ENGLISH 403: THE EARLY WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE
Monday-Wednesday 11:00-12:15
Tawes 0201

Instructor: Dr Kavita Mudan
Office Hours: Tawes 1206, Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM
Contact Information: The best way to reach me is via e-mail at kvmudan@umd.edu.

Course Description
Close study of selected works from the first half of Shakespeare’s career. This course will cover eight of Shakespeare’s earlier plays, including Henry VI Parts II and III, Richard III, Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, and Hamlet. All of these plays will be read in conjunction with sources and contextual material. Assignments will include four response papers (one for every two plays read), one 8-10 page research paper, one paper proposal, and a group scene performance.

Prerequisites: Two lower-level English courses, at least one in literature; or permission of the department.

Required Texts

* Any scholarly edition of Shakespeare is acceptable (Signet, Norton, Arden, etc). However, do keep in mind that line numbers may be different if you are not using the above edition, and it might be more difficult to follow along in class.

All secondary texts will be available on ELMS e-reserve or BlackBoard. You are responsible for bringing these to class, either as printouts or in electronic copy.

General Course Policies

Attendance
We are covering a lot of material in this course so it is extremely important that all students attend all classes. The University allows absence in particular cases (illness, representing the University at an event, religious holidays), but you must provide adequate documentation. If you will miss class for a planned University event or religious holiday, you must let me know within two weeks of the start of the semester.

For every day you are absent, you miss out on important information, in-class discussion, and participation points. You are responsible for catching up on all notes, announcements, or work missed, regardless of whether the absence was excused or unexcused. This means asking your classmates. Do not ask me unless you have questions beyond what they can explain to you.
Assignments
This class has a heavy reading load (approximately 2-3 hours per class) and you are expected to complete all of the reading by the assigned date, so plan accordingly. Don’t worry if you do not understand everything; that’s what class discussion is for. What is important is that you come to class with theories and ideas about that day’s reading.

Please be advised: This is a discussion-based class. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of speaking up and contributing to each day’s discussion, or if you prefer a greater emphasis on small assignments and group work, this may not be a good fit for you.

All students are expected to bring all assigned texts to class, whether they are books or printouts from BlackBoard, and are expected to participate in discussion. As a matter of general policy, cell phones must be switched off during class. However, I do understand that life happens, and if you think you may need to take a phone call or leave class early, let me know before class starts and I will do my best to accommodate you.

All assignments must be submitted on the listed due date. If you require an extension, you must request it at least 2 days in advance and provide a very good reason and a concrete date by which you will submit the work. In all other cases, 10% will be deducted from your grade on that assignment for every day late.

Note for online submissions: If you are submitting assignments online, please include your name in the filename.

This is a class intended primarily for English majors, and you have all either taken English 101 or tested out of it. As such, you are expected to use secondary sources that are not Wikipedia and cite them properly. Improperly researched or cited papers will not be tolerated.

Communication
Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with me during office hours or via e-mail. That being said, you should plan for a twenty-four (24) hour turnover time for e-mails. In case of an emergency, I will get back to you as soon as possible, but keep in mind that a lack of preparedness on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine. Please indicate your question in the subject line.

My office hours, as listed above, are in Tawes 1206 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM. This is an ideal time to bring me ideas for papers or to ask questions that you might not have felt like asking during class. If you would like me to look over a draft, please send it to me in advance and we can discuss it over e-mail or in office hours. As a final note, office hours end at 2:00 PM on the dot. Do not show up at 1:55 PM and expect an extended conversation.

In order for me to get to know you better, I have set aside time during office hours in the first two weeks of class to hold individual meetings of 15-20 minutes each. There will be a signup sheet going round on the first day of class. If you absolutely cannot make it
during those times because of other classes, let me know and I will do my best to accommodate you.

If you have a registered disability and wish to discuss accommodations with me, please let me know. Disabilities can be registered through Disability Support Services (4-7682 or 5-7683 TTY/TDD).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
The University has approved a Code of Academic Integrity which prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.

Plagiarism policy: All quotations taken from other authors, including from the Internet, must be indicated by quotation marks and referenced. Paraphrasing must be referenced as well.

Bottom line: Do your own work, cite your sources, and don’t plagiarize.

Inclement Weather and Extended Campus Closure
In the case of a University closing due to inclement weather, students should check their e-mail for notification of how class will proceed. In the case of an extended campus closure, we will continue to follow the course outline as much as possible. Information on continuing course requirements will be posted on ELMS and disseminated by e-mail. Students are responsible for all assignments and coursework disseminated in these ways. The grade of “Incomplete” will not be used.

If both ELMS and the University-maintained server become unavailable during a campus closure, the course content will be shortened as needed and grades will be assigned on this basis as necessary. The grade of “Incomplete” will not be used. In the case of an extended campus closure, the University may announce a formal policy on how courses should proceed. In this case, we will follow the University announced policy.

Grading Rubric
There is no curve in this class, and if the work merits it, I would be thrilled to give each and every one of you an A. That being said, they are reserved for exceptional work and class participation, and that is what you will need in order to earn one.

**A-level work is exceptional.** An A paper does everything a B paper does, below, but also goes above and beyond. The distinguishing qualities of such a paper are the originality, clarity, and complexity of the argument; the depth and subtlety of the analysis; and the elegance of the prose. Most A papers take some real intellectual risks -- for example, by advocating an interpretation that may be new, surprising, or controversial to readers. However, they also keep their analysis firmly grounded in the text and show how the author’s word choice and use of literary devices supports the student’s interpretation.
B-level work is competent. It has a clear and arguable main idea, and the author maintains focus on this point. It addresses some of the complexities of the text -- for example, by exploring and responding to alternative interpretations. It uses appropriate supporting evidence, including quotations and original analysis, and any evidence from outside sources is cited and attributed correctly. The writing is free or nearly free of surface errors and infelicities of style (e.g., unnecessarily convoluted sentences). The author has a good sense of audience; the tone and level of detail are appropriate for academic writing.

C-level work is promising but uneven. It is on topic, and the writer has some sort of argument and has made an attempt to muster appropriate supporting evidence. Information from outside sources is cited. However, the paper may be too general and lack specificity; it may substitute plot summary for analysis or fail to cite appropriate textual evidence (e.g., quotations). There may also be pervasive mechanical errors or stylistic problems that distract the reader from the author’s message. But by far the most common problem is that the author fails to make a real argument -- he or she plays it safe and makes claims that no reasonable person would disagree with, and hence readers are left wondering why the essay was written in the first place.

D-level work is seriously flawed. Perhaps the essay does not meet minimal standards of college-level writing -- it lacks a clear point, evidence, and / or an organizing principle. Or, more often, it simply fails to engage in analysis: it consists of plot summary and / or biographical or historical information, with the occasional quotation, but no real interpretation on the author’s part.

Failing work does not meet the guidelines for the assignment or is plagiarized.

Participation: Generally, a student with strong (A-level) participation does all of the following:

- Attends class regularly.
- Turns in writing responses that show engagement with the text.
- Contributes substantively to class discussions, usually speaking up during every class period. Questions and comments show that the student has read the text closely and carefully.
- Listens attentively and responds to other students’ comments.
- Seeks help when appropriate, for example, by coming to office hours.

Students who do most of these things will earn a B. Students who do some of them -- for example, students who attend every class and are not disruptive, but rarely ask questions or contribute to class discussion -- will earn a C. Students who attend the minimum number of classes and are frequently unprepared or disengaged will earn a D or F.

Scene Performances: In order to earn an A on your scene performances, you must provide a thoughtful and well-planned interpretation of the scenes you have chosen. You should know the text well enough that, even if you do require cue cards or scripts, you are not just standing up there and reading. Take this opportunity to be creative, to try out
your own ideas about character motivation and thematic elements, and don’t be afraid to highlight either comedic or tragic elements. The more interesting and entertaining you are, the better your grade will be!

-------------------------------

Course Requirements

Grading Breakdown
40% Research Paper
20% Short Response Papers (4 at 5% each)
10% Class Participation
15% Scene Performance
15% Final Exam

Research Paper
Students are required to write one major research paper for this class, of approximately 2500-3000 words (8-10 pages). Papers must include at least four (4) pieces of primary contextual material and secondary criticism (in any combination). Secondary criticism may be in the form of either books or articles, and may include material used in class.

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and submitted in hard copy, with attached bibliography in proper MLA format. I will not accept electronic copies of research papers.

Short Response Papers
Students are required to write four (4) short response papers of 400-600 words (1-2 pages) over the course of the term. You will be asked to choose one of two plays to write about for each response paper (see below for details). Several prompts will be provided for each play we read, and you may either respond to one of them or write on a topic of your choosing. If you do choose to create your own topic, keep in mind that you are expected to come up with a cohesive argument and support it using direct evidence from the text. Do not simply summarize the action of the play. You are welcome to use this as an opportunity to compare the two plays or to analyze one aspect that appears in both; do, however, keep in mind that you have limited space and consider possibilities for your extended research paper if you feel you’ve come up with an idea that’s too big.

Along with the prompts, I will also provide a number of suggested pieces of secondary criticism. You are not required to use them for your response papers, but you may find them useful when formulating your arguments.

This assignment is designed to stimulate class discussion, and to help you remember the texts and generate paper ideas. These do not need to be polished essays, but please watch for spelling and grammar, and please cite any additional sources.
These may be submitted via e-mail if you prefer, but they must be in my inbox before the start of class. If you wish to submit them in hard copy, they must be in my hands at the end of class.

Response papers will be due on the following dates:

- Wednesday February 15: *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI*
- Wednesday March 14: *Richard III* and *Romeo and Juliet*
- Wednesday April 11: *Titus Andronicus* and *The Merchant of Venice*
- Wednesday May 2: *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*

As you will notice, the due date for the fourth response paper falls during our unit on *Hamlet*. This is for timing reasons since your research papers are due on the last day of class and there seemed no reason to overload you during that busy part of the semester. You are, of course, more than welcome to read ahead and to write your response paper on *Hamlet*, but keep in mind that we will not have discussed Acts IV and V.

**Scene Performances**

All students will sign up on the first day of class to perform a scene of roughly 150 lines from one of the assigned plays. In order to ensure equal participation, all group members must have a major speaking role. If you cannot find a single selection of that length that incorporates all the members of your group, you may perform multiple, shorter scenes, or multiple versions of the same scene showcasing different interpretations.

On the final discussion day for each play, groups will perform their scene in front of the class. Be as creative as you like with settings, costumes, and casting. Memorization is encouraged but not required -- only make sure you are not just reading a script or note cards, but actually engaging with the text and performing it. There will be a short (5-10 minute) Q&A session with the class after each scene performance, so be prepared to explain your choices!

Each group must submit a 3-page analysis of their performance choices. This should explain why you chose that particular scene, and then address issues such as blocking, casting (i.e. double-casting, gender), and costuming, as well as the contributions of individual group members toward the performance as a whole.

Scene papers will be due the class period after the performance so groups can consider what they felt did or did not work. As with all other assignments, you are encouraged to discuss your scene performance ideas with me beforehand in office hours or via e-mail. I am more than happy to provide suggestions for potential scenes.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Important Note:** Topics of discussion may vary as the term progresses. If there are any changes to the syllabus, I will announce them in class and post a notice on BlackBoard.
**Week 1**  
Wednesday January 25  
In class: Introduction; choose scene performance dates

**Week 2 – Henry VI, Part II**  
Monday January 30  
For class: Read *Henry VI, Part II*, Acts 1-2

Wednesday February 1  
For class: Read *Henry VI, Part II*, Acts 3-4; excerpts from Hall, Grafton, and Holinshed from Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (BlackBoard)

**Week 3 – Henry VI, Parts II and III**  
Monday February 6  
For class: Read *Henry VI, Part II*, Act 5  
In class: Scene Performance for *Henry VI, Part II*

Wednesday February 8  
For class: Read *Henry VI, Part III*, Acts 1-2

**Week 4 – Henry VI, Part III**  
Monday February 13  
For class: Read *Henry VI, Part III*, Act 3; excerpts from Thomas More’s *History of King Richard III* (BlackBoard)

Wednesday February 15  
For class: Read *Henry VI, Part III*, Acts 4-5; Response Paper #1 due  
In class: Scene Performance for *Henry VI, Part III*

**Week 5 – Richard III**  
Monday February 20  
For class: Read *Richard III*, Acts 1-2

Wednesday February 22  
For class: Read *Richard III*, Act 3

**Week 6 – Richard III, continued**  
Monday February 27  
For class: Read *Richard III*, Act 4

Wednesday February 29  
For class: Read *Richard III*, Act 5; Excerpts from *True Tragedy* (BlackBoard)  
In class: Scene Performance for *Richard III*

**Week 7 – Romeo and Juliet**  
Monday March 5
For class: Read *Romeo and Juliet*, Acts 1-2; excerpts from Brooke, ‘Romeus & Juliet’ (BlackBoard)

Wednesday March 7
For class: Read *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 3

**Week 8 – Romeo and Juliet**
Monday March 12
For class: Read *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 4

Wednesday March 14
Read *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 5; Response Paper #2 due
In class: *Romeo and Juliet* Scene Performance

**SPRING BREAK – MARCH 18-25**

**Week 9 – Titus Andronicus**
Monday March 26
For class: Read *Titus Andronicus*, Acts 1-3; selections from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, VI.526-855 (BlackBoard)

Wednesday March 28
For class: Read *Titus Andronicus*, Acts 4-5
In class: Scene Performance for *Titus Andronicus*

**Week 10 – The Merchant of Venice**
Monday April 2
For class: Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts 1-2; excerpt from *Il Pecorone* (BlackBoard)

Wednesday April 4
For class: Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 3

**Week 11 – The Merchant of Venice**
Monday April 9
For class: Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 4; additional readings (BlackBoard)

Wednesday April 11
For class: Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 5; Response Paper #3 due
In class: *The Merchant of Venice* Scene Performance

**Week 12 – Twelfth Night**
Monday April 16
For class: Read *Twelfth Night*, Acts 1-2; Sonnets 20, 26, 57, and 126

Wednesday April 18
For class: Read *Twelfth Night*, Acts 3-4

**Week 13 – Twelfth Night and Hamlet**
Monday April 23
For class: Read *Twelfth Night*, Act 5
In class: *Twelfth Night* Scene Performance

Wednesday April 25
For class: Read *Hamlet*, Acts 1-2

**Week 14 – Hamlet**
Monday April 30
For class: Read *Hamlet*, Act 3; Q1 *Hamlet*, Sc. 7, ll. 1-231 (BlackBoard)

Wednesday May 2
For class: Read *Hamlet*, Act 4; Q1 *Hamlet*, Sc. 12-14 (BlackBoard); Response paper #4 due

**Week 15 – Hamlet**
Monday May 7
For class: Read *Hamlet*, Act 5
In class: *Hamlet* Scene Performance

Wednesday May 9
For class: Research paper due
In class: Conclusions and exam review

**FINAL EXAM**
Tuesday May 15
Take-Home Final due in my mailbox in Tawes 2119 before 2:00 PM.