English 212.520 : Shakespeare  
Fall 20xx

Dr. Nandra Perry  nandraperry@tamu.edu  
Office: 2XX LA AH  
Office hours: M/W/F 3pm-4pm  

ENGL 212. Exploration of selected works of Shakespeare.

Course Description
This course will examine the intellectual and cultural climate in which Shakespeare’s plays were written and performed and the dominant themes and motifs that characterize them. Although we will discuss a number of issues, we will focus particularly on representations of the theater and theatricality in Shakespeare’s works and on their relationship to debates about the role of acting and spectacle in early modern England. What pleasures, possibilities, and dangers were associated with playhouses in the period? What was the perceived relationship of “playing” to other forms of social theater (political spectacle, religious ritual, social role-playing etc.)? Finally, how do modern-day productions of Shakespeare reflect our own hopes and anxieties about the power of theater?

Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will be able to articulate key concepts and ideas in the work of Shakespeare.

2. Students will be able to better understand the broader historical and cultural context in which Shakespeare’s work flourished.

3. Students will develop an understanding of how old and new productions of Shakespeare reflect an array of aesthetic sensibilities and perspectives on the human condition.

Core Curriculum Objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of key ideas in the works of Shakespeare.

Communication Skills (CS): The course enhances communication skills through small and large group discussion of ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading.

Teamwork (TW): The course will enhance students’ ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

Social Responsibility (SR): The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross cultural understanding of how history, region, and broader social forces have shaped the differing interpretations and performances of Shakespeare’s work from the early modern England to the present.

Evaluation of Core Objectives

CTS: The evaluation of critical thinking skills will be based on exams and class participation and may include written work. Exams will be designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and synthesize key ideas from the assigned reading. Class room discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of Shakespeare’s work from the early modern England to the present.

CS: The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of Shakespeare’s work past and present that may involve guided writing assignments in which they will receive feedback, exams in which students will be expected to effectevely convey key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and class room discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the subtleties of each text under examination.

TW: The course will enhance students’ ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Students will be expected to work on a group project in which they will have to negotiate a collective vision of how to perform a scene from a Shakespeare play based upon their mutually
agreed upon interpretation and background research. Each group will be expected to turn in a short paper and facilitate a stimulating class discussion about their performance.

SR: The evaluation of social responsibility will be based upon an end-of-the-semester short writing assignment in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped Shakespeare's body of work from early modern England to the present.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Requirements:
Grades are weighted as follows: one 2- to 3-page paper/presentation (25%), one 5- to 6-page paper (25%) one group presentation (25%); and final which will consist of short and long answers (25%). On the final exam, students will be given a question in which they will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped Shakespeare's body of work from early modern England to the present.

Short Paper/Presentation
Each student is responsible for one presentation paper per semester (the sign up sheet is on my office door). The goal of these short papers is to lay the groundwork for your longer essay and to challenge yourself and your classmates to think more critically about that day's reading. Unlike the longer essay, your short paper need not articulate a full-fledged argument. Your job is to explore an idea, a question, or a way of looking at a character, scene, or theme that you think is interesting enough to merit class discussion. Your paper should have a clear main point, be well organized, and conform to the conventions of standard English (no typos or grammatical errors).

Long Paper
The long paper is a more fully developed paper which explores an idea that the student encountered in the process of writing their short paper from earlier in the semester. This paper should be 5-6 pages in length, and should have a clear main point, be well organized, and conform to the conventions of standard English (no typos or grammatical errors).

Creative Group Assignment
Group presentations for each play are scheduled on your syllabus. It is important to remember that Shakespeare wrote his plays to be performed, not read. My goal with this assignment is to explore as a class what happens when the words on the page are brought to life in different contexts. How much of the way we interpret a particular scene is up to Shakespeare? How much is in the control of the director and actors? How much freedom does the audience have? First, you'll want to think carefully as a group about your interpretation of the play. There will invariably be many different ways to understand any scene you might choose, and your first job is to study these possibilities. Look at different movie versions of the play. Look at filmed versions of live performances. Read reviews. Study the performance history of the play. Read and respond to the secondary materials in your textbook. Research the after-life of a particular character or phrase in American pop culture.

After you've completed this background work, you are ready to plan your presentation. As a group, you will be in charge of an entire class day. You may use film clips. You may bring in props. You may act out key moments of the scene. Pretty much anything you think will clarify your points and stimulate class discussion is fair game. Although you need not act out the entire scene, your group must articulate a vision for the entire scene. You should allot about 30 minutes for the presentation itself, with another 20 minutes for discussion.
In addition to the performance, please turn in to me a 3-to-5-page paper outlining your vision. Your individual grade will be based on a combined score that reflects my assessment of the performance, class discussion, and group paper. This part of the course will enhance students’ ability to consider different points of view and work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. For this assignment students will be asked to negotiate a collective vision of how to perform a scene from a Shakespeare play based upon a mutually agreed upon interpretation and background research. Members of each group will also be expected to facilitate a stimulating conversation about their presentation with questions, prompts, handouts, and material that they prepared ahead of time.

Final
The cumulative final will include short and long questions based on lectures, discussion, group presentations, and material covered in class throughout the semester. On the final exam, students will be given a question in which they will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped Shakespeare’s body of work from early modern England to the present.

Academic Integrity: “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.” You are expected to be aware of the Aggie Honor Code and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures, stated at http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute providing comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, B-118 Cain Hall (845-1637). For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Textbooks
Gail Kern Paster and Skiles Howard, eds. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Texts and Contexts*
Bruce R. Smith, ed. *Twelfth Night: Texts and Contexts*
Susanne L. Wofford, ed. *Hamlet: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*
Kim F. Hall, ed. *Othello: Texts and Contexts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tentative Reading Schedule for English 212 (Fall 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer Night’s Dream</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Twelfth Night</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Twelfth Night</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Twelfth Night</em> CTS, CS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explanation of short and long paper assignment. The goal of the short papers is to lay the groundwork for your longer essay and to challenge students to think more critically about that day’s reading. The longer essay will need to articulate a full-fledged argument. CTS, CS

Week 6  
Othello CTS, CS  
Othello CTS, CS  
Othello CTS, CS

Week 7  
Othello CTS, CS  
Othello CTS, CS  
Othello CTS, CS

Week 8  
Hamlet, Act 1 CTS, CS  
Hamlet CTS, CS  
Hamlet CTS, CS

Week 9  
Hamlet CTS, CS  
Hamlet CTS, CS  
Hamlet CTS, CS

Week 10  
Tempest, Act I CTS, CS  
Tempest CTS, CS  
Tempest CTS, CS

Week 11  
Tempest CTS, CS  
Tempest CTS, CS  
Tempest CTS, CS

Week 12  
This class will be devoted to explaining the structure of the final exam and the group project assignment. On the final exam, students will be given a question in which they will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped Shakespeare’s body of work from early modern England to the present. CTS, CS, PR

The group project assignment will enhance students’ ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. For this assignment, students will be asked to negotiate a collective vision of how to perform a scene from a Shakespeare play based upon a mutually agreed upon interpretation and background research. Members of each group will also be expected to facilitate a stimulating conversation about their presentation with questions, prompts, handouts, and material that they prepared ahead of time. In addition to the performance, each group will have to hand in a 3-to-5-page paper outlining their collective vision. CTS, CS, TW

Presentation: Midsummer Night's Dream CTS, CS  
Presentation: Twelfth Night CTS, CS, TW

Week 13  
Presentation: Othello CTS, CS, TW  
Presentation: Hamlet CTS, CS, TW  
Presentation: Tempest; long essays due. CTS, CS, TW

Week 14  
Review CTS, CS  
Review CTS, CS  
Conclusion CTS, CS