



ELL 409 – Shakespeare II

Asst. Prof. Michael D. Sheridan

Tuesday 12⁰⁰–13⁰⁰ / Thursday 12⁰⁰–14⁰⁰

G212

Office Hours: Held online, made by email appointment

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Course Description

This course will focus primarily on the four “great tragedies” (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*) written by William Shakespeare between 1600 and 1606 CE, though we will also read the later tragicomic play *The Tempest*, as well as several of Shakespeare’s “Dark Lady” sonnets. We will concentrate especially on understanding the plays and their themes, significance, and artistry within their own intellectual, sociocultural, and historical context(s), and to this end will also read a number of other, related contemporaneous primary-source texts.

Course Format

Although there will be occasional lectures or mini-lectures outlining, for example, the intellectual, sociocultural, and historical background of the plays that we will read, for the most part this course is a reading- and discussion-based course. Therefore, you will be expected to come to each class having read, thought about, taken notes on, and prepared questions or comments relating to the assigned texts. The class will then proceed according to your preparation as we discuss, debate, and (hopefully) clarify your thoughts and ideas.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ analyze, interpret, and think critically and creatively about the verbal, generic, structural, and dramatic qualities of William Shakespeare’s plays, particularly his tragedies
- ✓ utilize other contemporary primary sources as a means to better understanding and interpreting the plays
- ✓ connect the plays to the intellectual, sociocultural, and historical contexts in which they were produced
- ✓ conduct research independently and utilize the results of that research to produce analytical and critical work

Readings and Course Materials

All texts for the course will be provided for you via the course Moodle page, in either PDF format or via a URL link, as appropriate. You will be responsible for regularly checking the course Moodle page before class for assigned readings, updates, and announcements.

Most of the readings will consist of primary sources (*e.g.*, plays, poems, contemporary essays, etc.), although introductory or analytical secondary sources (*e.g.*, book chapters, journal articles, etc.) may also be occasionally assigned. As Shakespeare used an English that is over four centuries old now, his work can be difficult to read, especially for those for whom English is a second language: the plays that we read will be annotated, but I will also point you toward online modernized versions, with the expectation that you will use the latter as a supplement to, and not a replacement for, the original versions. On occasion, I may also point you toward various filmed versions of the plays we will read; these can be sources of great insight into the plays, but again, they should not be used as replacements for reading.

You are also strongly encouraged to seek out and read, on your own, any other material that will help you. I am, of course, ready and willing and happy to point you in the direction of such sources, some of which may be found through the Department of English Language and Literature's "Useful Links for Students" page at <https://ell.tedu.edu.tr/en/ell/useful-links-for-students>.

Grading

Your final grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

Ongoing (formative) assessment (30%)

- **Attendance and participation (15% of total grade)**

Because, as noted above, this is a reading- and discussion-based course, regular attendance at and active participation in class (and, if applicable, on Moodle forums) are expected and required. The attendance portion of your grade counts for 5% of your total grade (determined based directly on the percentage of class hours attended), while the participation portion of your grade counts for 10% of your total grade

- **Reading responses (15% of total grade)**

Over the course of the semester, you will write a total of three (3) short (approximately 500 to 750 words) reading responses to the plays and/or other material; each response will be worth 5% of your total grade. Some of these responses may be submitted separately, while others may be posted in an open forum on the course Moodle page; in any case, the content of and approach to adopt with each response will vary. More details about these reading responses will be provided in the first week of class, and periodically in class throughout the semester.

Summative assessment (70%)

- **Midterm essay (30% of total grade)**

You will be expected to write a comparative midterm essay of approximately 1,000–1,500 words focusing on at least two of the texts or other materials used or recommended in class. More details will be provided via Moodle, email, and/or in class. Your midterm essay will be due no later than Friday, November 26.

- **Final essay (40% of total grade)**

You will be expected to write a comparative final essay of approximately 2,000–2,500 words focusing on at least two of the texts or other materials used or recommended in class; this (if you wish) may be a continuation on and expansion of your midterm essay. More details will be provided via Moodle, email, and/or in class. Your final essay will be due no later than Friday, January 14.

Statement on Academic Integrity

TED University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. Such a level of ethical behavior and academic integrity will be expected in this course. Participating in behavior that violates academic integrity—e.g., unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments, plagiarism, multiple submissions of the same assignment and paper, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person to cheat, having unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, or any other action deemed as giving an unfair academic advantage—will result in disciplinary action. For more information on what constitutes ethical academic integrity at TED University, please see the following page: <https://student.tedu.edu.tr/en/student/principles-of-academic-integrity>.

Also please note that, in this course, any form of discrimination and/or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability, among other personal characteristics or choices, are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Attendance, Make-up, and Late Submission Policies

You are required to attend class regularly: as noted above, simple attendance counts for 5% of your total grade, but please note that more than 12 class hours of absence will result in failure of the course.

Except in cases of documented illness or emergency, there will be no make-ups for any of the assessments listed above. Late submissions (again, with the exception of documented illness or emergency) will be accepted, but at a penalty of 10% of the relevant assessment's overall grade per 24-hour period.

Tentative Reading Schedule

Below you will find a rough reading schedule for each week. You will notice that each of the five plays that we will read has approximately two weeks devoted to it, and that, as mentioned earlier, a number of related supplemental readings (including some sonnets by Shakespeare) are included as well. The precise details (which page numbers, which particular texts, etc.) of each class' and each week's reading will be provided via Moodle, email, and/or in class as the semester progresses, but please keep in mind that you are responsible for checking on and keeping up with the assigned reading before coming to class, in order to facilitate discussion.

Please note that the primary reading for each set of weeks (*i.e.*, the actual play by Shakespeare) is highlighted with red text in the schedule below.

Also please note that, as indicated by the word "tentative" above, the schedule below is subject to change, with any changes to be announced via Moodle, email, and/or in class.

Week 1 (Oct. 4 + 8): Introduction to Tragedy and Shakespearean Tragedy

Weeks 2–3 (Oct. 12 + 14, Oct. 19 + 21)

- ***Othello***
- "Cinthio's Tale of the Moor of Venice," translated by John Edward Taylor
- Walter Cohen, "Othello" (Introduction from *The Norton Shakespeare*)
- William Shakespeare, *Sonnets* #131 and 139
- Francis Bacon, "Of Marriage and Single Life," "Of Suspicion"

Weeks 4–6 (Oct. 26, Nov. 2 + 4, Nov. 9 + 11)

- ***Hamlet***
- The story of Amleth from Saxo Grammaticus' *The History of the Danes*, translated by Peter Fisher
- Stephen Greenblatt, "Hamlet" (Introduction from *The Norton Shakespeare*)
- William Shakespeare, *Sonnets* #129, 140, and 147
- Francis Bacon, "Of Delays," "Of Revenge"
- Please note that we will not have class on Thursday, October 28 due to the celebration of Republic Day.

Week 7 (Nov. 16 + 18): Review and Prep for Midterm Essay

- Please note that your midterm essay will be due no later than Friday, November 26.

Weeks 8–9 (Nov. 23 + 25, Nov. 30 + Dec. 2)

- ***Macbeth***
- Stephen Greenblatt, “Macbeth” (Introduction from *The Norton Shakespeare*)
- Francis Bacon, “Of Cunning”
- Excerpts from Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*

Weeks 10–11 (Dec. 7 + 9, Dec. 14 + 16)

- ***King Lear***
- Stephen Greenblatt, “King Lear” (Introduction from *The Norton Shakespeare*)
- William Shakespeare, *Sonnets* #147, 148, and 149

Weeks 12–13 (Dec. 21 + 23, Dec. 28 + 30)

- ***The Tempest***
- Stephen Greenblatt, “The Tempest” (Introduction from *The Norton Shakespeare*)
- Michel de Montaigne, “On Cannibals,” translated by J.M. Cohen

Week 14 (Jan. 4 + 6): Review and Prep for Final Essay

- Please note that your final essay will be due no later than Friday, January 14.