

Shakespeare - English 330 Spring 2007

**Instructors**

Professor Ramsey  
Office: Arena Theatre  
Office Hours: 9:30 – Noon  
Monday and Wednesday  
By Appointment Only

Professor Reid  
Office: 306 Zinzendorf Hall  
Office Hours: 2 – 4 pm  
Tuesday and Thursday  
And By Appointment

**Texts**

Flachmann, Michael, ed. Shakespeare: From Page to Stage. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2007.

Shakespeare, William. Richard II. Ed. Kenneth Muir. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev.ed. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999.

1595	<i>Richard II</i>
1596/97	<i>Henry IV, Part I</i>
1595/96	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
1596/97	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
1601/02	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
1601/02	<i>Hamlet</i>
1606	<i>Macbeth</i>
1605/06	<i>King Lear</i>
1611	<i>The Tempest</i>
1590's	The Sonnets

**Objectives**

To study the development of Shakespeare's art, emphasizing his vision of humanity and the world, through an analysis of dramatic action, character, language, thought and spectacle

To study the performance of Shakespeare's plays by examining the work of actors, directors, and designers (scene, costume, make-up and lighting)

**Activities**

- Attend class regularly. If more than two unexcused absences occur, the final course grade will be lowered one full letter grade.
- Read all assigned plays and supplementary materials



## Calendar

### January

19 Introduction

26 *Richard II*

### February

02 *King Henry IV, Part I*

09 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

16 *The Merchant of Venice*

23 *Twelfth Night*

### March

02 Examination

Spring Break

16 *Hamlet*

23 *Macbeth*

30 *King Lear*

### April

06 Easter Break

13 *The Tempest*

20 Sonnets

27 Sonnets

## Video Journal Entries

### *Richard II*

How does director David Giles in the 1979 BBC production, using non-verbal means such as casting, costuming and movement, interpret the characters of Bolingbroke and King Richard? Specifically how does Giles interpretation of Bolingbroke and King Richard live up to your expectations of the characters and your initial reading of the play?

### *Henry IV, Part I*

The BBC's 1979 production of the second play in the tetralogy consisting of *Richard II*; *Henry IV, Part I*; *Henry IV, Part II*; and *Henry V* continued under the direction of David Giles and with Jon Finch in the role of Henry Bolingbroke, now King Henry IV. Have the director, designers, and actor carried over any aspects of the previous play? Have they effected any changes? Be specific and try to explain their purposes. Does your reading of the play agree with their decisions about continuity and change? Explain.

### *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

John Russell Taylor has written about the 1935 film version "Not, clearly, a serious approach to Shakespeare at all, and yet, strange to relate, a remarkably successful film."

### *The Merchant of Venice*

In the original 16<sup>th</sup>-century performances of the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*, a boy actor would have played the part of Portia, a beautiful young woman, playing the part of a young man, a Doctor of Laws, Balthasar. The actress Joan Plowright plays Portia/Balthasar in the 1973 British television version. How does your perception of actual age and gender interact with the play's projected appearances as you watch Plowright's performance? Is your impression of her Portia/Balthasar straightforward or layered? expected or not from your reading of the play? satisfying or not?

### *Twelfth Night*

John Gorrie, director of the 1980 BBC's production, emphasizes the play's mellow, autumnal quality. In fact, compared with other directors of the play, Gorrie makes things especially somber, a decision that may not please all audiences, but which has support in the text. What exactly does Gorrie do? Are you pleased or not? Why?

### *Hamlet*

"To be or not to be?" Compare and contrast three performances of this famous soliloquy as they are delivered by Kevin Kline (1990), Kenneth Branagh (1996), and Ethan Hawke (2000)

### *Macbeth*

Compare and contrast the performances of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Roman Polanski's 1971 with the duo in Trevor Nunn's 1979 televised version of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production.

### *The Tragedy of King Lear*

What does Michael Elliott's 1983 production of *King Lear* do for you that the printed text cannot? Explain! Is the reverse true?

### *The Tempest*

*Prospero's Books*, Peter Greenaway's 1991 film based on Shakespeare's *Tempest*, has driven critics to opposite ends of the critical spectrum. Harlan Kennedy, writing in *Film Comment* in January 1992, praises "...the film's state-of-the-art video technology [which] allows Shakespeare's raw material to be swept up in surreal visual-calligraphic paroxysms, further echoing the play/film's theme of design conjured out of raw elements." John Simon, however, vehemently attacks the film in his commentary for the *National Review* of January 20, 1992. He accuses Greenaway of using "...a combination of 'film and video technologies,' especially the digital, electronic Quantel Paintbox (?), to superimpose several actions in a ceaseless visual palimpsest (or, as he calls it, a 'complex visual cascade'), to the utter bewilderment of non-stoned spectators." At which critical pole do you place yourself, Kennedy's or Simon's, especially with regard to the computer-graphic elements of the film?