

SYLLABUS

HTA 300 (42773) THE SHAKESPEAREAN CONTEXT, Fall 2008

Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00-5:20, Room N-109

Instructor: Humphrey Tonkin (tonkin@hartford.edu)

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Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment.

Course Objectives:

To provide students with an understanding of the historical, literary, and stylistic background to Shakespeare.

Student Skills to be Developed:

1. Understanding and reading Shakespearean blank verse and other verse effectively.
2. Familiarity with the history and literature of the period, including the history of style and taste.
3. Ability to analyze and explicate a text.

Required Texts:

Students should buy the following. No other edition will do.

Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*. 2nd edn. Bedford/St. Martin's (Palgrave). 2001. Paper. ISBN 0-312-24880-6

William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Arden Shakespeare: Third Series. Paperback. Ed. Ann Thompson & Neil Taylor. Thomson Learning, 2006. ISBN: 1-904271-31-1.

Recommended text:

Charles Boyce, *Shakespeare A to Z*. Laurel. 1990 – or an equivalent reference work.

Additional Requirements:

Students should own a good edition of Shakespeare's collected works. Although other plays by Shakespeare do not appear on the list of assignments, students will be expected to have a general knowledge of Shakespeare's canon.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is available on line through the library. Students are expected to make good use of it.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all sessions, unless they have notified the instructor in advance and made arrangements to cover the material missed.

E-mail:

Students are expected to have a working e-mail address capable of receiving individual messages and messages to the class as a whole. They are expected to check it regularly.

Assignments:

- A first paper will be due on Wednesday, September 17.
- A second paper will be due on Monday, October 13.
- A third paper will be due on Monday, November 17
- A final paper will be due on Wednesday, December 10.
- There will be additional short written assignments.
- There will be two tests.
- There will be a final examination, either in-class or take-home.
- There may be additional spot quizzes.

Grading:

- The four papers will account for 40% of the grade.
- The two tests will account for 20%
- Additional short assignments will account for 10%.
- There will be an additional grade (15%) for class participation. Unexcused absences will negatively affect this grade.
- The final examination will account for 15% of the grade.
- Papers and other assignments must be handed in on time. Late papers and other assignments will be docked one grade per day late.
- All work for the course must be completed in order to receive a final grade.
- Students who wish to rewrite papers should talk with the instructor.

A Reminder:

Academic Honesty. All the work you submit in this course should be your own, and any sources of information consulted in the completion of that work – including but not limited to friends, other instructors, books, articles, and internet sources – must be acknowledged in the conventional manner (quotation marks, footnotes, bibliography, etc.). Any breach of the Academic Honesty Policy set forth in *The Source* and in the *Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures* will result in failure on the relevant assignment (with no possibility of revision and/or resubmission) and may be grounds for failure in the course. In extreme cases, academic dishonesty may result in suspension or dismissal from the university.

Provisional Schedule, HTA 300, Fall 2008
(subject to change as the semester progresses)

September

- 3 Wed. **Introduction.**
 Assignment. Read *Hamlet*
- 8 Mon. Shakespeare in context: 16th-century literature
 Assignment. Read Sonnets 3 (Look in thy glass), 18 (Shall I compare thee), 19 (Devouring time), 20 (A woman's face), 30 (When to the sessions), 55 (Not marble), 65 (Since brass nor stone), 73 (That time of year), 97 (How like a winter), 111 (Let me not), 129 (Th'expense of spirit), 130 (My mistress' eyes), 138 (When my love swears), 146 (Poor soul).
- 10 Wed. *Hamlet*: An overview. Paper on *Hamlet* assigned
- 15 Mon. *Hamlet*: The verse and the language
 Assignment. Read McDonald ch. 1 (biography) & ch. 2 (language)
- 17 Wed. *Hamlet*: ideas. Paper on *Hamlet* due
- 22 Mon. Shakespeare's works: the canon (with special attention to the tragedies)
- 24 Wed. **Shakespeare's biography.** Paper on the canon assigned
 Assignment. Read McDonald ch. 3 (dramatic kinds)
- 29 Mon. *Hamlet* and acting; *Hamlet* and revenge
 Assignment. Read McDonald ch. 4 (theatre and performance), plus additional reading assignments

October

- 1 Wed. *Hamlet* and interpretation
- 6 Mon. Test on McDonald chs. 1-4
 Assignment. Read McDonald ch 5 (Shakespeare's reading) & ch. 6 (text)
- 8 Wed. **The poetic context**
- 13 Mon. **The intellectual context.** Paper on the canon due
 Assignment. Selected readings (Shakespeare's contemporaries – Marlowe, Kyd, Jonson, Webster, Ford)
- 15 Wed. **The text, and Shakespeare's reading**

- 20 Mon. **Contemporary dramatists**
- 22 Wed. **Contemporary dramatists**
Assignment. Read McDonald ch. 7 (town and country)
- 27 Mon. **The artistic context**
Assignment. Read McDonald ch. 8 (men and women)
- 29 Wed. **The social context**

November

- 3 Mon. **The historical context.** Paper on historical context assigned
Assignment. Read McDonald ch. 9 (politics and religion)
- 5 Wed. **The historical context (contd.)**
- 10 Mon. Test on McDonald chs. 5-9
Assignment. Review *Twelfth Night*
- 12 Wed. *Hamlet* and the tragedies
Assignment. Poems by Shakespeare's later contemporaries
- 17 Mon. *Hamlet* and the comedies. Paper on historical context due
Assignment. Read McDonald ch.10 (stage history)
- 19 Wed. *Hamlet* and the histories. Final paper assigned
Assignment. Selections on blank verse tradition
- 24 Mon. **The Shakespearean legacy**

December

- 1 Mon. **Shakespeare and film**
- 3 Wed. **Stage history**
- 8 Mon. **Shakespeare and film**
- 10 Wed. Review. Final paper due

September 3, 2008