

# Shakespeare: Histories and Comedies (Fall 2021)

Dr. Jenny C. Bledsoe



Upper row, L to R: Tom Hiddleston as Henry V in *The Hollow Crown* (2012); Laurence Olivier as Richard III (1955). Bottom row, L to R: Alexis Denisof and Amy Acker as Benedick and Beatrice in Joss Whedon's *Much Ado About Nothing* (2012); Marina Shay as Viola, Ginneh Thomas as Olivia, and Charles Pasternak as Duke Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, Alabama Shakespeare Festival (2018); Ian Merrill Peakes and Karen Peakes as Angelo and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Folger Theatre (2016).

This semester, we will read five of Shakespeare's plays: two histories, *Henry V* and *Richard III*; two comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*; and a "problem play," *Measure for Measure*, which is often classified as a comedy. We will analyze early modern dramatic works, medieval sources, modern adaptations of the plays, and recent scholarship on Shakespeare.

## **BOOKS**

The following five books are required; they are all Folger Shakespeare Library editions (ed. Barbara A. Mowat et al.). All other readings will be available via a link or PDF on Blackboard.

- Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. ISBN: 978-0743484879.
- ---. *Measure for Measure*. ISBN: 978-074348909.
- ---. *Much Ado About Nothing*. ISBN: 978-0743482752.
- ---. *Richard III*. ISBN: 978-0743482844.
- ---. *Twelfth Night*. ISBN: 978-0743482776.

You will be required to watch two modern adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. *Much Ado About Nothing* will be available for free screening online, while *Henry V* is \$1.99 SD/\$2.99 HD to buy via Amazon Prime Video.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **ENGL 4203: Undergraduate requirements**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Percentage of final grade</b>
Attendance	ongoing	10%
Participation	ongoing	9%
<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> journal, 5 entries of 3 words from each play, about one paragraph per word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wed., Sept. 8, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Sept. 29, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Oct. 13, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Oct. 29, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Nov. 10, 4:30pm</li> </ul>	10% (2% each)
Adaptation discussions (3 entries of one paragraph each, 2x)	<i>Henry V</i> , s1 ep4 of <i>The Hollow Crown</i> (2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Sept. 12, 11:59pm</li> </ul> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , adaptation by Joss Whedon (2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Oct. 17, 11:59pm</li> </ul>	6% (3% each)
Two short papers, 2–3 pages each <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One must analyze a history (<i>Henry V</i> or <i>Richard III</i>)</li> <li>• One must analyze a comedy (<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> or <i>Twelfth Night</i>)</li> </ul>	History paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Oct. 3, 11:59pm</li> </ul> Comedy paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Oct. 31, 11:59pm</li> </ul>	20% (10% each)
Modern adaptation project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper, 4–5 pages</li> <li>• Presentation, 8–10 minutes</li> </ul>	Papers due Sun., Nov. 14, 11:59pm  Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduates on Nov. 17</li> <li>• Graduates: 1 on Nov. 17, 4 on Dec. 1</li> </ul>	15% paper 5% pres.
Final literary research paper		
• Proposal (1 page)	Sun., Nov. 21, 11:59pm	5%
• Peer review of final paper drafts	Wed., Dec. 8, in class	participation
• Final paper (8 pages)	Wed., Dec. 15, 7:10pm	20%

### **ENGL 5583: Graduate requirements**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Percentage of final grade</b>
Attendance	ongoing	10%
Participation	ongoing	9%

Presentation (10 minutes) and handout (1 page single-spaced) on a scholarly article addressing one of our plays	Sign up for one of five available dates/articles (Sept. 8, Sept. 29, Oct. 13, Oct. 29, or Nov. 10)	5%
<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> journal, 5 entries of three words from each play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wed., Sept. 8, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Sept. 29, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Oct. 13, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Oct. 29, 4:30pm</li> <li>• Wed., Nov. 10, 4:30pm</li> </ul>	10% (2% each)
Adaptation discussions (3 entries of one paragraph each, 2x)	<i>Henry V</i> , s1 ep4 of <i>The Hollow Crown</i> (2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Sept. 12, 11:59pm</li> </ul> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , adaptation by Joss Whedon (2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Oct. 17, 11:59pm</li> </ul>	6% (3% each)
Two short papers, 3–4 pages each <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One must analyze a history (<i>Henry V</i> or <i>Richard III</i>)</li> <li>• One must analyze a comedy (<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> or <i>Twelfth Night</i>)</li> </ul> <p>You must cite <u>at least one</u> scholarly article in each paper.</p>	History paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Oct. 3, 11:59pm</li> </ul> Comedy paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun., Oct. 31, 11:59pm</li> </ul>	16% (8% each)
Modern adaptation project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper, 4–5 pages</li> <li>• Presentation, c. 25 minutes</li> </ul>	Papers due Sun., Nov. 14, 11:59pm  Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduates on Nov. 17</li> <li>• Graduates: 1 on Nov. 17, 4 on Dec. 1</li> </ul>	10% paper 10% pres.
Final literary research paper		
• Proposal (1 page)	Sun., Nov. 21, 11:59pm	5%
• Peer review of final paper drafts	Wed., Dec. 8, in class	participation
• Final paper (14–16 pages)	Wed., Dec. 15, 7:10pm	19%

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

- Aug. 25      *Before class.* Read the syllabus and Daniel Pollack-Pelzner, “Why We (Mostly) Stopped Messing with Shakespeare’s Language,” *The New Yorker*, October 6, 2015 ([PDF](#)).
- In class.* Lecture on Shakespeare and his works, focusing on histories and comedies, and discussion of Pollack-Pelzner article

## **Shakespeare's Histories**

Sept. 1 *Henry V*, Prologue & Acts I–III (pp. 7–129)

Sept. 8 *Henry V*, Acts IV–V (pp. 143–237);  
excerpt from Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (PDF)  
OED 1 entry due at 4:30pm

**Graduate student presentation on** Constance C. T. Hunt, "The Origins of National Identity in Shakespeare's *Henry V*," *Perspectives on Political Science* 36.3 (Summer 2007): 133–140 (PDF).

**Sunday, Sept. 12, 11:59pm: Adaptation discussion entries on *Henry V* due**

Sept. 15 *Richard III*, Acts I–II (pp. 9–125)

Sept. 22 *Richard III*, Acts III–IV (pp. 129–263)

Sept. 29 *Richard III*, Act V (pp. 267–303);  
excerpt from St Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* (PDF)  
OED 2 entry due at 4:30pm

**Graduate student presentation on** Katherine Schaap Williams, "Enabling Richard: The Rhetoric of Disability in *Richard III*," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 29.4 (2009): n.p. Available online at <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/997/1181>.

**Sunday, Oct. 3, 11:59pm: History paper due**

## **Shakespeare's Comedies**

Oct. 6 *Much Ado About Nothing*, Acts I–II (pp. 7–79)

Oct. 13 *Much Ado About Nothing*, Acts III–V (pp. 83–197)  
OED 3 entry due at 4:30pm

**Graduate student presentation on** Nova Myhill, "Spectatorship in/of 'Much Ado About Nothing,'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 39.2 (Spring 1999): 291–311 (PDF).

**Sunday, Oct. 17, 11:59pm: Adaptation discussion entries on *Much Ado About Nothing* due**

Oct. 20 *Twelfth Night*, Acts I–II (pp. 7–87)

Oct. 27 *Twelfth Night*, Acts III–V (pp. 91–189);  
a short article about a review of the first performance of the play on February 2, 1602 by a law student, John Manningham, written by Dr. Will Tosh ([link](#))  
OED 4 entry due at 4:30pm

**Graduate student presentation on** Maria Carrig, "*Twelfth Night* and Gender Fluidity,"

*William Shakespeare and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Culture, Politics, and Leadership*, ed. Kristin M. S. Bezio and Anthony P. Russell (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), 202–17 ([PDF](#))

**Sunday, Oct. 31, 11:59pm: Comedy paper due**

Nov. 3      *Measure for Measure*, Acts I–III (pp. 7–127)

Nov. 10     *Measure for Measure*, Acts IV–V (pp. 131–211);  
Julia Reinhard Lupton, excerpt from “Saints on Trial: The Genre of *Measure for Measure*”  
(110–11); “Saint Cecilia” (318–23); “Saint Paul the Hermit” (84–85) ([PDFs](#))  
**OED 5 entry due at 4:30pm**

**Graduate student presentation on** Stacy Magedanz, “Public Justice and Private Mercy in *Measure for Measure*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 44.2 (Spring 2004): 317–32 ([PDF](#)).

**Sunday, Nov. 14, 11:59pm: Modern adaptation paper due**

### **Conclusion**

Nov. 17     Undergraduates’ and one graduate student’s modern adaptation presentations  
**Bring to class: ideas for final paper for peer review workshop**

**Sunday, Nov. 21, 11:59pm: Proposal for final paper due**

Nov. 24     Thanksgiving holiday, no class

Dec. 1      Four graduate students’ modern adaptation presentations

Dec. 8      In class: peer review of final research paper drafts  
(bring at least 3 pages if undergraduate, 6 pages if graduate)

Dec. 15     **Final paper due by 7:10pm.** No meeting.