SHAKESPEAREAN HISTORIES AND COMEDIES

English 5112
MWF---11:00
Burris Room 131
Mr. Willis

Mr. Willis’s contact information:
Office: Academy House/Basement of Elliott Hall

Office Hours:
MWF 10-00-12:00noon
Tues: 3:00-5:00pm (usually) otherwise by appointment
Thurs: 12:00-2:00pm
Tues and Thurs mornings by appointment.

The Course:

The course title rather well describes the course. We will be examining some of Shakespeare’s history plays and some of his great tragedies. Specifically, we will examine some of the history plays that cover the period before and during one of England’s civil wars, The War of Roses. Those history plays are Richard II, Henry IV, Part I, and Richard III. Although the Richard plays are titled tragedies, most scholars lump them into the history category of Shakespeare’s canon. The three tragedies we will study are Macbeth, King Lear, and Othello. These three plays combined with Hamlet, which you read in World Literature, represent what many critics and scholars believe to be the greatest demonstrations of Shakespeare’s writing.

A frustration discovered in the study of Shakespeare is the realization that we don’t have enough time to study the plays adequately. So much has been written about Shakespeare and his plays, that it would take us years to unveil all of the thoughts and ideas and levels found in the plays, and then, we would probably change our minds! We will do what we can in our limited semester to unearth as many riches as possible. We will study the plays from as many different angles as we can in order to find varieties of interpretations. We will, of course, read and discuss the plays, but we will also read what noted critics have said, how actors have portrayed various roles, what designers and directors can do with a scene or a play, how films have treated Shakespeare, and then, students will have the chance to do some classroom performances of the plays. And hopefully, we will arrange to see a full production of one or more of the plays on stage.

To be successful in the course, it will be necessary for students to read carefully the assigned reading for the day before coming to class. We will attempt to have some activity each discussion day that will utilize careful reading and critical thinking. There will also be several reports and projects (written and oral) that will need completed, as well as two memorization exercises. The class will also be divided into two acting
troupes, and each troupe will be responsible for giving us a 30-45 minute staged reading of one of the histories or one of the tragedies. There will be two major examinations and numerous short papers and creative projects. It is a very busy class, and one where we must keep to the schedule. It is not a class for the lazy. These plays are important works of literature and are not to be taken lightly.

Tardiness and Absences:

Tardiness will be reported (as well as absences). **If a student is absent, it is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements for make up.** A missed test must be completed within two days, or the student will receive a 0 for the exam---unless there is ample reason for an extension such as illness or a family crisis. There is no way a student can make up a missed section of group work, so the student should expect a 0 for that assignment, unless some satisfactory method of make up can be designed.

If a student is having difficulty with an assignment, please make arrangements to see me. I am always willing to help...although I do get suspicious when the problem is brought to my attention 5-10 minutes (or less!) before class.

On written papers that require research, **remember that ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT COME OUT OF YOUR HEAD needs to be cited using correct MLA documentation form. Plagiarism (even unintentional) will not be tolerated.)**

Do not cite Wikipedia or any of the various “Notes” in any assignment in this class. There are better sources available!!!!!!!!!

I like to teach this class very much, and I hope that students will enjoy digging into the works of Shakespeare. There is so much for all of us to learn.

Major and Minor assignments with point values attached.

- Quizzes—discussion and written..................20-100 points
- Exercises—written and presented...................30-100 points
- Major projects.............................................200 points
- Major Tests................................................200-300 points
- Play presentations........................................200 points
- Some extra credit opportunity may be available.

Grading scale:

- 95-100% = A
- 90-94%  = A-
- 88-89%  = B+
- 85-87%  = B
- 80-84%  = B-
- 78-79%  = C+
- 75-77%  = C
70-754% = C-
Below 70% = D*

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

The policy for Academic Dishonesty as written in the Student Handbook will be in force during this course. Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the Academy community. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated for it threatens the foundation of this institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and critical thinking. To maintain credibility and reputation and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, The Indiana Academy and this instructor, are committed to maintaining a climate which upholds and salutes the highest standards of academic integrity.

EQUITY STATEMENT

Ball State University and The Indiana Academy aspire to be a university and gifted high school that attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and The Indiana Academy and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respectful and civil discourse as expressed in the Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at:
http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter.
SHAKEPEAREAN HISTORIES AND TRAGEDIES
SYLLABUS
MWF 11:00AM
ROOM 119
Mr. Willis

Jan. 8 Mon. Introduction to the course. Lecture on Shakespearean Backgrounds.

Jan. 10 Wed. Lecture Shakespearean backgrounds continues. Also some background on Titus Andronicus.

Jan. 12 Fri. Quiz over lecture notes. Discuss A. C. Bradley pp. 23-75. Discussion will graded. Turn in reading notes.

Jan. 15 Mon. NO SCHOOL-----MLK DAY

Jan. 17 Wed. Read and discuss Acts I and II of Titus Andronicus. 7:00pm Extra credit film of Titus.

Feb. 19 Fri. Read and discuss Acts III, IV, and V of Titus Andronicus

Jan. 22 Fri. Wrap up Titus Andronicus. Lecture, historical backgrounds to Richard II. Background discussion of symbolism in art and literature in the era.

Jan. 24 Wed. Act I, Richard II. Have SUPER PAGES ready to discuss; if possible, have them on Power Point.

Jan. 26 Fri. Film exercise in class on I-4. Discuss Act II, Richard II.

Jan. 29 Mon. Read and discuss Acts III, IV, and V of Richard II.

Jan. 31 Wed. Wrap up Richard II as needed. CRITICS DAY; GROUP A, Bloom, Garber, Frye, and Bradley.

Feb. 2 Fri. Memorized speeches from Richard II.
Feb. 5   Mon.  Extended Weekend

Feb. 7   Wed.  Introduction to *Henry IV, Part I, II and III, Henry IV, Part I.*


Feb. 12  Mon.  Wrap up discussion of *Henry IV, Part I,* with some final film scenes from *Henry IV, Part II.*

Feb. 14  Wed.  Character debates regarding *Henry IV, Part I.*

Feb. 16  Fri.  The *Henry V* films of Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh

Feb. 19  Mon.  Continue viewing *Henry V.*

Feb. 21  Wed.  Continue viewing *Henry V.*


Feb. 26  Mon.  Film notes due on *Henry V.*
Read and discuss Act I, *Richard III.*

Feb. 28  Wed.  Read and discuss Acts II and III of *Richard III.*

Mar, 2   Fri.  Read and discuss Acts IV and V of *Richard III.*

Mar 3–March 11  SPRING BREAK