

Instructions for collaborative close reading assignment
Due in class Thursday Week 4

- 1) Look up your word in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Note the range of possible definitions operative during the period in which Shakespeare was writing. These are all seemingly ordinary words that had additional meanings for early modern audiences, so you should resist the urge to skim the entry.

- 2) Hunt for your word in the MIT Shakespeare (or whatever searchable online text you prefer). Find the passages in your own copies of the play and discuss them as a group. Is the word used in a similar way in each passage? Are there other words within the passage that resonate with or amplify the meaning of your word? If any related words (which can include antonyms) stand out, do a search for those, too. Not all the passages you find will be worth discussing in detail, but they may help you develop a hunch about the common trends in the way Shakespeare is using the word.

- 3) Pick at least two passages for which the act of reading them side by side draws out the meaning of your word. Prepare a short write-up (one per group is fine) containing those passages, and your interpretation of them vis a vis the specific meanings associated with your word. Be prepared to discuss your findings in lecture on Thursday. How does your word accumulate meanings throughout the course of a particular scene, or the play as whole? How might a director draw out those meanings in performance?