiarized, although I will not necessarily meet with you, I will report the incident to the Provost of Academic Affairs. If you have any questions about plagiarism, I will gladly discuss them with you.

Writing Issues

Be aware that on due dates I normally read the titles of essays aloud. Give good thought to your titles.

Pay attention to the overall appearance of your essay. Use page numbers. Employ a good-looking font of your choice. If the paper is to be printed, use a decent printer and staple the pages. If a work is due electronically, use a short title combo with your surname within the file name, such as TempestYourName.

Take pride in your writing, both its contents and its appearance. Remember, good writing is hard, intellectual labor. It's also good for you.

Week 1

September

3

- Introduction to the course. The cultural importance of Shakespeare; Bardolatry and Youtube; Shakespeare's Language.
- Introduction to *The Sonnets*.
- Assignment due next time: 1. Thinking about Shakespeare—Writing about Shakespeare (find assignment under "Writing Assignments" on the #NightShakes blog).

Week 2

8

- The Sonnets, 1-17.
- Convention asks that you understand the sonnet sequence as a series of poetic efforts written by a lover, the poetic voice, to a loved one. The sonnets attempt to set forth the worthiness of the poetic voice. The first 126 of Shakespeare's sonnets are generally accepted to present a male poetic voice addressing a male, noble youth. The first

17 sonnets have been referred to as the procreation sonnets. Consider the repetitive nature of their themes, “Get thyself a baby!” Does this suggest something about the nature of the sonnet form within a structured, perhaps daily sequence? does the repetition provide insight into the character of the poetic voice? is the repetition simply evidence of poor craftsmanship on Shakespeare’s part? How do you understand the relationship being described through the first 17 sonnets?

- **Due: 1. Thinking about Shakespeare—Writing about Shakespeare.**
- Introduction to *The Tempest*: Stephen Hopkins.

10

- *The Tempest*.
- Consider the opening scene of *The Tempest*. As stripped down as the English Renaissance stage was, it could still mount an impressive spectacle. Themes to consider as you read: What can be understood as natural, a part of nature, or according to kind? Where do reality, illusion and imagination intersect? What is the relationship between servitude & freedom (does a class system necessarily preclude freedom)? Given the chance, how would you go about building a new world? Do you find any echoes in *The Tempest* of the sonnets we have read so far?

Week 3

15

- *The Tempest*.
- Assignment due next time: 2. Conclusions about Concluding Couplets.

17

- The Sonnets, 18-126.
- Sonnets 18-126 move beyond the repetitive “courtship” of the first 17 sonnets, depicting (or reflecting) the poetic voice’s emotions: thoughtfulness, lust, jealousy, recrimination and love. Watch for the entrance of the rival poet—consider what Shakespeare (not the poetic voice) is trying to convey through the introduction of this rival. Watch

for the arrival of the Dark Lady, the rival *lover* of the noble youth. Do you find any echoes of themes found in *The Tempest* in these sonnets?

- Due: 2. Conclusions about Concluding Couplets.

Week 4

22

- *Measure for Measure*.
- *MFM* is often described as one of Shakespeare's problem plays because it has a peculiarly dark and ambiguous tone. It shifts, sometimes violently, between psychological drama and nearly slapstick material. And its ending is a problem, as you will see. Characters to keep an eye on: VINCENTIO, Duke of Vienna, who spends a good half of the play disguised as Friar Lodowick. Shall we see the Duke as a surrogate of God? Should we agree with Lucio and suspect that the Duke is a wastrel, if not a downright libertine? LUCIO is a foppish young nobleman. Is he an out of control, overly talkative fop? Or should we see him as sort of common-man-speaker of truth? ANGELO, whose honor the Duke seems to trust: Is he an honorable man who succumbs to irresistible lust? or is he a deceitful, manipulative man? ISABELLA, virginal sister to Claudio: Is she the innocent, religious, naive virgin? Or is she a forward woman, working outside of societal norms?

24

- *Measure for Measure*.
- Assignment due next time: 3. Meaning Conveyed through Blocking.

Week 5

29

- *Measure for Measure*.
- Due: 3. Meaning Conveyed through Blocking.

October

1

- The Sonnets, 127-154.
- The Dark Lady, hinted at in previous sonnets, becomes the focus of the poetic voice's attention in sonnets 127-52. The relationship between lover and loved is alternately obsessive and sweet, but nearly always clear-sighted. Compare the themes and ideas developed in the latter part of the sequence to those found in *Measure for Measure*. How are they related if at all? Note the final two sonnets, apparently unrelated to the previous sonnets; is one a revision of the other?
- Introduction to *Troilus and Cressida*.

Week 6

6

- *Troilus and Cressida*.
- Another of Shakespeare's problem plays, *Troilus and Cressida* is difficult to comprehend for several reasons. First, the title characters are so presented that they may be understood in nearly opposite ways: Is Troilus a fool or an immature youth whose character develops over the course of the play? Is Cressida a woman faced with impossible choices or is she a duplicitous, opportunity-taking widow? Consider the satirical edge of this play. Love is presented far more cynically than within Chaucer's great *Troilus and Criseyde*. Can anything good be said about the character of Pandarus? And nearly all the warriors and women of Troy and Greece, heroically presented by Homer, Chaucer, and others, are shown in a mocking light. Why?

8

- *Troilus and Cressida*.
- Read Tufte, chapter thirteen, "Cohesion."
- Assignment due next time: Cohesion and Structure in *TC*.

Week 7

13

Troilus and Cressida.

- Due: 4. Cohesion and Structure in *TC*.
- Introduction to *Henry IV, part 1*.

15

- *Henry IV, part 1*.
- Consider the act of reimagining Lincoln in Steven Spielberg and Daniel Day-Lewis' *Lincoln* (2012). Working with legends, myths and (some) facts that were well known to his audience, Shakespeare completed a similar act when reimagining Henry V (to be) in this play. Consider the father/son relationship between the King and Hal and between Falstaff and Hal. Watch for mirroring of themes and situations throughout the play. How does the development of Hal's character differ from the development of that of Troilus? Attend carefully to scenes between Hotspur and his wife (and scenes that mention them). In Act 2, scene 4, can you tell whether Hal is drunk? How?

Week 8

20

- *Henry IV, part 1*.
- Assignment due in two classes: 5. The Impact of Punctuation in *Henry IV, part 1*.

22

- *Henry IV, part 1*.

Week 9

27

- Writing about *Henry*.
- Due: 5. The Impact of Punctuation in *Henry IV, part 1*.
- Introduction to *Hamlet*.

29

- *Hamlet*.
- Assignment due on November 12: 6. *Hamlet Cuts*.

Week 10

November

3

- *Hamlet*.

5

- *Hamlet*.
- Read Tufte, chapter thirteen, "Syntactic Symbolism."

Week 11

10

- *Hamlet*.

12

- Writing about *Hamlet*.
- Due: 6. *Hamlet Cuts*.
- Final Examination handed out.

Week 12

17

- *Macbeth*.

19

- *Macbeth*.
- Read Tufte, chapter eight, "Sentence Openers and Inversion."
- Assignment due next time: 7. Most Important Sentence in *Macbeth*.

Week 13

24

- *Macbeth*.
- **Due: 7. Most Important Sentence in *Macbeth*.**
- Introduction to *Taming of the Shrew*.

THANKSGIVING

Week 14

December

1

- *Taming of the Shrew*.

3

- *Taming of the Shrew*.

Week 15

8

- *Taming of the Shrew*. Last class discussion. Final Examination due.

Evaluation

Meaning Conveyed through Blocking 10%

Impact of Punctuation 10%

Hamlet Cuts 20%

Most Important Sentence 20%

Final examination 40%

In order to receive a passing grade for the course, all assigned writings must be completed.

Final examination will ask you to draw on all of your reading during the semester. I will provide the examination question in week eleven. Your finished examination will be from 12 to 16 pages, with the exact length to be determined by class performance during the semester.