

## **PLAYING WITH SHAKESPEARE Program Syllabus Spring Quarter, 2008**

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### **Program Description**

In this full time, all-level program we will read, study and play with seven Shakespearean dramas as well as two written by his contemporaries. Some people read Shakespeare in search of truth; others read him for sheer entertainment. Some people say his works are subversive and use his works to foment change, while others argue that he bolsters stability. Some people make fun of Shakespeare and others are awed by him. Shakespeare is used by comedians, by politicians, by historians and by literary critics. He inspires actors, filmmakers, poets, musicians and authors. Cultures outside of England adapt his plays to their benefit. What makes Shakespeare so useful, so appealing and so popular across the globe and across time? These are some of the issues that we will address in this program. But we will also pay close attention to Shakespeare's poetry, his imagery and his dramatic techniques through close readings and through short performances of his plays.

We have organized the reading around accumulating themes beginning with gender relations in *Taming of the Shrew*, a contentious and difficult play which Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* will help us understand. Many of the same issues arise in *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Troilus and Cressida*, though *Troilus* also raises problems about commerce and politics. These reappear in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, plays that also open up questions about religion in the context of the meaning of justice. In *Othello*, Shakespeare adds race to the mix of sex and jealousy, while John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, by adding the question of incest, pushes matters to an extreme. All comes together in that most open-ended of Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet*, the most imitated, most adapted, most USED of any of the plays. We will study the many ways in which *Hamlet* has been portrayed on the stage, in film, and in other creative modes from Shakespeare's time to our own, in England and abroad. In short, we will end our study playing with *Hamlet*.

This program will involve serious study and a heavy time commitment. The week will be structured around lectures, seminars, workshops, film showings and student performances. Students will be expected to read the plays at least twice, read a series of critical essays, prepare response writings for each seminar, write formal essays, and perform short scenes each week in performance workshops. Students can expect to develop skills in critical thinking, literary and historical analysis, film studies, performance and writing. They can also expect to learn how to make the most of Shakespeare and to enjoy his plays.

## Credit Equivalencies

Credit will be awarded in English Literature: Shakespeare, Writing, Literary criticism. Credit equivalencies can be tailored to individual student needs, if necessary. This especially applies to students needing specific credits for the MIT program

## Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Lecture/All Program Meeting  10:00 – 12:00 SEM 2 D1107		All Program Meeting/Workshops  10:00 – 1:00 SEM 2 D1107	All Program Meeting/Performances  9:00 – 12:00 SEM 2 D1105
Seminar  1:30 – 3:30 SEM 2 D2107, D2109	Performance group meetings (times to be set by individual groups on Tuesdays or Wednesday afternoons.)	Governance time  Office Hours*/Lunch-Tea/optional film viewing 1:00 – 5:00  All Program Meeting/ Film 7:00 – 9:30 SEM 2 A1105	Seminar 1:30 – 3:30 SEM 2 D2107, D2109

\*Office hours available at other times by appointment.

### **Primary Reading List (in the order to be read)**

*The Taming of the Shrew* (New Folger Library Shakespeare) by William Shakespeare.

*Woman Killed With Kindness* by Thomas Heywood. Download from e reserves.

*Much Ado About Nothing* (New Folger Library Shakespeare) by William Shakespeare.

*Troilus and Cressida* (Folger Shakespeare Library) by William Shakespeare.

*The Merchant of Venice* (Bantam Classics) by William Shakespeare.

*Measure for Measure* (The New Cambridge Shakespeare) by William Shakespeare and edited by Brian Gibbons.

*'tis Pity She's a Whore* (New Mermaids) by John Ford and Martin Wiggins.

*Othello* (New Folger Library Shakespeare) by William Shakespeare.

*Hamlet* (Arden Shakespeare: Third Series) by William Shakespeare, edited by Ann Thompson, and Neil Taylor.

Secondary sources will be assigned weekly and will be available on e-reserves. Be sure to check the detailed weekly schedule which will be available the first day of class and every Monday throughout the quarter.

### **Writing Goals and Assignments**

**Seminar Response Papers:** For each seminar students are required to write a one-page response to the reading for that day. We strongly recommend that you use a computer and that you keep your papers in a three-ring binder. The papers are intended to serve several purposes: 1) to give students the opportunity to give their first impressions of the play, to raise issues and themes that interest them and to ask questions, as a way of preparing for seminar discussions; 2) to link the on-going work of the program by relating the new play to books and ideas talked about in previous weeks; and 3) to keep faculty informed about how students are responding to the readings. The paper should point to specific lines for discussion and conclude with **one or two significant questions to contribute to the seminar discussion**. These papers will be read aloud periodically in seminar and turned in to your faculty at the end of each seminar on Mondays and Thursdays.

**Essays:** Students are required to write three essays during the quarter; at least one of these essays should go through several drafts. Specific assignments will be given out for each essay. These essays will be due Wednesday, April 23rd, Wednesday, May 14th and Monday, June 2nd.

### **Films**

Each Wednesday evening we will meet at 7:00 as a whole program to view a film or television adaptation of a play. One of the objectives of this program is to develop some sophistication in media studies; i.e. to learn how to read a film. The films will allow us to see how Shakespeare has been interpreted through time, by other cultures and by a wide variety of directors and actors. Some films will be straight presentations of the plays; some documentaries; some adaptations (musicals, operas, contemporary plays based loosely on Shakespeare).

In addition to the required film viewing on Wednesday evenings, we will often show films on Wednesday afternoon to any and all who can come.

### **All Program Tea/Lunch and Office Hours**

Wednesdays, after the all program workshop, we invite you to stay around for tea (or even bring your lunch) in the area outside of Sem 2 D1105. During this time you will

have the chance to meet your faculty and fellow students and talk further about Shakespeare. This teatime/lunchtime serves as a kind of spontaneous office hour, social time—essential for building our community. Plan on coming every week. We will also offer office hours at other times by appointment and after seminars.

### **Performance Groups**

Performance groups will be established on Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup> during seminar. The purpose of these performance groups is not to turn you into actors but to help you understand the complexity of Shakespeare's language and to help you imagine how these plays actually work on stage. Reading Shakespeare out loud at pace can really help you understand and enjoy his difficult language. Don't stop and look up every word; just forge ahead. We want you to speak and hear the language and to experiment with different meanings of that language by acting out specific scenes. During performance workshop on Thursday morning, all groups will perform scenes (of 100 lines or less).

### **Evaluations**

At the end of the quarter students will be required to write self-evaluations and evaluations of the faculty. In this program you will be required to submit your self-evaluation for inclusion in your formal transcript. It ought to represent your very best work of the quarter and speak honestly about your experience. We will conduct an evaluation writing workshop during week nine to help you reflect on your work and construct your evaluations. Drafts of self evaluations are due on Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **Playing With Shakespeare Program Covenant**

### Prologue

This program, while lasting only for one quarter, follows the model of a Coordinated Studies Program. It relies heavily on seminars and on collaborative study. In practice, we recognize that a considerable degree of trust is necessary for people to exercise their rights to voice opinions and to be as honest as the social contract requires. This covenant is a set of mutual expectations, elaborated over years of teaching and learning at Evergreen, designed to create an environment where people can collaborate to enhance each other's learning, challenge each other intellectually, and trust each other enough to put the social contract into practice.

### Expectations of Students

This is a full-time integrated program. We expect students to register for 16 units of credit each quarter. Students are expected to complete all the assigned work and receive full credit, awarded at the end of the quarter. Partial credit for work partially completed will be awarded in special circumstances (illness, emergencies, etc.) only with the consent of both faculty members. This means that students must participate in all aspects of the program, not picking and choosing some elements and ignoring others. Students will be informed about their credit status during the fifth week of the quarter and, of course, at the end of the quarter. Students can enroll in an additional course in the college, if they choose, but it must not interfere with work in this full time program. Students should consult with their seminar leader about their plans for taking courses outside of the program.

You will receive credit if you do satisfactory work and if you adhere to the following expectations:

- attend all scheduled classes regularly and on time and be well-prepared to begin the work of the class;
- submit the required writing, typed, double-spaced, on time;
- maintain an open, inquiring attitude toward the material;
- practice open, honest, adult communication while respecting other people's views and backgrounds;
- let your seminar leader know if you will be unable to attend class;
- address any grievance directly to the person involved, and if still unresolved, bring it to a meeting first with seminar faculty, then faculty team, if necessary, and/or a mediator agreed upon by both parties;
- do your own work, and document fully any ideas or material directly used from research conducted;
- submit a formal self-evaluation at the end of the program;
- submit a faculty evaluation at the end of the program;
- attend a scheduled evaluation conference at the end of the program;
- refrain from use of alcohol or other drugs at official program functions;

- keep the faculty apprised of any problems or difficulties; that is, feel free to seek guidance and help.

Expectations of Faculty

Faculty agree to:

- Attend all scheduled classes regularly and on time and be fully prepared for seminars, lectures and workshops;
- Comment on students' papers and return them in a timely manner;
- Write evaluations of students at the end of the quarter;
- Hold midquarter conferences and evaluation conferences at the end of the quarter;
- Participate actively in the planning of the program;
- Be available to students for help, advice and encouragement.
- Work collaboratively on the design and teaching of the program;
- Consult regularly with the students about how the program is going and make adjustments as necessary and prudent;

As a group, we all agree to address work and life together with good humor and friendship. Above all, we pledge willing cooperation.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sign and return this copy to your seminar leader.