

Shakespeare in Performance Summer 2020

Stratford, Ontario

Brock University

St. Jerome's/University of Waterloo

University of Guelph

University of Windsor

Western University

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Course Description: This course provides the opportunity for both academic and experiential learning about three of Shakespeare's plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*. Students will participate in intensive classroom study and discussion; Q&As with cast members of shows; and classroom visits via Zoom from renowned actors in the Stratford Festival Company.

Shakespeare in Performance will examine the Shakespeare plays on Performance Plus in terms of stage history, performance choices, changing reception and social contexts. We will consider how Shakespeare, as Ben Jonson suggested, was “not of an age, but for all time” by looking at ways in which his plays continue to be relevant in our own era even as they are continually transformed and mediated through the lens of our understanding of theatre and the world.

At this historical moment, we will focus on the problem of disease in Shakespeare's drama, since his theatre was more than once closed during outbreaks of the bubonic plague and since the plays on our list all deal in various ways with the idea of illness.

Our classes will be held via Zoom and course materials, assignments, and announcements will be available on OWL.

Readings and viewings for the class: please watch and read *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* on Performance Plus, as well as the Online Lectures posted on OWL and selected critical readings (listed below and available under Resources on OWL).

Class Schedule (please note that actor visits via Zoom are TBA):

Week 1:

Monday, May 4: Introduction: Shakespeare's Theatre and the Stratford Festival

Tuesday, May 5: watch *Romeo and Juliet*

Wednesday, May 6: *Romeo and Juliet* discussion: the disease of love and the plague

Thursday, May 7: watch *Hamlet*

Friday, May 8: *Hamlet* discussion: the antic disposition

Saturday, May 9: *Hamlet* discussion: articles on disease in *Hamlet*

Sunday, May 10: Mother's Day—no class! Think about Gertrude

Week 2:

Monday, May 11: **Essay 1: in class, on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet***

Tuesday, May 12: watch *King Lear*

Wednesday, May 13: *King Lear* discussion: Let me not be mad, sweet Heaven!

Thursday, May 14: *King Lear* discussion; articles on Lear and dementia

Friday, May 15: **Test**

Saturday, May 16: **Essay 2 Due**

Essay Topics:

Essay 1: In-class, Monday, May 11. Worth 20%. 1 hour, spend ½ hour on each passage. Open book.

Students will be asked to choose one passage from *Romeo and Juliet* and one from *Hamlet* and write a brief analysis of the passage in terms of literary and performance elements and relation to the play and performance as a whole. There will be a choice of two passages from each play.

Examples of literary elements: patterns of imagery, significant repetition, rhetorical devices such as paradox, language play such as puns, metaphors, similes, versification, soliloquies, irony

Examples of performance elements: lighting, sets, costumes, sound, music, props, blocking, levels of playing, fight choreography, dance choreography, make up, color, special effects

Test: In-class Friday, May 15, 2 hours, worth 40%. Format: short answer.

This test will involve short answers in full sentences to 20 questions (5 on each play) about *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, as well as two bonus question on the history of the Stratford Festival. Open book. Timed and available on OWL.

Essay 2: Due Saturday, May 16, worth 40%: Write a 1500-word essay in which you present an argument that considers BOTH one of the articles we have read (see below) AND a performance of one of the plays we have studied. **Use MLA 8 format and cite carefully! Ask for help if you have any questions.**

Selected Critical Readings:

Bergeron, David M. "Sickness in *Romeo and Juliet*." *CLA Journal*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1977, pp. 356–364. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44329270. Accessed 24 Mar. 2020.

Dewall, Nichole, et al. "A Plague "o Both Your Houses": *Shakespeare and Early Modern Plague Writing*." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1 Jan. 2008, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304546238/>.

Dressel, Samantha. "Terror and Dementia in *King Lear*." *Shakespeare Newsletter*, vol. 66, no. 2,

- Spring 2017, p. 72+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, <https://link-gale-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/apps/doc/A512374822/AONE?u=lond95336&sid=AONE&xid=e cadbe2d>. Accessed 24 Mar. 2020.
- Hunter, Dianne. "Ear disease in *Hamlet*." *Journal of Social and Psychological Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2010, p. 19+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, <https://link-gale-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/apps/doc/A314443329/AONE?u=lond95336&sid=AONE&xid=7 0ae41fc>. Accessed 24 Mar. 2020.
- Maginess, Tess, et al. "'Poor, Bare Fork'd Animal': The Representation of Dementia in *King Lear*." *Dementia and Literature: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 1st ed., vol. 1, Routledge, 2018, pp. 53–70, doi:10.4324/9781315207315-4.
- Makaryk, Irena R., and Diana Brydon. *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere*. University of Toronto Press, 2002.
https://books.scholarsportal.info/uri/ebooks/ebooks0/gibson_crkn/2009-12-01/6/418314
- Thiele, Matthew, and Constance Relihan. *Invisible Tokens: Staging Cultural Anxieties About the Plague in the Plays of Shakespeare and Jonson*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1 Jan. 2011, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/905174478/>.
- Vanhoutte, Jacqueline. "Denmark's Rotting Reconsidered." *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 91, no. 3, University of Iowa, Philological Quarterly, 2012, pp. 393–418, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1459729211/>.