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FILM 320.01: Shakespeare and Film

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SHAKESPEARE & FILM (FILM 320)

Spring 2018

Rob Browning

Tues./Thurs. 2:00-4:20

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Office hours (LA 217): Tu./Th. 12:30-1:50; Tu./Th. before 10:00 & Fridays by appointment

"In Shakespeare the birds sing, the bushes are clothed with green, hearts love, souls suffer, the cloud wanders, it is hot, it is cold, night falls, time passes, forests and multitudes speak, the vast eternal dream hovers over all. Sap and blood, all forms of the multiple reality, actions and ideas, man and humanity, the living and the life, solitudes, cities, religions, diamonds and pearls, dung-hills and charnelhouses, the ebb and flow of beings, the steps of comers and goers, all, all are on Shakespeare and in Shakespeare."

--Victor Hugo, *William Shakespeare* (1864)

"Shakespeare sees always both sides of a thing. [...] In his plays he is woman, man, black, white, believer, heretic, Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Muslim. He grew up in an atmosphere of equivocation, but he lived in freedom. And he offers us freedom: to pin him down to a single identity would be an obvious diminishment, both for Shakespeare and for us. [...] He understood what fierce, singular certainty creates and what it destroys. In response, he made himself a diffuse, uncertain thing, a mass of contradictory, irresolvable voices that speak truth plurally."

--Zadie Smith, "Speaking in Tongues," in *Changing my Mind* (2009)

"You have not experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon."

--Chancellor Gorkon in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991)

As Marjorie Garber has observed, "Shakespeare is in a way always two playwrights, not one: the playwright of *his* time, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England, and the playwright of *our* time, whatever time that is. The playwright of *now*." This trans-historical phenomenon is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in a sustained study of Shakespeare that takes seriously both the verbal texts of the plays and the films that interpret or adapt the plays or use the plays as significant points of departure. In this class we shall undertake such a study, which will lead us into consideration of the various ways creative artists (film-makers and Shakespeare) adopt, adapt, and otherwise use or play with source materials; the different ways that verbal and filmic texts create meaning; and theories about authorship and the cultural meanings of "Shakespeare" in our own time.

Required Texts (and recommended editions):

- *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Penguin), 2000. ISBN: 978-0-14-071451-7
- *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. A.R. Braunmuller (Penguin), 2000. ISBN: 978-0-14-313022-2
- *Henry V*, ed. Claire McEachern (Penguin), 1999. ISBN: 978-0-14-071458-6
- *Hamlet*, ed. Robert S. Miola (Norton Critical Edition), 2011. ISBN: 978-0-393-92958-4
- *Macbeth*, ed. Robert S. Miola (Norton Critical), 2014. ISBN: 978-0-393-92326-1
- *Coriolanus*, ed. Jonathan Crewe (Penguin), 2018. ISBN: 978-0-14-313227-1
- *The Tempest*, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (Norton Critical Edition), ISBN: 978-0-393-97819-3
- Various readings posted on our course's Moodle site (those in the course schedule are required).

Films: For most of the plays we read we will study at least one film in its entirety and we'll examine other films more selectively by way of clips. You should make every effort to watch each of the main films we discuss. Most of these we'll watch together during class time, and others will be on reserve at the Mansfield Library. I encourage you to rent, borrow, purchase or otherwise acquire any films that are the major focus of your essay projects. Please let me know if you run into trouble accessing a particular film you wish to study closely.

Graded Work:

Response papers -----	30
Presentation -----	10
Forum posts -----	10
Short, formal essay (to be developed in a revised draft) -----	20
Term paper -----	30

Attendance is a sign of your commitment to your studies. I become concerned after a student has missed more than two classes. If you miss **three** classes, I expect you to schedule a meeting with me so we can discuss your status in the class. Ordinarily (and certainly if I hear nothing from you), each absence beyond three will reduce the final grade by one-third of a letter grade.

Please arrive to class on time. While I understand that the most conscientious of us sometimes are delayed by circumstances beyond our control (and in those cases, please do come to class rather than not at all), persistent late arrivals are a distraction. You may dismiss yourself during class time for urgent reasons.

Essays: This course includes three kinds: **1) Response papers.** These are informal, one to two page (single-spaced) explorations of some aspect of a play and/or film we have studied. You should use these papers to help develop your thinking about the plays and films we're studying. You should also use these papers as a forum for generating interesting questions and topics you might pursue in either of your two formal papers. Otherwise, you have considerable freedom in how you go about these papers. **2) A short, formal essay** (of about five double-spaced pages). I will distribute prompts for this essay, but you also will have the option of devising your own topic. **3) A term paper** (of no fewer than eight double-spaced pages). It will be your responsibility to devise a topic for this paper, however, I encourage you to talk with me about your reading and research interests at any point during the semester. Your paper should engage with your chosen primary film(s) and/or text(s) and carefully selected critical/theoretical publications.

Presentation: The purpose of the presentation is to give you the opportunity to develop an interpretive analysis of a specific film scene and to lead the class in discussion of this scene. I will assign each presentation group a film, and your group should let me know one week in advance of your presentation which scene from that film you will be analyzing. Your basic goal should be to help the class see what the film's makers are doing in the scene: how they are interpreting Shakespeare's text, how they are evoking the idea of "Shakespeare," and/or how they're using the scene for their own purposes. I encourage you to take Shakespeare's lead: be creative and have fun with this project! A one-page, single spaced synopsis of the content of what you presented will be due the following class meeting.

Forums for discussion: There will be discussion forums on Moodle for each of the plays we study. How we use these forums will vary: sometimes I'll raise a question and ask everyone to post a response and other times I'll ask you to generate the questions or topics for discussion. Chiefly, I intend these forums to be places where we can extend our discussions of Shakespeare and film beyond the classroom.

Electronic devices: You may use a personal computer or other device during class time for purposes directly related to the class: namely, note taking or consulting relevant supplementary texts. Please do not use an electronic device for other purposes since doing so would be a distraction from what we're trying to accomplish together in this class.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is a violation of scholarly trust. According to the Provost, "Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>." Violators of the Student Conduct Code will receive an "F" for the offending paper. Each essay you submit must be signed at the bottom of the last page, assuring that the work is your own, except where indicated by proper documentation. Your signature is your word that the essay is free of plagiarism.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

Specific goals for students of this course:

1. To become experienced, insightful, and wise interpreters of "Shakespeare"—the plays, the films, and the cultural phenomenon.
2. To become adept at performing meaningful, interesting close-readings of literary and filmic texts.
3. To gain familiarity with the distinguishing characteristics of Shakespeare films by four major directors: Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, Akira Kurosawa, and Kenneth Branagh.
4. To practice revising and developing the draft of a formal analytical essay.
5. To become proficient in writing rhetorically effective essays (well-reasoned and grammatically sound), driven by a thesis and sustained by an ordered, coherent argument.

The following schedule is tentative. At the beginning or end of each class I will confirm the homework for the next class, which often will include additional secondary readings (accessible on Moodle). If you miss a class, please check with a classmate or myself about homework I have announced for the next class.

- 1/23 Tues.** Who was and what is "Shakespeare"? For this class, please read "The Theatrical World" and "The Texts of Shakespeare" (which you can find near the front of any of the Penguin editions of the plays) and Scott L. Newstok, "How to Think like Shakespeare" (on Moodle). Recommended reading for as soon as you can get to it: Harold Goddard, "Cadwal and Polydore" (on Moodle)
- 1/25 Thurs.** *The Taming of the Shrew*, acts 1-3; Marjorie Garber's chapter on the play, pp. 57-60 (Moodle)
- 1/30 Tues.** **Response paper due.** *The Taming of the Shrew*, acts 4-5; finish reading Garber's chapter on the play (Moodle); film we'll study: Franco Zeffirelli (dir.), *Taming of the Shrew* (1967); Samuel Crowl, "Auteurs and Actors" and Ed Sikov, "Mis-en-scene" (both on Moodle)
- 2/1 Thurs.** *The Taming of the Shrew*; Elsie Walker, "Getting Back to Shakespeare: Whose Film is it Anyway?" (Moodle); Films: Zeffirelli's *Taming of the Shrew* and Gil Junger (dir.), *Ten Things I Hate about You* (1999)

- 2/6 Tues. *The Merchant of Venice*
 2/8 Thurs. *The Merchant of Venice*
- 2/13 Tues. **Response paper due.** Film screening: Michael Radford, *The Merchant of Venice* (2005)
 2/15 Thurs. *The Merchant of Venice*
- 2/20 Tues. *Henry V*, acts 1-3; introduction to Penguin edition by Claire McEachern; and please familiarize yourself with the plots of the first three plays of “the Henriad” (see link on Moodle to serviceable summaries). For more detailed context, see Peter Saccio’s article (Moodle)
 2/22 Thurs. *Henry V*, acts 4-5; clips from Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (1944).
- 2/27 Tues. *Henry V*; Marjorie Garber, “Henry V: the Quest for Exemplarity” (Moodle); Kenneth Branagh’s *Henry V* (1989)
 3/1 Thurs. *Henry V*; Sara Munson Deats, “Rabbits and Ducks” (Moodle)
 3/2 Friday **Short formal essay due** (please slide under my office door by 5:00)
- 3/6 Tues. *Hamlet*, acts 1-2; Robert Miola’s introduction to Norton edition (xi-xix)
 3/8 Thurs. *Hamlet*, act 3; clips from Laurence Olivier’s *Hamlet* (1948)
- 3/13 Tues. **Response paper due.** *Hamlet*, acts 4-5; clips from Kenneth Branagh’s *Hamlet* (1996)
 3/15 Thurs. *Hamlet*; readings in Norton Critical Edition of the play: by Ernest Jones (264-71), by Olivier (168-73), and by Branagh (176-82).
- 3/20 Tues. Film Screening: Justin Kurzel, *Macbeth* (2015)
 3/22 Thurs. *Macbeth*
- Week of 3/26 Spring Break**
- 4/3 Tues. *Macbeth*
 4/5 Thurs. Film screening: Akira Kurosawa, *Throne of Blood* (1957)
- 4/10 Tues. **Response paper due.** *Throne of Blood*
 4/12 Thurs. *Coriolanus*
- 4/17 Tues. Film screening: Ralph Fiennes, *Coriolanus* (2011)
 4/19 Thurs. *Coriolanus*
- 4/24 Tues. **Response paper due.**
 4/26 Thurs. *The Tempest*
- 5/1 Tues. *The Tempest*; screening of Fred Wilcox’s *Forbidden Planet* (1956)
 5/3 Thurs. *The Tempest*; clips from Peter Greenaway’s *Prospero’s Books* (1991)

Term paper due: May 7 (Monday) by 3:00. Please slide your essay under my office door.