

ENGLISH 11 C

SHAKESPEAREAN OUTSIDERS

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FH 109-A

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Readings: William Shakespeare. *As You Like It*. Ed. Albert Gilman. Penguin: Signet Classics, 1998.
_____. *Othello*. Ed. E. Honigmann. Arden Shakespeare, 1997.
_____. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. M. Lindsay Kaplan
Bedford: St. Martin's, 2002.
_____. *The Tempest* Ed. Stephen Orgel. Oxford: World's
Classics, 1998.

The Handbook used in this course will be *A Writer's Reference* (5th ed.) by Diana Hacker (Bedford Books, 2003).

Class meetings: Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., at 8:00 a. m., in FH 105. For more details, see separate schedule.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a. m. daily, and by appointment.

COURSE POLICIES AND GOALS

Writing: Like all sections of English 11, this one is primarily a writing course. We will use the Shakespearean texts listed above as the bases for opportunities for you to write **expository** and **argumentative** papers and by so doing to learn what effective writing is and to practice it. I will begin by taking for granted that you can write grammatically. Discussions of writing will therefore focus more on the related matters of **construction of the thesis, organization, development** and **clarity of focus**. We will also pay attention to matters of **economy** and **style** at the sentence level of your writing. If it happens that your writing displays serious grammatical problems, I will deal with these individually in conference. The course will be set up so that there will be class days devoted to discussions of issues arising from the Shakespearean texts and other class days devoted to discussions of your own writing. A detailed schedule will make clear the relation and balance between those classes that focus on writing and those that will focus more on the literature.

Readings: I have chosen Shakespearean texts that present in different ways problems caused by and experienced by characters who might be designated “outsiders” in the worlds of their plays. We will discuss the contribution of these characters to the generic character – tragic or comic – of their respective plays, but we will also discuss the moral, social, and political issues raised by these characters. We will try to be aware of the historical circumstances that affect the formulation of such issues in the different worlds of early 17th Century England and early 21st Century United States. I will use supplementary material – films, essays – to help focus questions on these issues and to give you possible topics for writing. **Note:** The editions of the Shakespearean texts have been deliberately chosen, and **it is an absolute requirement of the course that you purchase and use these editions**. I want you to see and think about the different ways in which different publishers and editors have decided to make available early 17th

Century texts for a 21st Century readership. I will assign each student a date on which he or she will be responsible for providing focusing questions for class discussion.

Goals: (i) To better understand what makes essays effective as exposition or argument.

(ii) To improve your ability to write clearly and organize effectively expository and argumentative essays.

(iii) To foster your understanding and enjoyment of some interesting plays by Shakespeare by considering them in their generic and historical contexts.

(iv) To make you more critically aware of what it means to produce a work of historical scholarship – in this case, an edition of a text from an earlier historical period.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: See separate handout

Attendance: Attendance at classes, conferences, and film screenings is a requirement of the course. Unexcused absences will be taken as evidence of lack of interest and will result in a lowered final grade. Unavoidable absences should be cleared with me in advance or should be explained after the fact with some indication of a medical or other emergency. Such absences will be considered “excused” and will not be penalized.

Paper Assignments and Due Dates: You will be required to write **five** papers during the term. The particular topics and any other requirements and options will be made clear with each assignment. Except for paper 1, the due dates will depend to some extent on how conferences are scheduled, but the following dates will serve as a rough guide:

<i>Paper 1</i>	Mon. 22 September.
<i>Paper 2</i>	In week beginning Mon. 6 October.
<i>Paper 3</i>	In week beginning Mon. 27 October.
<i>Paper 4</i>	In week beginning Mon. 17 November.
<i>Paper 5</i>	In week beginning Mon. 8 December.

Determination of Final Grade: The best grade of papers 2, 3, and 4 will count 25% towards your final grade, while the other two of that group will count 20% each. Paper 5 will count for 15%, and paper 1 10%. My evaluation of your attendance and participation will count for 10%.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should contact Susan Clark, Coordinator of Disability Services. Her office is on the lower level of the Earle Infirmary, and her on-campus extension is 2322. Please contact Ms. Clark early in the term, before the due date of the earliest assignment that might require an accommodation. After you meet with her, please contact me.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Unit One

- Tues. 9 Sept.** Introduction, handouts, first assignments
- Thurs. 11 Sept.
Fri. 12 Sept.** Writing, rhetoric and argument (discussion)
- Mon. 15 Sept.
Tues. 16 Sept.** Style, grammar, and choices
- Tues. 16 Sept. (evening)** Film of Shakespeare's *Othello* [Time/place TBA]
- Wed. 17 Sept.
Thurs. 18 Sept.** Getting ready to read Shakespeare (discussion)
- Thurs. 18 Sept. (evening)** Film: "O". Dir. Tim Blake Nelson [Time/place TBA]

Unit Two

- Mon. 22 Sept. – Thurs. 25 Sept.** Discussion of *Othello*.
- Mon. 29 Sept. – Fri. 3 Oct.** Conferences on drafts of paper 2

Unit Three

- Mon. 6 Oct. – Fri. 10 Oct.** Discussion of *As You Like It*.
- Mon. 13 Oct. – Wed. 15 Oct.** Conferences on drafts of paper 3

Unit Four

- Mon. 20 Oct. – Thurs. 23 Oct** Discussion of *The Merchant of Venice*
- Mon. 27 Oct. – Fri. 31 Oct** Conferences on drafts of paper 4

Unit Five

- Mon. 3 Nov. – Thurs. 6 Nov.** Movie viewings (2) related to *The Tempest* [Evenings, times and places TBA]
- Mon. 10 Nov. – Thurs. 13 Nov.** Discussion of *The Tempest*

Unit Six

Mon. 17 Nov. – Fri. 21 Nov.

Conferences on drafts of paper 5

[Thanksgiving Break, 23 November – 30 November]

Mon. 1 Dec. – Fri. 5 Dec.

Final conferences and classes, including a class meeting for course evaluation and some discussion of the different editions of Shakespeare's texts and their relative usefulness for the 21st Century reader.

NOTES: (i) In the weeks designated for conferences, we may not meet every day as a class. I will let you know in advance the class meeting schedule for these weeks. The scheduling of individual conferences will be decided on when the enrollment in the class is final – i. e. after the drop/add period. (ii) There is no final exam in the course.

General comment: This course doesn't presuppose any knowledge on your part of Shakespeare and his times, nor does it intend to be a preparation for the future study of Shakespeare. If you find the reading and discussion interesting and carry some of it away with you, I will be delighted, but you shouldn't think that each discussion will constitute an exhaustive treatment of a particular play. Rather, I'll tend to focus on questions that are manageable in a writing course of this kind, and where *Othello* and *As You Like It* are concerned, these will begin with the ideas of tragedy and comedy. These are terms that will have some meaning for you in a quite non-literary way, and I'll be interested in thinking about the relation between, on the one hand, our "everyday" understanding and usage of such terms and, on the other, their more specifically literary significance. *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest* are stranger and perhaps more disturbing plays, with what look like both tragic and comic elements. Both are undeniably effective as reading experiences and as staged drama.