



Course Title and Number: Shakespeare and Elizabethan Literature

Instructor: Dr. Brian Ridgers

This course encourages students to encounter the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries in relation to Elizabethan culture and the wider literary traditions of renaissance poetry and drama. The texts that are studied will be considered both as works of art in their own right as well as social and historical artefacts that reflect the preoccupations of both sixteenth century writers and their audience. The course offers the student a chance to read poetry and drama within a historical and contemporary theoretical context. Students do not have to be studying literature to be able to fully engage in this course, detailed and fully accessible information of every element covered will be provided in lectures as well as being supported by further reading. As your tutor I assume no specialist knowledge on the part of the students except the appetite to read and learn about Shakespeare and his fellow writers.

The course begins with a study of the sonnet linking it to Elizabethan constructions of gender. We then go on to study Shakespeare's romantic comedy *Twelfth Night*, a satire on the tense relationship between men and women within Elizabethan culture. We will be thinking about the idea of cross-dressing, bawdy language and notions of carnival. We will go on to study Christopher Marlowe's extended poem *Hero and Leander*, the 'must read' love story of 1593 left unfinished after the author's death in a tavern brawl. In studying this verse narrative students compare Marlowe's satirical tale with the more serious earlier versions by Ovid and Musaeus, allowing a brief but detailed study of Elizabethan adaptation of Classical culture. We then conclude the course by watching and reading Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a psychological study of corrupt power or an investigation into the influence of the supernatural? The course will also include two walking tours of Shakespeare's London, the twentieth century recreation of the theatre that Shakespeare part owned and in which most of his plays were first performed publicly.

You will be given a copy of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* but you will need to buy and read your own copies of the following plays by Shakespeare:

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

Twelfth Night

Macbeth

The most expensive versions of the play (and the ones with the fullest notes) are the Arden editions. Other very good editions include the Cambridge Student's Edition, the Penguin Edition and the Oxford World's Classic Edition. Any edition will do but avoid the £1.00 versions or the complete works of Shakespeare as neither will have notes or an introduction to help you.

There is a Waterstones Bookshop on Kensington High Street. I can also recommend the Borders Bookshop just south of Oxford Circus (Tube Piccadilly Line from Gloucester Road.) There are three large bookshops on the Charing Cross Road (south of Tottenham Court Road tube station). Please let me know if you are having any problems finding the books on the course or any of the above bookshops.

Required Text:

- Frank Kermode *The Age of Shakespeare* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson 2004)
- John Stow *A Survey of London* (1598) (Stroud: Sutton Publishing 2005)
- Liza Picard *Elizabeth's London Everyday Life in Elizabethan London* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson 2003)
- James Shapiro *1599 A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Faber and Faber 2005)
- Alison Weir *Elizabeth the Queen* (London: Pimlico 2005 edition)

Further reading will include:

Extracts from each book mentioned in the list below are photocopied for students in relation to each playtext taught. NB the plays on this course change according to what is being performed in either London or Stratford. In this sense the bibliography (and reading pack) changes accordingly)

Twelfth Night

- Lisa Jardine 'Twins and Travesties gender, dependency and sexual availability in *Twelfth Night*' in Lisa Jardine *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London: Routledge 1996)
- [Natalie Zemon Davis](#) *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London: Duckworth & Co 1975) chap one.
- Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, tr. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. First published M I T Press, 1968) various short extracts
- Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*. Transl Lydia G. Cochrane foreword by David Herlihy (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1985)
- Peter Stallybrass and Allon White *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* 1986 extract from pp. 9 & 19.

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

- C.L. Barber 'Testing Courtesy and Humanity in Twelfth Night' pp. 112-136 in *Shakespeare Twelfth Night Critical Essays* (ed. D. J. Palmer)
- Catherine Belsey 'Disrupting sexual difference: meaning and gender in the comedies' in Drakakis, J (ed) *Alternative Shakespeares* (London: Routledge 1985)
- Malcolm Evans 'Deconstructing Shakespeare's Comedies' in Drakakis, J (ed) *Alternative Shakespeares* (London: Routledge 1985).

Macbeth

- Janet Adelman 'Born of Woman': Fantasies of Maternal Power in Macbeth' in *New Casebooks William Shakespeare Macbeth* (London; Macmillan 1992) (ed.) Alan Sinfield.
- Malcolm Evans 'Imperfect Speakers: the Tale Thickens' in *New Casebooks William Shakespeare Macbeth* (London; Macmillan 1992) (ed.) Alan Sinfield.
- Stephen Greenblatt 'Shakespeare Bewitched' in *New Historical Literary Study Essays on reproducing texts, representing history* (Eds. Jeffrey N Cox & Larry J Reynolds) (NJ: Princeton UP 1993).
- Peter Stallybrass 'Macbeth and Witchcraft' in *New Casebooks William Shakespeare Macbeth* (London; Macmillan 1992) (ed.) Alan Sinfield.

Topics covered will include:

- Introduction
Poetry and the Individual: forms such as never were in nature: the importance of love poetry in the sixteenth century.
- Shakespeare's Twelfth Night
Ludgate Hill, Smithfield Market and Temple Bar: a walking tour of Medieval and Elizabethan London ending with a curry in Brick Lane
- Shakespeare's Twelfth Night introduced
William Shakespeare and Elizabethan theatre.
'I am all the daughters of my father's house, and all the brother's too' - cross dressing and female power in Twelfth Night.
- Shakespeare's Twelfth Night
Carnival and misrule in Twelfth Night. Trevor Nunn's film of Twelfth Night will be shown in this class.
- Shakespeare's Twelfth Night
How far does Shakespeare go in Twelfth Night?
- Christopher Marlowe's Hero and Leander
Hero and Leander, classical myth and 'peculiar sexuality' – Venus Nun the heroine as prostitute.
- Christopher Marlowe's Hero and Leander
Hero betray'd: what happens when the guy gets the girl?
- Macbeth
A romance of evil: the intimacy of Shakespeare's Macbeth.
- Macbeth
Witchcraft and treason: the background to Macbeth.

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

- Macbeth
'Out Damn'd Spot': Madness, and femininity in Macbeth. How guilty is Lady Macbeth?
- Quiz
Carnival and the Shakespeare quiz.

Co-curricular activities will include:

- **Bankside walking tour**
A walk through the area of London with the most useful reminders of the age when Shakespeare lived and worked in the disreputable borough of Southwark. The area is undergoing rapid gentrification but the links to brothels, bear baiting, cathedral and taverns helps put the status of Elizabethan theatre in its context
- **Shakespeare Globe**
Interactive lecture by an actor who explains (with some student participation) the differences between putting on a production 400 years ago on Bankside compared to a West End theatre nowadays. Also a visit to the stage, frequently getting groups actually on stage itself to get the feel of being in an open-air theatre where actors see everyone in the audience. Terrific support for any course with a drama/theatre content because it looks at the mechanics of writing, rehearsing, acting and "hearing a play" as opposed to watching. Interesting for non-theatre majors too with a combination of social history and, surprisingly, business interest – money keeps cropping up as the explanation behind most things to do with theatre.

Grading and Assessment

Worksheet one:	The sonnet and the blazon	10%
Worksheet two:	Twelfth Night	10%
Worksheet three:	Hero and Leander	10%
Worksheet four:	Macbeth	10%
Theatre review		10%
Written assignment		50%

Theatre Review

Please write a review of one of the performances that we attend during the course paying close attention to the staging, the interpretation of characters and how you, as an audience member, responded to the play. Your review should be word processed and be about 1000 to 1500 words long. *Please submit this to me by the final class on Wednesday 15th February 2006.*

Assignment questions: Shakespeare and Elizabethan Literature.

Essays should be approximately 1500 words long. Essays should be word processed. I can be contacted on brianridgers@yahoo.co.uk or I am happy to discuss your work with you in person.

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

Answer ONE of the following questions. Please refer to ONE or TWO plays in your answer.

1. 'Women are always seen as being the weaker vessels of Elizabethan Culture.' How far is this true in the works that you have studied on this course?
2. 'Power isolates the individual and makes them brutal.' How far is this true of the texts that you have studied on this course?
3. How far does Shakespeare offer us villains that we can hate and heroes/heroines that we can love?
4. Taking any TWO characters from the work that you have studied and analyse them according to modern concepts of good/bad or gender role models. Please make sure to offer detailed textual examples to support your discussion.
5. 'Shakespeare's heroines and heroes must suffer in order to find happiness.' How far is this true of the plays that we have studied?
6. 'Marriage is always seen either a reward for characters in Shakespeare's drama or a haven in times of crisis.' To what extent can we view marriage as a reward or a haven in the plays that you have studied?
7. How far is male authority disrupted or questioned by women characters in Shakespeare's drama?
8. Take any two characters from the works that you have studied on the course and discuss how they exemplify (or don't exemplify) Elizabethan concepts of what makes a man or woman good or bad.
9. Shakespeare's heroines are strong because they inhabit a world in which men are constantly seeking to ridicule or destroy them. Do you agree?
10. How far does the act of cross dressing change our view of Viola in *Twelfth Night*?
11. Discuss the role of Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. How guilty is she of taking part in the 'crimes' of the play?

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

Twelfth Night or What You Will (1603)

Act I

In Illyria, Duke Orsino reflects upon his love for Olivia. Valentine tells him that Olivia has vowed to mourn her brother's death for seven years. Orsino regards this as proof of her love for him.

In a shipwreck off the coast of Illyria two identical twins have been separated. Viola the female twin thinks her brother, Sebastian has drowned. Viola decides for safety sake to disguise herself as a young man (a eunuch). She goes to Duke Orsino's court. Sir Toby Belch, Olivia's uncle, is outraged by her decision to go into mourning, he wants his friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, to seek her hand in marriage. Viola (disguised as Cesario) finds employment with the Orsino and is given the task of courting Olivia on his behalf. Viola secretly falls in love with Orsino.

Cesario begins to woo Olivia for Orsino. Olivia consents to see him. Although she encourages Cesario to return, she forbids him to pursue the matter further. To make Cesario come back she sends her steward Malvolio after him with a ring, which she pretends that he has left behind.

Act II

Viola's twin brother Sebastian has been rescued by Antonio but believes that his sister is dead. He is in despair and decides to go to Orsino's court. Antonio is an old enemy of Orsino but still follows him. After Malvolio has given the ring to Cesario, Viola realises that Olivia has fallen in love with her.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are drinking when they are joined by Maria, Olivia's lady-in-waiting and Feste, a clown. Malvolio interrupts them and complains about their noise. Resentful of Malvolio's arrogant attitude and angry that he has threatened to complain to Olivia about her, Maria proposes a plan to make a fool of him. She will forge a love letter in Olivia's handwriting and leave it for Malvolio to find. Meanwhile Orsino finds that he trusts and likes Cesario. Viola, during the *Patience on a Monument* speech is able to inform the audience of her love but also of the credibility and power of female desire.

Malvolio imagines being married to his mistress. He finds Maria's forged letter and becomes convinced that Olivia loves him. In the letter he finds a love-poem and some instructions on how he should behave and dress (yellow stocking and green cross garters) when he next sees Olivia – these instructions will make him appear ridiculous.

Act III

Olivia confesses her love for Cesario but Cesario rejects her. Sir Andrew Aguecheek has spied on Olivia and Cesario together and become jealous. He is persuaded to challenge Cesario to a duel. On seeing the transformed Malvolio (wearing strange stockings and garters and grinning inanely), Olivia believes that he has gone mad. He is locked up in a dark room.

Goaded and misled by Sir Toby and Fabian, Sir Andrew and Cesario are brought together and forced to draw swords. Antonio enters. On seeing Cesario he

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

mistakes him for Sebastian, He draws his sword and threatens to attack Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. Orsino's officers arrive and arrest him. Antonio addresses Cesario thinking him to be Sebastian.

Act IV

Sebastian is mistaken for Cesario and is attacked by Sir Andrew. He responds by beating the knight. Olivia appears and also assumes that Sebastian. She scolds her uncle for threatening him and invites the boy into her rooms (for you know what...). Sebastian follows her.

Malvolio is imprisoned. Maria and Feste play a new trick upon him. Feste dresses up as a priest and torments him. Sir Toby decides to bring the joke against Malvolio to an end and Feste agrees to help Malvolio explain to Olivia that he is not really mad. Olivia summons a priest and marries Sebastian.

Act V

Orsino recognises Antonio, who explains that he is not a pirate and that he has rescued Sebastian who he believes has disowned him. He points accusingly at Cesario thinking that he is Sebastian. Olivia appears and finally rejects Orsino, telling him that she has just married Cesario. Orsino threatens to kill Cesario when Sir Andrew and Sir Toby appear claiming that Cesario has assaulted them. At last Sebastian enters and Viola recognising her lost brother reveals her true identity. Olivia sends for Malvolio who learns of the facts of his deception. He leaves, threatening revenge upon them. However the play ends happily for Fabian tell the audience that Sir Toby has married Maria, Olivia has married Sebastian and the Duke Orsino promises to marry Viola.