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LS 455.01: Shakespeare - Homoerotic Patterns

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Fall 1998

LS 455 Shakespeare: Homoerotic Patterns

Professor Ruth Vanita

Tuesday, Thursday, 2.10-3 p.m.

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 1-2 p.m.

This course will look at patterns in plot, character type, phraseology, imagery, that foreground homoeroticism and critique institutionalized heterosexuality, in some of Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. We will consider how these patterns relate to earlier and contemporary traditions of such representation, how they influence later traditions, and how they are affected by genre (tragedy, comedy, romance, history, sonnet).

Texts

The Sonnets

The Merchant of Venice

As You Like It

Troilus and Cressida

Timon of Athens

The Winter's Tale

Requirements

Students are required to

- (a) attend classes and plenary lectures regularly and participate in group discussions. Excessive unexplained absences (more than three) will result in a zero for class attendance and participation
- (b) keep up with the assigned reading and bring the text to class
- (c) write a paper (undergraduates 10-12 pages, graduates 15-20 pages double-spaced typed) due November 19 in class
- (d) make a short class presentation on any aspect of a text. Graduate students will be required to make two presentations.
- (e) take a final examination December 16, in which the student will be required to focus on texts not covered in his/her paper.

Topics for papers must be decided in individual consultation with me. Topics that compare one or more texts in the syllabus to one or more texts outside of the syllabus are desirable. Papers and examination answers will be required to show a thorough knowledge of the texts in the syllabus and demonstrate an ability to perform close readings. Graduate students must engage with up-to-date secondary sources and situate their arguments in the context of current critical debates.

Grades

Class attendance and participation will be worth 30%, the paper 30%, and the final examination 40%.

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to complete the work as outlined, please notify me by September 10.

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with any changes announced in class.

September 3 Read Sonnet 121 and write a one-paragraph response to it.

September 8 Read Sonnets 1-20

September 10 Read Sonnets 21-85

September 15 Read Sonnets 86-144

September 17 Read The Merchant of Venice (entire) Discussion continues 22, 24, 29.

October 1 Read As You Like It (entire) Discussion continues 6, 8, 13

October 15 Read Troilus and Cressida (entire) Discussion continues 20, 22, 27, 29.

November 3 Election Day

November 5 I will be away at a conference.

November 10 Read Timon of Athens (entire) Discussion continues 12, 17, 19.

November 19 **Paper due in class**

November 24 Read The Winter's Tale (entire)

26 Thanksgiving holiday

Discussion on The Winter's Tale continues December 1, 3, 8, 10.

December 16, 1-3 p.m. Examination.