

Shakespeare and Film

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Course Description

This course explores the phenomenon of 'Shakespeare and film', concentrating on the meanings provoked by the "and" in the course-title. We shall be looking at examples of films of Shakespeare plays both early and recent, both in English and in other languages, and both ones that stick close to conventional concepts of how to film Shakespeare and adaptations at varying degrees of distance from his language, time, plot, reaching a limit in versions that erase Shakespeare from the film. The transposition of different forms of Shakespearean texts (printed, theatrical, filmic) and the confrontation with the specificities of film production have produced and continue to produce a cultural phenomenon whose cultural meanings will be the subject of our investigations.

Required Texts

Editions of the following Shakespeare plays: *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Additional Readings

- Loehlin, James N.. "This star of England: Laurence Olivier (1944)." In *Henry V*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. 25-48.
- Holderness, Graham. "Agincourt 1944: Readings in the Shakespeare Myth" *Literature and History*. 10 (1984): 24-45.
- Burt, Richard. "Shakespeare in Love and the End of the Shakespearean." In *Shakespeare, Film and Fin de Siècle*, edited by Mark Burnett. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. 203-31.
- Lehmann, Courtney. "Shakespeare in Love: Sex, Capitalism and the Authorial Body-in-Pleasure." In *Shakespeare Remains: Theater to Film, Early Modern to Postmodern*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002. 213-233.
- Watson, William van. "Shakespeare, Zeffirelli, and the Homosexual Gaze." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 20 (1992): 308-25.
- Deats, Sara Munson. "Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare for the Sixties." *Studies in Popular Culture* 6 (1983): 60-69.
- Donaldson, Peter S. "'In fair Verona': Media, Spectacle, and Performance in William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet." In *Shakespeare After Mass Media*, edited by Richard Burt. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 59-82.
- Hodgdon, Barbara. "William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: Everything's Nice in America?" *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999): 88-98.
- Osborne, Laurie. "Mixing Media and Animating Shakespeare Tales." In *Shakespeare the Movie II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD*, edited by Lynda Boose and Richard Burt. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.40-53.

- Semenza, Gregory M. Colon. "Teens, Shakespeare, and the Dumbing Down Cliché: The Case of The Animated Tales." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 26, no. 2 (2008): 37-68.
- Deitchman, Elizabeth. "Shakespeare Stiles Style: Shakespeare, Julia Stiles, and American Girl Culture." In *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, edited by Barbara Hodgdon and William B. Worthen. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005. 78-93.
- Friedman, Michael. "The Feminist as Shrew in 10 Things I Hate about You." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 22, no. 2 (2004): 45-65.
- Henderson, Diana. "'A Shrew for the Times,' Revisited" In *Shakespeare the Movie II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD*, edited by Lynda Boose and Richard Burt. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. 120-39.
- Loftis, Sonya Freeman. "Mary Pickford as Shakespearean Shrew: Redefining the Image of America's Sweetheart." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (2010): 331-45.

Syllabus

- | <i>(Week)</i> | <i>Film for screening</i> |
|---------------|--|
| (1) | Beginnings (aka Getting Started). |
| (2) | Shakespeare Writes a Film: <i>Shakespeare in Love</i> (Madden, 1998) |
| (3) | Verona, Italy: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Zeffirelli, 1968) |
| | Sign up for presentations. |
| (4) | Verona Beach: <i>William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet</i> (Luhrmann, 1996) |
| (5) | Verona for Kids: <i>Gnomeo and Juliet</i> (Asbury, 2011) |
| | Mid-term title and abstract due. |
| (6) | Shakespeare and High School: Padua, WA: <i>10 Things I Hate About You</i> (Junger, 1999) |
| (7) | Shakespeare in Hollywood: <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (Taylor, 1929) |
| | Mid-term papers due. |
| (8) | End of the 60s: <i>Macbeth</i> (Polanski, 1971) |

- (9) Samurai Shakespeare: *Throne of Blood* (Kurosawa, 1957)
- (10) Mafia Shakespeare: *Men of Respect* (Reilly, 1991)
- (11) McShakespeare: *Scotland, Pa.* (Morrisette, 2001)
- (12) Shakespeare from Stage to Film: *King Lear* (Brook, 1971)
- (13) Soviet Shakespeare: *Korol Lir* (Kozintsev, 1971)
- Final paper title and abstract due.
- (14) Remembering Shakespeare: *The King Is Alive* (Levring, 2001)
- (15) Final papers due

Rules and Comments

You must read the plays on which the films are based – no excuses. There will be quizzes – see below.

You must read the article materials assigned that are related to the films – no excuses.

You must watch all of the assigned films – no excuses.

I also expect you to be at every class punctually. As far as I'm concerned, lateness is much the same thing as absence.

This is not a Shakespeare class. I do not expect to spend much class time exploring the Shakespeare text separately from the film versions. If you want a class that will enable you to study Shakespeare's plays, then you've picked the wrong class!

The films do not add up to my list of all-time great Shakespeare films. I have deliberately tried to keep the number of different plays covered down. So I haven't included, say, Taymor's *Titus* or Godard's *Lear*. Much as I'd like to have found space, there are no screenings of important and fine 'versions' like *Maqbool* or *Makibefo*. You will be welcome to explore such work for your final paper (but see below on 'Presentations'). Some of the films we will watch are magnificent, some are (IMHO) not so good. We may well disagree about which are in which category. We study bad films to understand what they are doing and why, not to admire them.

Words/phrases to avoid in class and papers: the Bard, themes, relatable, it is interesting to note that..., we shall see that... (and complex passive forms designed to avoid the use of the 1st person singular pronouns).

The asynchronous classes will act primarily as preparations for the screenings, providing context for both the film and the play and will also include frequent close analysis of an extract from the film. Beginning in Week 8, asynchronous material will include presentations given by pairs of students.

Requirements and Penalties

These percentages are guides, not hard-and-fast categories. I will not be spending hours with a calculator.

Class participation	10%	You must be in the Live Session and awake and participating!
Completion of asynchronous class materials	20%	See below!
Mid-term paper	20%	8-10pp. The opening of a screenplay for a Shakespeare film you have imagined plus an analysis of that opening. More details later.
Presentation	20%	A joint presentation plus one short film extract. Many more details later.
Final paper	30%	12pp. Even more details later.

Grades

Do every assignment fully, participate significantly, work hard, watch attentively, think constructively – and you'll earn a B grade (B+, B, B-). Go the extra yard, do research, think imaginatively, write thoughtfully, work very hard – and you'll earn an A/A-. Miss out anything, sit back, let others do the work for you and you'll earn a C or worse.

Policies

Titles/Abstract/etc for mid-term and final papers: Failure to hand in the material when due will result in an automatic F for the assignment.

Attendance and late papers:

Any more than 2 unexcused absences from scheduled Live Sessions during the semester will result in a drop in your final course grade by ½ a step per unexcused absence. For each day a paper is handed in late, your grade will drop by ½ a step.

Reading Assignments

As soon as the presentations start, the presenters will be responsible for guiding us to critical writing that will help us to understand the films. What kinds of things do we want to read? Scholarly/critical articles or book chapters that will provide sharp analysis to contextualize or otherwise enhance our understanding. What do we not want to read for this purpose? Newspaper reviews of the movie. How do we find the material? Articles and other materials are available online as e-resources. There are major bibliographies that may help, for example the World Shakespeare Bibliography Online. If you would like suggestions, ask me (by e-mail or carrier-pigeon). More explanation in a hand-out to follow.

Presentation

This will be a significant part of your work for the course. You and your 'pair' will be responsible the presentation in the asynchronous class and for leading discussion in the live classroom that week. Your presentation of context might include exploration of some (but probably not all) of the following kinds of concerns (these are just examples): the treatment of the text (cuts, additions, rewrites); the connection with the studio and/or distributors; the other work of the director, cast, crew; responses to the film (reviews, critical analysis). Your presentation of an extract for analysis should enable the rest of the class to prepare for the screening effectively and therefore you might want to offer some guidance about lighting, setting, acting, camerawork, editing, sound, etc, etc, etc. If this all seems complex at present then, with luck, the first few weeks when I will be leading the work will make it all clearer. But you should also contact me *at least two weeks* before the presentation for some guidance on extra reading/viewing you will need to do to make the presentation work well.

Because I expect a substantial amount of work to be needed for your presentation you may well want to make the film on which you have worked for the presentation also the basis for your final paper, so that you can develop in written form the kinds of work you have done for the presentation. You do not have to do so but I suspect many of you will want to do so. This also means that you should think carefully about which film you will opt for as your presentation.