ENGLISH 301

SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY

SPRING 2012

MWF 12:50-1:50
OM 311

Dr. Richard L. Sprow
Office: TC 410 (x 7346)
Office Hours: MW 2-3 T 2-3:30 and by Appt.

English 301, "Shakespeare and Company," is a Studies in Context course that focuses on Shakespeare as both an Elizabethan and a "modern." For centuries, writers have been inspired by the Bard to create works which reflect Shakespearean themes and issues, and which sometimes even adapt actual plot lines and characters to a more contemporary setting. Filmmakers have also freely interpreted and adapted Shakespeare, producing a variety of films which create another way to understand the playwright's style and substance. In the last few years, Kenneth Branagh has championed Shakespeare's power and art with several film renditions of his plays(*Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Hamlet*).

This course will study Shakespeare's art in two ways. We will read SIX plays, and study them carefully for their structure and meaning. Then, we will view several film versions or adaptations of these works and compare the modern text with the original. The various writing assignments and projects will allow students a chance to react to the texts studied and to create their own interpretations of Shakespeare.

TEXTS: The Norton Shakespeare (vol. 1 and 2) [2nd ed.]

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

English 300-level courses are designed to investigate the relationship between texts and the contexts within which they are produced. These contexts can include historical, cultural, and literary materials. The goal of each course is to introduce students to close reading of texts and then give them opportunities to discuss and write about the interaction of the texts and the contexts. Ultimately, students will explore their own cultural contexts and relate them to the works studied. As part of the English major, English 300 courses are designed to meet the Goals and outcomes statement of the major. Thus, as an English major progressing through our curriculum, we call upon you to improve continually in your ability to demonstrate the following:

1. **the ability to discuss literature, including engaging in an exchange of ideas, and offering and supporting insights.**

2. **the capacity to sustain controlled, critical arguments that analyze and synthesize texts.**

3. **an understanding of the craft of writing, including concision, diction, grammar, and syntax.**

4. **the ability to produce creative writing that shows an awareness of language, freedom from cliché, and an understanding of genre, style, and topic.**

5. **the ability to identify and use a range of sources suitable to the scholarly conversation on a particular topic, to evaluate and integrate source material, and to document accurately.**

6. **an understanding of the literary tradition, the historical and cultural contexts of literature, and critical methods of reading.**

7. **the ability to give well-planned, engaging presentations.**

The primary goals of this particular course are twofold: to develop your skills at close and careful reading, and then to use those skills to discuss and interpret the text within the context of modern reproductions of the play. Each assignment/activity in class will be linked to one or more of these goals and outcomes.

ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS FORMAT:

Please plan to read the plays as indicated in the syllabus. You will need to have a firm grasp on the text of each play before we view the modern film versions. Because the class has a heavy video component, you should be prepared to "study" the film versions as texts.

Class attendance is very important. Discussion of plays and film viewing are crucial to success in the course. You may miss NO MORE than THREE classes without excuse; more absences will affect your final grade. All excused absences must be presented to me, preferably in advance.

QUIZZES/TESTS

It is imperative to keep up with the readings, bot for understanding of the material and for good class discussion. Therefore, I will give you FREQUENT reading

quizzes as you read through the plays. These will be designed to make sure you are reading; most questions will test content, but occasionally you will be asked to comment or interpret the readings. These quizzes will be unannounced, so be prepared on any class day. There will also be THREE "longer" exercises, not really "tests," so much as opportunities to write short essays about the material. These are scheduled on the syllabus.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

You will write THREE REACTION ESSAYS (2-3pp. EACH).

These essays are designed to examine thematic and structural elements in the plays and films. Each assignment will have a specific focus, though you will also have some choice of actual topics.

FINAL PROJECT/ESSAY:

The class will be divided into small groups (3-4 students each) Each group will chose a Shakespeare play not assigned in class and prepare a scene (or other appropriate representation) from that play adapted to a modern setting, theme, or circumstance. The main requirement of this project is that each group maintains the integrity of the original work while translating it into other words or another medium. Creativity is the key. During the FINAL EXAM period, each group will have 10-15 minutes to present this creation to the class. Each student in the group will also prepare a brief essay (2-3 pages) that examines a particular aspect of the adaptation process.

GRADING / EVALUATION

Although I always grade on improvement, and so later work is more important than earlier, here are the basic guidelines for grading and final evaluation.

All assignments will be evaluated on a 100 point scale (or a 10 point equivalent), with pluses and minuses assigned for borderline grades (90-91=A-, 88-89=B+, 80-81=B-, 78-79=C+, 70-71=C-). The actual course assignments will be valued approximately in the following way:

Quizzes/Tests	**= 20%**
Reaction Essays	**= 40%**
Final Project /Essay	**= 20%**
Class Participation	**= 20%**
	100%

Academic Integrity:

Central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community is academic integrity. Al1 members of the Westminster community are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and purposes of the College.

Academic dishonesty is a profound violation of this expected code of behavior. It can take several forms, including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, purposely altering the work of another (without that person's permission), misrepresentation of attendance in class or at College events, misrepresentation of work, facts or experimental results, unauthorized use of or intentional intrusion into anther's computer files and/or programs, intentional damage to a computer system, unauthorized use of library materials and privileges, or engaging in any activity which attempts to alter or harm another's academic standing.

The college has adopted a comprehensive policy on academic integrity. You should read this policy in its entirety. You will find it printed in the 2011-2012 catalog (pages 71-75). Please also be familiar with the punishments that accompany violations of this policy.

Syllabus Outline
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Jan. 17(W): Introduction to Shakespeare and Company
Shakespeare in Love

19(F): Norton I (Introduction 1-42)

Shakespeare in Love

23(M): Norton I (Introduction 42-97)

Shakespeare in Love

25W): *Romeo and Juliet*: Act 1-2 [Norton I, 877-937

27(F): *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* [Film]

***30(M): Romeo and Juliet*: Act 3-5 [Norton I, 937-972**

***Feb. 1(W): William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* [Film]**

3(F): *Romeo and Juliet*: Discussion

6(M): *West Side Story* [Film]

8(W): *West Side Story* [Film]

10(F): *West Side Story* [Film]

13(M): REACTION ESSAY #1 DUE

***Merchant of Venice*: Act 1-2 [Norton I, 1111-1146]**

15(W): *Merchant of Venice* [Film]

17(F): *Merchant of Venice*: Act 3-5 [Norton I, 1147-1175]

20(M):*Merchant of Venice* [Film]

22(W):*Merchant of Venice* : Discussion

24(F): IN CLASS ESSAY #1

27(M):BONUS FILM (TBA)

29(W):BONUS FILM (TBA)

Mar. 2(F):BONUS FILM (TBA): Discussion

S P R I N G B R E A K

[Mar. 3-11]

12(M):*Much Ado About Nothing*: Act 1-2 [Norton I, 1407-1437

14(W):*Much Ado About Nothing* [Film]

16(F): *Much Ado About Nothing*: Act 3-5 [Norton I, 1438-1470]

19(M):REACTION ESSAY #2 DUE

***Much Ado About Nothing* [Film]**

21(W):*Much Ado About Nothing*: Discussion

23(F): *Othello*: Act 1-2 [Norton II, 375-415]

26(M):*O* [Film]

28(W) *Othello*: Act 3-5 [Norton II, 415-457]

30(F): *O* [Film]

Apr. 2(M): *Othello*: Discussion

4(W): IN CLASS ESSAY #2

E A S T E R B R E A K

[Apr. 5-9]

10("M"): *Macbeth*: Act 1-3 [Norton II, 835-877]

11(W):*Men of Respect* [Film]

13(F): *Macbeth*: Act 4-5 [Norton II, 877-898]

16(M):*Men of Respect* [Film]

18(W):Macbeth: Discussion

***The Tempest*: Act 1-2 [Norton II, 1321-1357]**

20(F): *The Tempest* [Film]

23(M):*The Tempest*: Act 3-5 [Norton II, 1357-1381]

25(W):UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH DAY

NO CLASS. REQUIRED ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS

27(F): *The Tempest* [Film]

30(M):IN CLASS ESSAY #3

May 2(W): *Forbidden Planet* [Film]

4(F): *Forbidden Planet* [Film]

ESSAY #3 DUE

FINAL PERIOD:

Tuesday, May 8[8-10:30]