

## ENGL 355.61 SHAKESPEARE: TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

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MW 2:00p–5:13p

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### OVERVIEW:

- Less than seventy years separate the granting of the first royal patent for playing in London in 1574 and the closing of the theatres in 1642; however, the literary and cultural impact of the plays written during this time have left an indelible mark on subsequent generations. This course has a threefold purpose: We will consider the nature of performance in Shakespeare's time, including playhouse practices. We will discuss the challenges and advantages of modern productions and how modern theatre and film alter our perspective of the plays. We will spend time attending to the texts as works of literature and as maps for performance. This course will cover 4 plays: *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*.
- Requirements: class participation, in-class writing, film and performance reviews, a presentation, attend RSC's production of *Romeo & Juliet* (or *The Winter's Tale*), and a final research project.

### REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Hunter Bookstore and Shakespeare & Co.):

- *Titus Andronicus* ISBN: 9780199535842
- *Romeo and Juliet* ISBN: 9780199537129
- *Macbeth* ISBN: 9780199537457
- *Othello* ISBN: 9780199535910
- A packet of various secondary readings that I will provide
- Film versions of all of the plays covered that I will provide

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

#### Attendance

- **Regular attendance is required.** If you miss a class, you miss a lot. **After one absence your grade will suffer.** I expect you to be in class on time and ready to participate.

#### Class Participation

- **Active participation is required.** Come to class prepared and ready to participate. If you are unprepared or do not have the necessary materials (your book, handouts, reviews, etc.), you may be asked to leave. You will be respectful of your fellow classmates. Disruptive behavior—rudeness, talking while others are speaking, cell phones, or texting during class—may result in me asking you to leave. **If you text or check your cell phone during the RSC performance you will automatically forfeit a significant portion of your participation grade.**
- You are required to provide a topic for discussion on the text once during the semester (your date will be assigned to you). A topic may include a passage or scene that you found interesting or confusing. Similarly, you might want to discuss a particular character or an action that occurs in the play. You may also raise broader issues/questions from the text, or topics that engage with the world outside of the text. Your topic should not be associated with one of the film versions (those will be discussed in the second half of each class session).

## Reading

- You will notice that the reading for this course is heavy and our time together is short. Please familiarize yourself with the syllabus and the readings—both the plays and the secondary sources—and budget your time accordingly.

## Film Screenings

- Beyond reading for this course, you will be required to watch 7 films (1 of *Titus*, 2 each of the other 3 plays) over the course of 5 weeks. I expect that you will use a critical eye when viewing the films, take notes, and write thoughtful and critical reviews (see below). Again, make sure to budget your time accordingly.

## Film and Performance Reviews

- You will turn in a 1–2 page (300–600 words typed, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced) film review for each play covered plus a performance review of the RSC production that you attend (5 reviews total). For *Titus* you will write a review on the Julie Taymor film; for the other three plays you may choose which film to write on. Do not provide a plot summary or an overview of how the film differs from the text. Instead, focus on a specific aspect of the production—the direction, lighting, music, costumes, actors, or scenery—and analyze how that element works to further the story/view/concept. Be specific. Focus on a scene or a few shots. In the case of modern adaptations that vary significantly from the text, how does the film manage to suggest the tone, style, point, or even details of the original text? Are there interesting ways that the screenwriter, director, or actor, pays homage to the original but still presents their own work and/or vision? Are there specific elements from the texts that are emphasized more readily in this medium?

## In-Class Writing

- Once a week you will spend the first ten minutes of class writing. You will not be allowed to use your books or secondary reading during the ten minutes; however, you may use any notes you have taken on the reading.
  - Your write-ups should be approximately one page long. Each response will be graded. If you miss the first ten minutes of class you may not make up the writing for that day. Likewise, if you are absent you may not make up the writing for that day (another reason why it is important to attend class and arrive on time). Your in-class writing is not intended to prove that you read the assigned reading and, therefore, should not include a plot summary. I suggest that you focus on a particular detail or question from the reading. What struck you as important or interesting? Were there things about the reading that were confusing (not just “I didn’t get it.”)? This time is not intended as a “free-write” but rather a chance for you to explore an idea or question from the reading.

## Presentations

- On the first day of class, you will sign up to present on a specific film version of one of the plays we are covering this term. Each person will give a 5–10 minute presentation. You should plan on showing a brief (maybe 2–3 minutes) clip from the film and then discuss a specific aspect of the film, explaining why you chose the clip, what it tells us, how it conveys/represents the original story or the particular style/vision for the film. This assignment will be explained more fully in a separate handout.

## Final Project

- This course requires either a traditional paper (6–8 pages) or a design proposal for your own hypothetical production. A brief proposal for your project will be due via email **by 8p, Friday, August 5th**. These options will be explained more fully in a separate handout. Your final project will be due **by midnight, Thursday, August 18th**. Your project must be uploaded to turnitin.com by that date and time; no late projects will be accepted. In order to upload the paper, you will need the **class ID (4134194)** and **password (summer11)**.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

### Format of Written Work

- All work must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font (preferably Times New Roman), with 1-inch margins on all sides.

### Plagiarism

- The Hunter College Senate requires that the following statement be included on all syllabi: “Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”
- ***Plagiarism is a serious offence.*** Plagiarism includes any representation of another’s ideas or work as your own, including the ideas of another student, articles, books, or information from the internet. I take instances of plagiarism seriously. **If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the assignment and be reported to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Official.**
- If you find yourself stuck during the writing process, come and see me. If you have any questions about how to properly cite sources, I’m more than happy to help. Also, the Reading/Writing Center has several handouts, including ones on MLA style and how to cite sources properly: <http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/on-line.html>

### Academic Accommodation

- In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of ACCESSability located in Room 1124 East to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212-772-4857)/TTY (212-650-3230).

*Please note that the syllabus is subject to change.*

### GRADES:

- Class Participation: 10%
- In-Class Writing: 10%
- Film and Performance Reviews: 25%
- Presentations: 15%
- Research Proposal: 5%
- Research Project: 35%

Date	Plays / Films / Due	Readings
7/18 M	Play: <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	Acts 1–3 Gurr, Andrew. <i>Playgoing in Shakespeare's London</i> . New York: Cambridge UP, 1987. 1–26.
7/20 W	Play: <i>Titus Andronicus</i> Film: <i>Titus</i> (dir. Taymor) <b>Due: 1st film review due</b>	Acts 4–5 Crowl, Samuel, ed. <i>Shakespeare and Film: A Norton Guide</i> . New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008. [pgs. xiv–xv, xxiii–xxv, 197–201]
7/25 M	Play: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Film: <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> (dir. Zeffirelli)	Acts 1–3 Bevington, David. <i>This Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance Then &amp; Now</i> . Chicago: U Chicago P, 2007. [pgs. 129–139]
7/27 W	Play: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Film: <i>Romeo + Juliet</i> (dir. Luhrmann) <b>Due: 2nd film review due</b>	Acts 4–5 Tatspauh, Patricia. “The tragedies of love on film.” Ed. Russell Jackson. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film</i> . New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. 135–159. [pgs. 140–143]
8/1 M	Play: <i>Macbeth</i> Film: <i>Macbeth</i> (dir. Casson/Nunn)	Acts 1–3 [Secondary Reading TBD]
8/3 W	<b>No Class</b>	<b>RSC's Romeo and Juliet at Park Avenue Armory (entrance on Park Avenue between 66th &amp; 67th Streets); meet at the entrance by 7:00pm</b>
8/5 F	<b>Due: Final project proposal due via email by 8pm</b>	
8/8 M	Play: <i>Macbeth</i> Film: <i>Scotland, P.A.</i> (dir. Morrissette) or <i>Macbeth</i> (dir. Wright) <b>Due: 3rd film review due</b>	Acts 4–5 [Secondary Reading TBD]
8/10 W	Play: <i>Othello</i> Film: <i>Othello</i> (dir. Parker) <b>Due: RSC performance review due</b>	Acts 1–3 Tatspauh, Patricia. “The tragedies of love on film.” Ed. Russell Jackson. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film</i> . New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. 135–159. [pgs. 148–150]
8/15 M	Play: <i>Othello</i> Film: <i>Othello</i> (dir. Sax) or <i>O</i> (dir. Nelson) <b>Due: 4th film review due</b>	Acts 4–5 Bevington, David. <i>This Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance Then &amp; Now</i> . Chicago: U Chicago P, 2007. [pgs. 150–158]
8/17 W	Play: <i>Othello</i>	Finish up text discussions Brief presentations on final projects
8/18 Th	<b>Due: Final project due to turnitin.com by midnight</b>	