

# Shakespeare

English 3304

Fall 2015

Monday, 6-8:45 p.m.  
Del Rio, 101  
Eagle Pass, B114  
Uvalde, B111

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Office Hours: Tuesday, noon to 4:30

## Goals

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Most people who know Shakespeare's work think that he had important insights into human nature and expressed those insights well. Those are good enough reasons for studying them. After taking this course, you should develop an appreciation for rich language. Perhaps more important, you should be able to use Shakespeare's insights into human nature to develop your own insights and to help others develop theirs.

That does not mean you just adopt Shakespeare's ideas as your own. It means you take Shakespeare's ideas and winnow them through your own experience. You may adopt his ideas, modify them, or reject them; you can argue, disagree, or cite contradicting evidence. Do the characters seem real? Do the incidents, motives, plots seem plausible?

To develop your own ideas, you need critical thinking skills, and this course should help you develop them. For example, after taking it you should be able to see patterns in characters and incidents in several plays, synthesize them into a coherent idea and then compare and contrast that idea with what you know from personal experience. You should also hone your skills of assessing evidence and developing theses and presenting arguments.

To do all that, of course, you will need some basic knowledge about Shakespeare and the plays. You need to know a timeline – when each play was written, as far as we know – so that you can fit them into a progression of Shakespeare's ideas. You should know plots, characters, and incidents from plays. For example, you should be able to match characters and plays and even identify specific lines.

## Text

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Dover Thrift Editions, *Twelve Plays of Shakespeare*

Study guides online

## Grading

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Your grade will be based on your knowledge of the plays and how well you demonstrate your ability to discuss them. You will take exams and quizzes, write papers and contribute to class discussions and will accumulate up to 1,000 points. If you have 900 or more, you will get an A and so on. Specifically, the grading will be based on the following rubric.

Report, 40 points. You will make a report on some aspect of Shakespeare studies. We will assign the reports on the first night of class, and you will submit an outline before making the report.

Daily quizzes, 260 points (10 points each x 26). Two quizzes of 10 questions each in each meeting. Questions will regard simply the facts of the readings, no analysis. The quizzes will be passed out at the beginning of class and after the break.

Weekly questions, 40 points. Questions on Blackboard for the first two weeks. See the assignment sheet under course content.

Online posting, 60 points. You will post two questions on Blackboard and then answer one of your peers' questions. Each post will be worth 15 points. See the assignment sheet in course content.

Response papers. 200 points. You will write two papers, of at least three pages, responding to questions that I give you or to questions that you ask. Questions ask about hermeneutics or poetics. You will write a rough draft of each paper; we will talk about it privately, and then you will revise it for the final grade. As a scholar, you must learn to ask questions, so you may make up your own questions, but they should be about poetics or about what Shakespeare says about human nature. You may write both papers on one topic, and you will have a start on your term paper.

If you prefer, you may emulate Shakespeare by outlining a tragedy or a comedy and by emulating his writing style. If you choose to emulate Shakespeare, you should talk to me about your plans so I can make sure you are proceeding correctly.

The assignment sheet for these papers is under course content.

Examinations. 250 points. A mid-term examination worth 100 points and a final examination worth 150 points. You will need to identify ideas, incidents, themes, characters, etc. and write a couple of short essays on topics you select from a list. The object will be to show that you can analyze and synthesize evidence and produce a conclusion and a coherent argument to back it up.

Term paper. 150 points. You will select a topic, develop a position, and write a six- to eight-page paper to support that position. You may also write a play emulating Shakespeare's style. An assignment sheet is under course content.

As you work through the assignments, you should learn skills and apply them to the next assignment. Answering the weekly question should tell you how to state a thesis precisely and give at least one piece of evidence to support it and document that evidence in the MLA style. The online postings should give you the ability to write a scholarly question and, in answering a peer's question, more practice in thesis and evidence. By the time you have done those, you should be able to write the response papers: write a precise thesis and support it with evidence, presented coherently. The bulk of the examinations will consist of response questions like that. The term project will require you to ask a scholarly question and answer it with a longer, detailed argument.

### **Submitting work**

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Never write to me through Blackboard except when I specifically say to: answering the weekly questions and writing online questions and responses. For response papers, exams, and the term paper, open your e-mail program and send the paper to my e-mail address, [dwaldeen@sulross.edu](mailto:dwaldeen@sulross.edu). For the subject line, use Shakespeare and something to indicate the subject: Shakespeare first response paper. This will help me keep better records and will make me think you are smart.

### **Late papers**

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Late papers will not be accepted without a legitimate reason.

### **Attendance**

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To participate in class, you must be present and on time. **If you are absent nine hours without good, documented reasons, you will be dropped from the course with an F.**

### **Plagiarism**

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Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Plagiarism means turning in someone else's work for credit. We will discuss documentation and citation so you will know how to submit work without plagiarizing. If you plagiarize work, I shall drop you from the class with an F and turn your name over to the dean.

### **Students with disabilities**

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Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. Students who need accessibility services should contact Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, Texas 78801.

Shakespeare

August 24

Introduction

Shakespeare's life and times

The Renaissance

Humanism

August 30

Due: response to the first weekly question

August 31

Romeo and Juliet

Report: life in Elizabethan England, BF, 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Report: gender and family in Elizabethan England, BF, 8 \_\_\_\_\_

Tragedy: Hamartia, climax, structure, disorder to order

Plan a tragedy

September 6

Due: response to the second weekly question

September 7

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Report: kinds of drama, BF, 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Report: The Wars of the Roses \_\_\_\_\_

Comedy: what the characters really want, rigidity to flexibility

Plan a comedy

September 13

Due: first online posting

Ice cream at Dr. Walden's house in Normandy

September 14, Eagle Pass

Due: response to the first online posting

Richard III

Report: Shakespeare's language, BF, 2 \_\_\_\_\_

September 20

Due: second online posting

September 21

Due: response to the second online posting

Julius Caesar

Report: Puritans and Shakespeare, BF, 9 \_\_\_\_\_

September 27

Due: rough draft of your first response paper

September 28

Much Ado about Nothing

Report: Shakespeare's theater troupes, BF, 4 \_\_\_\_\_

October 4

Due: final draft of response paper No. 1

October 5

Hamlet

Report: Shakespeare's theaters, BF, 4

October 11

Due: rough draft of your second response paper

October 12

The Taming of the Shrew

Report: the controversy over authorship, BF, 1 \_\_\_\_\_

October 18

Due: the final draft of your second response paper

October 19

Mid-term examination online

October 25

Due: the topic for your term project

October 26

The Merchant of Venice

Report: printing the plays, BF, 5 \_\_\_\_\_

November 1

Due: annotated passages for your term project or the first draft of a play

November 2

Othello

November 8

Due: outline of your term paper or the second draft of your play

November 9

Macbeth

November 15

Due: the first draft of your term project or more work on your play

November 16

King Lear

November 22

Due: the second draft of your term project or more work on your play

November 23

The Tempest

November 29

Due: the final draft of your term project or your complete play

November 30

Poetry:

Sonnets 18, 20, 30, 66, 73, 124, 128, 129, 130, 151, 154

Venus and Adonis

December 7

Final Examination online