

ENGLISH 313: BRITISH LITERATURE: SHAKESPEARE

Fall 2016 Thurs 6-8:50 Eberhard Center 410 Section 03

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Wondrous Bodies, Monstrous Acts

Monstrous Bodies, Wondrous Acts

monster: n. Origin: borrowing from French *monstre*; Latin *mōnstrum*

1. Originally: a mythical creature which is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is frequently of great size and ferocious appearance. Later, more generally: any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening. [...]

2. Something extraordinary or unnatural; **an amazing event or occurrence**; a prodigy, a **marvel**. *Obs.*¹

Course Description and Theme

This course will examine the work -- both dramatic and poetic -- of one author, William Shakespeare, in the context of the society of Early Modern England. In particular, we will consider how his writings and performances of his plays engage with the idea of the human body in all its wondrous and monstrous capabilities. As we read the plays and engage with critical interpretations of Shakespeare's works, I would ask you to think about "the body" in its broadest sense: beautiful and desirable, monstrous and "other"; gendered bodies, royal bodies, colonized bodies; unnatural or inhuman bodies... as well as the great body of Shakespeare's work. We will also consider the acts that these bodies undertake: monstrous acts of murder, regicide, deception, conquest, and enslavement, and wondrous acts of heroism, love, and creation.

Many of Shakespeare's plays survive due to their preservation in a 1623 folio collection of his work, but we must remember that a play is above all meant to be *played*. While the text will be our primary source for discussion, we will also watch some film interpretations of the plays so that we can see more memorable interpretations and adaptations, and discuss how his themes, characters, and language are still very much a part of our society today.

Learning Goals

By the end of the semester, you should:

- Have an understanding of Shakespeare's major works, and be able to analyze his plots and language effectively;
- Have an increased knowledge of the history of Early Modern England, and how it influenced Shakespeare's writing and the performances of his plays;
- Be able to discuss the contemporary relevance of Shakespeare, and how his plays are currently transmitted to audiences via stage performance and film.
- Be able to research critical analyses of Shakespeare's works and contribute to the scholarly discussion of his plays and related and/or adapted texts.

¹ Adapted from Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "monster." See <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/>

Supplemental Writing Skills

This course has been designated as carrying SWS credit. Keep in mind that to receive SWS credit for ENG 313 you must have completed and earned a grade of C or better in ENG/WRT 150 (or the transfer equivalent). Please see the GVSU catalogue for more details about SWS courses.

Required Texts:

I have ordered the Folger Shakespeare editions of: *Twelfth Night*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*. You are welcome to use other versions of these plays if you already own them, or if you prefer to purchase digital versions. Please make sure that whatever edition you used is not abridged or adapted, and that it provides line numbers. The Folger, Arden, and Norton editions tend to be useful in the classroom, as they are well-glossed and provide ample notes and additional scholarly material.

Other readings and handouts will be available via Blackboard.

Coursework:

Reading, participation, and class activities: Our class will be discussion-based and fairly light on lecture. You will be expected to complete the reading assignments prior to each class meeting, to attend class regularly, and to contribute to class discussion often. Your comments and questions to some extent determine the shape and direction of the course -- your active engagement will help me to make this class a productive, positive experience for all of us! I will keep track of the quantity and quality of your contributions to discussion, so be sure to *think* and *speak up* often. In-class writing assignments and your contributions to group-work assignments will also count toward the “participation” portion of your grade.

Daily classwork points: For each class meeting, you can earn a possible 10 points for participation. I will award points thus:

0 points -- absence OR student is disengaged with class, unprepared (no text book), or using phone or laptop for activities unrelated to class.

5 points -- student is present, brings book or reading, generally attentive in class.

8 points -- student is present, with text book, attentive, taking notes, perhaps volunteers once in discussion; if working in groups, student contributes to group efforts.

10 points -- student is fully prepared, actively engaged in the class, taking notes and actively participating in discussion; if working in groups, student is actively engaged in group.

arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early will automatically earn you a score of 1 point for that day

Writing prompts:

From time to time I will assign writing prompts to lead us into discussion. I will not always collect these for grading. Those that I collect will be scored thusly:

— (minus): Unsatisfactory. Student has put little effort into the response or obviously has not completed the reading or answered the question. Earns 1 point.

√ (check mark): Satisfactory. Student has made a good effort to answer the question, has shown that s/he has completed the reading. Earns 4 points.

+ (plus): Exemplary. Student has answered the question thoroughly, has referred to specific moments or details in the text to support her / his answer, and prompt is well-written. Earns 5 points.

Short analysis papers: You will complete two short papers of **3-4 pages each** (no more!), in which you will analyze or explicate a passage, an idea, a question in any of our plays. You must use textual evidence to support your assertions. Papers will be due via email to me on Fridays at 5pm.

Discussion lead: Each class member will sign up to lead our discussion of one of the scholarly articles I have assigned. Depending on class size, you may end up working in pairs. You should plan to lead discussion for about 15-20 minutes, though if we get into a rollicking debate, the floor will remain yours! To aid you in your discussion lead, you will create and turn in: (1) an outline of the major argument(s) and evidence presented in the article; (2) your own response and evaluation of your chosen article; (3) five thoughtful discussion questions to prompt class engagement with both the article and the play assigned for that day. These materials are due to me on the day of your presentation.

Research paper: This paper (a cumulative learning experience for this course) is a chance for you to explore, in more depth, a topic that has interested or intrigued you during this semester. This may grow out of one of the papers you've already written for this class (a discussion paper or your bibliographic essay). You must organize your paper around a central thesis or main argument, and provide textual evidence to support your assertions. Expand on your initial idea or analytic strategy by consulting works of literary criticism, history, and critical theory to contextualize your argument. Your paper should be between **8-10 pages** and should incorporate **10 peer-reviewed scholarly sources**.

Final Exam: Held Thursday, December 15, from 6-8pm. Will likely include passage identifications, short answer questions, and essay questions.

Grading Breakdown by Assignment:

Participation / daily writing assignments: 30%

Short response papers: 20% (10% each)

Discussion lead: 10%

Research paper: 20%

Final exam: 20%

A = 94-100	A- = 90-93	B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83	C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76	C- = 70-73	D+ = 67-69	D = 64-66	F = 0-63	

Communication and Blackboard:

Any updates and notices (change of venue, change in assignment, instructor absence, etc.) will go out over email and will be posted on the Blackboard site. PLEASE CHECK EMAIL AND BLACKBOARD REGULARLY! I promise to make my best attempt to get this information to you as soon as possible.

Other Policies...

Respect: The classroom (this includes our online class space!) is a place of respect, civilized discussion, and open-mindedness. We will likely disagree with each other from time to time about literary interpretations (among other things), but we will learn to do so respectfully and sensitively. Please be aware your tone online and in person.

Attendance: is expected. I will take attendance at the start of each class. Arriving more than 10 minutes late (or leaving more than 10 minutes early) will result in a penalty of your classwork points for the day. Arriving more than 20 minutes late will be counted as an absence. ****EVERY** component of your grade draws upon the material we explore in class discussion and in lecture, so be here!** If you miss class, it is YOUR responsibility to find out what content you missed, preferably by first asking your classmates. Any absences beyond **two** will result in a deduction of 3% from your final grade, *per day*. I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences... if you run into a situation where you must miss multiple classes, talk to me.

Computers and cell phones: **You may use a laptop to take notes**, read the handouts posted on Blackboard, and find information relevant to our discussion. Please do NOT use your laptop for Facebooking, watching cat videos, or otherwise wasting time or distracting yourself during class. **No cell phones out during class.** Lectures and class discussions **may not be** recorded in any fashion by students.

Late work: Assignments are due at the start of class on the due date OR when indicated on Blackboard (i.e. for quizzes). One letter grade will be lost for every calendar day that an assignment is late. Class activities and quizzes cannot be made up at a later date.

FERPA: Because of FERPA regulations, I cannot discuss your grade via phone or email. If you would like to discuss your academic standing and progress in this class, I am happy to meet with you during my office hours.

Plagiarism: I am happy to discuss what constitutes plagiarism and how to ensure that your work engages with extant criticism without duplicating it. If you have any questions or uncertainty about the issue, PLEASE ASK ME. If you plagiarize in this class, you will face academic sanctions including possible failure of this course and a letter sent to the appropriate campus offices.

Students with Disabilities:

If you need academic accommodations because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact Disability Support Resources at 331-2490. Furthermore, if you have a physical disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency situation, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you.

Course Schedule

****Please regard this schedule as *somewhat* fluid.**

I may move some readings and assignments around if we fall behind.**

Th, Sept 1	Introduction to course and syllabus; introduction to early modern England	
Th, Sept 8	Sonnets (Blackboard); <i>Twelfth Night</i> (I-III)	
Th, Sept 15	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (IV-V); Maslen, “ <i>Twelfth Night</i> , Gender, and Comedy”	
Th, Sept 22	<i>Richard II</i> (I-III)	
Th, Sept 29	<i>Richard II</i> (IV-V); Bolam, “ <i>Richard II</i> and the Languages of the Stage”	
Fri, Sept 30	short paper #1 due at 5pm	
Th, Oct 6	<i>Richard III</i> (I-III)	
Th, Oct 13	<i>Richard III</i> (IV-V); Olson, “Richard III’s Animalistic Criminal Body”	
Th, Oct 20	catch-up reading / discussion; film excerpts from <i>The Hollow Crown</i> , <i>Richard III</i> (McKellan)	
Fri, Oct 21	short paper #2 due at 5pm	
Th, Oct 27	<i>Macbeth</i> (I-IV)	**Fri, Oct 28 is the last day to drop class (5 pm)**
Th, Nov 3	<i>Macbeth</i> (V); Hampton, “Purgation, Exorcism, and the Civilizing Process in <i>Macbeth</i> ”; Herman, “‘A deed without a name’: <i>Macbeth</i> , the Gunpowder Plot, and Terrorism”	
Fri, Nov 4	short paper #2 due at 5pm	
Th, Nov 10	<i>Othello</i> (I-IV)	
Th, Nov 17	<i>Othello</i> (V); Loomba, “Outsiders in Shakespeare’s England”; Bartels, “ <i>Othello</i> and the Moor”	
Fri, Nov 18	Research paper due at 5pm	
Th, Nov 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Th, Dec 1	<i>The Tempest</i> (I-IV)	
Fri, Dec 2	Research paper due at 5pm	
Th, Dec 8	<i>Tempest</i> (V), Brown, “‘This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine’: <i>The Tempest</i> and the Discourse of Colonialism”; semester review	
Th, Dec 15	6pm -- 8pm FINAL EXAM	