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**JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY**

COURSE CODE: "EN 245-1"  
 COURSE NAME: "Shakespeare"  
 SEMESTER & YEAR: Fall 2023

**SYLLABUS****INSTRUCTOR:** Livia Sacchetti**EMAIL:** livia.sacchetti@johncabot.edu**HOURS:** TTH 6:00 PM 7:15 PM**TOTAL NO. OF CONTACT HOURS:** 45**CREDITS:** 3**PREREQUISITES:** Prerequisite: EN 110 with a grade of C or above**OFFICE HOURS:****COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is a general introduction to Shakespeare's plays and an in-depth study of a selection of his work. Through the close reading of the plays selected for the course, students will analyze a theatrical text, will contextualize it in the historical and political environment of the Elizabethan age, and will assess Shakespeare's cultural inheritance. This is a reading and writing intensive course. Students in 200-level literature classes are required to produce 4-5,000 words of critical writing.

**SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:**

Through a close reading of five key plays (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1595/6; *Twelfth Night*, 1600/1; *Othello*, 1604/5; *The Winter's Tale*, 1610/1, *The Tempest*, 1611) students will explore Shakespeare's relationship with dramatic form, learning to identify the foundations and evolution of the Shakespearean tragedy, comedy (and dark comedy), as well as his experimentation with form in his late plays. Each play will be introduced and contextualized through pointed lectures, and then discussed in detail in a Socratic seminar. The plays span the arc of Shakespeare's career and offer precious insights into the evolution of Shakespeare's conceptualization of theater, the human experience, and the potential for art to subvert human shortcomings. The explicit Italian setting in four of the plays will enrich the students' understanding of Italy as an imaginary landscape; this will be complemented nicely by the implicit allusions to Italy in the other two plays. A selection of short critical readings will complement the students' understanding of the plays and of the principles of dramatic form.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of this course students will have a strong understanding of the Shakespearean canon, being able to evaluate the development of dramatic form as a crucial and foundational aspect in the evolution of Shakespeare's voice. Students' critical competence will grow as a result; they will learn to develop an original argument orally and in their writing. The three papers will allow them to find their voice in academic writing, while the journals and class discussion will allow them to gain confidence in their interpretations. The final exam will cement their ability to develop a cogent interpretation of a specific extract.

**TEXTBOOK:**

Book Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN number	Library Call Number	Comments	Format	Local Bookstore	Online Purchase
Twelfth Night	Shakespeare	Arden	978-1903436998				Almost Corner Bookshop	
Othello	Shakespeare	Arden	978-1472571762					
The Winter's Tale	Shakespeare	Arden	978-1903436356					
The Tempest	Shakespeare	Arden	9781408133477					
Romeo and Juliet	Shakespeare	Arden	978-1903436912					

**REQUIRED RESERVED READING:**

NONE

**RECOMMENDED RESERVED READING:**

NONE

**GRADING POLICY****-ASSESSMENT METHODS:**

Assignment	Guidelines	Weight
First Essay 1500 words	Students will write three papers as part of this course. Submitting outlines and proposals for such papers will be part of their learning experience as they develop their ability to engage competently with critical discourse. The first paper will address an aspect of one of the works studied, in light of the criticism which will be part of the course. Students will be able to respond to a given prompt or write their own prompt for each of the papers.	15%
Second Essay 1500 words	Building on the skills learned from writing the first paper, the second paper will investigate a more daring and bold perspective into one of the text studied. Students will be invited to explore formal elements in one or two of the plays in light of a chosen conceptual lens.	15%
Forum	Students will be invited to post reflections, critical interpretations, proposals and outlines for their papers on Moodle. The forum is an informal space for students to engage with the course and develop their critical responses.	15%
Class Discussion	The course will be structured as a mixture of lectures and Socratic seminar. Students will be invited to respond to probing questions so as to develop their ideas.	10%
Final paper 2000 words	The final paper will be a research paper in which students will be invited to develop an original line of inquiry into at least two of the works studied, drawing cogent conclusions on the conceptual constructs addressed and implied in the texts.	25%
Final Exam	Students will be asked to interpret a key extract from one of the plays studied in relation to a given prompt.	20%

**-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:**

**A** Work of this quality directly addresses the question or problem raised and provides a coherent argument displaying an extensive knowledge of relevant information or content. This type of work demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate concepts and theory and has an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of a significant amount of reading beyond that required for the course.

**B** This is highly competent level of performance and directly addresses the question or problem raised. There is a demonstration of some ability to critically evaluate theory and concepts and relate them to practice. Discussions reflect the student's own arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from any major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the required assignments.

**C** This is an acceptable level of performance and provides answers that are clear but limited, reflecting the information offered in the lectures and reference readings.

**D** This level of performance demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

**F** This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material in the answer is irrelevant.

**-ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance is mandatory. After three absences, your overall grade for the course is reduced by one grade point. For example, if your final grade for the class is a B, it will become B- if you have had three or more absences in the term.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

As stated in the university catalog, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the work in which the dishonesty occurred. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty, irrespective of the weight of the assignment, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student who is reported twice for academic dishonesty is subject to summary dismissal from the University. In such a case, the Academic Council will then make a recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.

**STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR OTHER DISABILITIES**

John Cabot University does not discriminate on the basis of disability or handicap. Students with approved accommodations must inform their professors at the beginning of the term. Please see the website for the complete policy.

## SCHEDULE

Class will be structured combining lectures with a Socratic seminar. Students will be engaged in a close analysis of specific soliloquies, dialogues and scenes to gain an understanding of the evolution of Shakespeare's plays.

*Romeo and Juliet*

- Introduction to key conceptual underpinnings; elements of the tragedy
- The Shakespearean tragedy: the modern tragic arc

- Sources and undoing of elements of *Dolce Stilnovo*

Week 1: Act One

Week 2: Acts Two and Three

Week 3: Acts Four and Five

### *Twelfth Night*

- The dark comedy
- Merging of genres
- First paper due

Week 4: Act One and Two

Week 5 Acts Three and Four

Week 6: Act and Five

### *Othello*

- The modern tragic hero

Week 6: Act One

Week 7: Acts Two and Three

Week 8: Acts Four and Five

### *The Winter's Tale*

- Shakespeare's late plays — the romance
- Second paper due

Week 9 Act One

Week 10: Acts Two and Three

Week 11: Acts Four and Five

### *The Tempest*

- Meta-theater and parody in the final act.
- Third paper due

Week 12: Act One

Week 13 : Acts Two and Three

Week 14: Acts Four and Five

The final exam will consist in an in-class analysis of a soliloquy