

Spring 1-15-2008

ENG 5002-001: Studies in Shakespeare

William J. Searle
Eastern Illinois University

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Dr. William J. Searle

English 5002—001—Studies in Shakespeare: Shakespeare Twice-told
Thurs. 7:00 to 9:30 PM—CH 3159 (CH 309)

Office: CH 3371 (314B)

Office Phone: 581-6375; e-mail:cfwjs@eiu.edu

Home Phone: 345-7670

Office Hours: 9:00 to 9:50 MWF; 3:00 to 3:50 Fri. and by appointment

The following texts are used for English 5002:

David Bevington, Editor. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Fifth Edition. Boston, MA: Longman/Pearson, 2004.

Russell Jackson, Editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Timothy J. Corrigan. *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*. Fifth Edition. New York, New York: Pearson, Longman, 2004.

Requirements:

Your participation (in the form of comments, responses, questions, oral reports, etc.) is essential to the quality of this course. Speaking Shakespearean verse, dancing on table tops, and publishing your essays are not requirements. If, however, students in this class do publish essays written for the course, your humble instructor will boast about them to his colleagues for at least the next five years!

Initially, particularly in Shakespeare's early tragedies (like *Titus Andronicus* or *Richard III*, for instance), the language itself—reflecting the world view, syntax, and vocabulary of the Renaissance and early seventeenth century—may provide an obstacle between us and the texts. That difficulty should pass reasonably quickly, though few, if any, of Shakespeare's histories or tragedies are quick reads. The course outline, I believe, suggests what is manageable in a graduate-level course on Shakespeare. We can, if need be, reduce speed, back track, or even take an occasional detour when the situation warrants.

Written requirements: One ten to twelve page typewritten essay (worth 40%) on a topic of your choice (after a brief discussion with me) is due during the last week of class. More precise guidelines and suggestions are attached. The ideal, of course, is that you create your own topic.

Oral presentations: Each of you will present two in-class projects (15% apiece), in which you present secondary material on a particular issue or theme in the Shakespearean plays discussed in class. There are all sorts of possibilities, many of which are listed on the

course outline, but the areas listed may be changed after a consultation with me. I have copies of all of the secondary sources listed and will distribute them by lot in the next class. The basic format of the presentation would consist of a handout, a review/summary of the major points of the article, and an optional assessment of the article's or articles' usefulness, virtues, flaws, omissions, etc. Applying the findings of the article to a scene or scenes in the play not discussed by the critic would be impressive, but not required. For those of you who have presentations on a film version of a play, remember to back up the critic's arguments (or your own) on the handout by showing segments of the film. Indeed, since we will not have the time to view any of the film versions in their entirety, the more scenes we see of a particular film version, the better. Obviously, those presentations dealing with film will, in most cases, be longer than those just dealing with the text. Any handout you distribute (one for everyone in the class) should contain a brief summary, key quotations, an outline of the argument, etc., along with the appropriate MLA Works Cited entry. I will bring sample handouts with me next Thursday.

Class participation: Informal class participation will count thirty percent (30%). In any case, because this is a graduate seminar, we are all responsible for its success. If an absence is unavoidable due to a severe illness, a family emergency, an ice storm, etc., you may make it up by giving another presentation or by illustrating your thespian skills by a dramatic reading of a scene from one of the plays discussed in class. Feel free to bring in props, costumes, etc. to enhance your performance (the more imaginative, the better). If any of you want to do a dramatic reading, even if you have not been absent, just let me know.

Logistics: Your instructor owns a copy of every video presented in class, not mention video versions of many Shakespearean plays not discussed in class. Booth library has a surprisingly good collection, so too does the English Department. Various video stores or other libraries are also options. From Booth's collection I should be able to construct a reserve list of many of the plays discussed in class, if you wish me to do so. I would prefer not to place my own videos or those of the department (that my colleagues may wish to view in their classes) on library reserve (where anyone would be eligible to check them out).

In any case, this procedure seems best to me: the class before a presentation on a filmed version is due, I will give you a copy of the video. If you want it sooner, just let me know. If you decide to write your paper on a video version, I will gladly loan you a copy. If the video supply becomes tight, it may be that two or three of you will have to share. A further note: your humble instructor will try to purchase as many Shakespeare videos as he can before the semester ends.

A Very Tentative Course Outline

Wk #1-Thurs.. Jan. 10—Discussion of course and assignment of texts; lecture on the Renaissance; video—scenes from plays we will not discuss in class: silent films, early “talkies,” etc.

Wk #2-Thurs. “ 17—MAGIC HAT RITUAL: drawing lots for presentations.

TEXT: Much Ado about Nothing

Handouts on comedy, a synopsis of Castiglione’s Theories on the Renaissance Lady

Class Assignment

Read Russell Jackson’s “From Play-Script to Screenplay,” Pages 15-31 in *Shakespeare on Film* (SOF)

Read Chapter I of Timothy J. Corrigan’s *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*—“Writing about the Movies.” (WAF)

Wk #3-Thurs.. “ 24—FILM VERSION: Branagh’s Much Ado About Nothing

Presentation on the text:

Michael D. Friedman’s “Hushed on Purpose to Grace Harmony”: Wives and Silence in *Much Ado about Nothing*.”

Presentation on a Film Version:

Samuel Crowl’s “Shakespeare and Hollywood: Branagh’s Much Ado about Nothing”

Wk #4-Thurs. Jan. 31—TEXT: Titus Andronicus

Presentation on the text:

Emily Detmer-Goebel’s “The Need for Lavinia’s Voice: *Titus Andronicus* and the Telling of Rape.”

Presentation on the text:

Francesca T. Royster's "White-limed Walls: Whiteness and Gothic Extremism in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*."

Wk #5-Thurs.. Feb. 7—FILM VERSION : Taymor's *Titus*

Presentation on a Film Version:

Mary Lindroth's "Some Device of Further Misery":
Taymor's *Titus* Brings Shakespeare to Film Audiences
with a twist."

Presentation on a Film Version:

Clara Escoda August's "Julie Taymor's *Titus*: Framing
Violence and Activating Responsibility."

Suggested Reading: Barbara Freedman's "Critical Junctures
In Shakespeare's Screen History: The Case of Richard III", pages
47-68 in SOF

Wk #6-Thurs.. " 14—TEXT: Richard III

Presentation on the text:

Madonne Miner's "'Neither mother, wife, nor England's
Queen': The Roles of Women in Richard III"

Class assignment:

Read H.R. Coursen's "Filming Shakespeare's History:
Three films of Richard III," pages 99-115 in SOF

Wk#7-Thurs.. " 28—FILM VESIONS: Laurence Olivier's Richard III and Loncraine's
Richard III

Presentation on a film version:

Anthony Davies' "Laurence Olivier's "Richard III"

Presentation on a film version:

Samuel Crowl's "Changing Colors like the Chameleon:
Loncraine's Richard III"

Perhaps scenes from Al Pacino's Looking for Richard

Class assignment: read Chapter 3 of WAF—"Film Terms and Topics For Film Analysis and Writing"

Wk #8-Thurs. Mar.6—TEXT: Henry V

Presentation on the text:

John S. Mebane's "Impious War": Religion and the Ideology of Warfare in Henry V"

SPRING RECESS—MARCH 8 THRU MARCH 16—NO CLASSES

Wk #9-Thurs. Mar 20—FILM VERSIONS: Olivier's Henry V and Branagh's Henry V

Presentation on a film version:

Anthony Davies' "Laurence Olivier's Henry V"

Presentation on a film version:

Kathy Howlett's "Framing Ambiguity: Kenneth Branagh's Henry"

Suggested reading: Chapter 6 of WAF—"Researching the Movies"

Wk #10-Thurs." 20—TEXT : Hamlet

Presentation on the text:

James W. Stone's "Androgynous 'union' and the Woman in Hamlet

Presentation on the text:
Robert C. Evans' "Friendship in Hamlet"

Suggested reading: Harry Keyishian's "Shakespeare
And Movie Genre: The Case of Hamlet" in SOF

Wk #11-Thurs. Mar.27—FILM VERSIONS: Olivier's Hamlet, Zeffirelli's
Hamlet, and Branagh's Hamlet

Presentation on a film version:
Anthony Davies' "Laurence Olivier's Hamlet"

Presentation on a film version:
Samuel Crowl's "The Golden Girl and a Fistful
Of Dust: Zeffirelli's Hamlet"

Presentation on a film version:
Douglas Lanier's "Art Thou Base, Common and Popular?":
The Cultural Politics of Kenneth Branagh's Hamlet"

Class assignment:
Read Patricia Tatzpaugh's "The Tragedies of Love on Film,"
Pages 144-153 in SOF

Wk #12-Thurs. Apr. 3—TEXT: Othello

Presentation on the text:
Lena Cowen Orlin's "Desdemona's Disposition"

Presentation on the text:
Daniel J. Vitkus' "Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion
and Damnation of the Moor."

Wk #13-Thurs.. " 10—FILM VERSIONS: Welles' Othello, Burge/Dexter's Othello
(starring Olivier), Parker's Othello (starring Laurence
Fishburne)

Presentation on a film version:
Anthony Davies' "Orson Welles' Othello"

Presentation on a film version:
Jack Jorgens' "Stuart Burge and John Dexter's Othello"

Presentation of a film version:
Samuel Crowl's "Checkmate: Parker's Othello"

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Wk#14-Thurs. Apr. 17—TEXT: The Tempest

Presentation on the text:

Barbara Fuch's "Conquering Islands: Contextualizing
The Tempest"

Presentation on the text:

Ben Ross Schneider's "Are We Being Historical Yet?":
Colonialist Interpretations of the Shakespeare's *Tempest*"

Wk#15—Thurs. Apr.24—FILM VERSION: For mature audiences only: Greenaway's
Prospero's Books, perhaps scenes from Jarman's Tempest

Presentation on a film version:

Douglas Lanier's "Drowning the Book: Prospero's Books
And the textual Shakespeare"

Presentation on a film version:

James Andreas' "'Where's the Master?': The Technologies
Of the Stage, Book, and Screen in The Tempest and Prospero's
Books"

PAPERS ARE DUE DURING THE LAST WEEK OF CLASS, NO LATER THAN
FRIDAY, APRIL 28 AT NOON.

Possible Paper Topics

The first day of class is too early to assign paper topics, yet even a fifteen-week semester tends to fly by quickly, especially for those of you who already have a fulltime job. I have scheduled the due date as late as I can, Monday, April 28, particularly since grades are due the following week. There may be some wiggle room after that, but not much.

In any event, the following is merely a list of areas of interest and does not pretend to be an exhaustive (or very specific) list. As the semester progresses, I will be suggesting other subjects, indeed more specific subjects, to write about. Since the areas below are rather general, they will have to be restricted and focused according to your interests and findings. In other words, restriction of topic and construction of a thesis statement are your responsibilities. Of course, you are encourage to create your own topics. All I ask is that you let me approve your topic several weeks before you actually start working on your essay.

The essay should be of medium-length—10 to 12 pages of typewritten text—essentially critical in nature and based upon a careful reading of a work or works or careful viewing of a film or films. Needless to say, your essay should not be a rehash of information discussed in class. Our library has more than enough secondary sources, especially articles in scholarly journals to stimulate your thought and lend support to your work. Incidentally, there is a bibliography in the back of the Bevington Shakespeare, arranged according to background, themes, genre, and studies of individual plays. The *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film* also has a “Suggestions for Further Reading” section. The references in those texts might be a good place to start your research. Of course, the best place is still the MLA Bibliography in Booth Library. All you have to do is click on Library Services, then Article Indexes, then literature, then scroll down to the MLA. As you know, any critical study will mention works for further reading. The proper documentation form, the MLA Style Sheet, 5th Edition, is found in most college handbooks. Many of these are available in our Writing Center, Room 301 Coleman Hall.

For years scholarship in Shakespeare has been, virtually, an industry, its publications including everything from the truly insightful to the very arcane and eccentric, as a quick glance at the MLA Bibliography proves. For that reason, any criticism that you read for this paper must be leavened with your good sense. It might be a good idea, then, to read the text (or view the film) carefully before you read the appropriate criticism. Then single out some aspect of the work to discuss in the terms of the age which produced it and the contribution it makes to your understanding of the craft of William Shakespeare. The paper is due at the end of the last week of class, April 25 or at latest, Monday, April 28 at noon. Good Luck!

- the role of gender in any play discussed in class, or in any Shakespearean play or film not discussed in class
- comic devices/ techniques in any Shakespearean tragedy or history
- plot structure
- subplot (as Hamlet's relationship with Ophelia or the below-stairs characters in the comedies)
- the fool in any Shakespearean play or plays
- the influence of the Morality Play in a Shakespearean tragedy
- deaths of various characters
- initial or concluding scenes
- fathers and daughters in any Shakespearean play or plays
- use or abuse of disguise
- the technique of eavesdropping
- A Shakespearean tragedy or history as a reflection of or comment upon a recent or current event in Renaissance England (*Macbeth* and James I)
- the use of satire
- witchcraft or magic
- the impact of Senecan tragedy
- Shakespeare's use of madness
- fathers and sons in one or more of Shakespeare's tragedies or histories
- absent mothers
- elements of an early tragedy or comedy that appear in later Shakespearean plays
- Shakespeare's use of history (Shakespeare's Richard III vs. the historical Richard III)
- an essay on pedagogy, an approach to teaching a particular Shakespearean play or plays
- the theme of friendship in a Shakespearean comedy
- marriage in a Shakespearean tragedy, comedy, or history
- the play within a play
- the use of character foils
- kingship in one of the tragedies, comedies, or histories
- the theme of insanity in one or more of Shakespeare's tragedies
- evocation of a particular dramatic world
- stage properties—props, off-stage noise, costume, spectacle, setting, mime, etc.
- biblical allusions in a Shakespearean play—especially a tragedy or history
- the classical influence (Ovid, Seneca, Sophocles, etc.)

- the humanist influence (Erasmus, More)
- Shakespeare's use of sources (Thomas More's Richard IIIs. Shakespeare's; Shakespeare's use of Holinshed or Hall)
- Romeo and Juliet* or *Othello* as inverted comedies
- uses of soliloquy in a particular play
- ghosts or the supernatural
- the adaptation of one of Shakespeare's plays to film
- a contrast of two video versions of the same play

--any of the various twice-told Shakespeare plays: the film *A Thousand Acres* retells *King Lear*, the film *My Own Private Idaho* retells *King Henry IV, part I, part II*, and *Henry V*, so does Orson Welle's *Chimes at Midnight*, etc.