

Syllabus - Session 2, 2026

Excluding materials for purchase, syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: English 3503: Shakespeare I

Credits: 3

Format: online

Prerequisites: [ENGL 1007 or 1010](#) or [1011](#).

"The remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he is really very good, in spite of all the people who say he is very good." -- Robert Graves

After many years of teaching and studying Shakespeare, we still marvel at how good he really is. Our major goal in this introductory class is to share some of the things we've learned about his plays over the years, and to explore with you the reasons why his artistry continues to influence and move us 400 years after his death. Our more technical goal is to instill appreciation and understanding of the following: the historical context in which Shakespeare lived and created his art; the major dramatic genres; the chief characteristics of Shakespeare's dramatic style: systematic indeterminacy, pervasive metatheatricity, and dialectical structuring; the basic terms and devices of Shakespearean drama, including soliloquy, aside, play-within-the-play, and exposition; some of the major characters such as Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, and Juliet; and the major dramatic themes, including nature versus nurture, fate and freewill, and sacred and profane love.

One decade beyond the quatercentenary year—the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death—this seminar will also focus some on Shakespeare's enduring cultural legacy. Looking critically and theoretically at engagements of Shakespeare in scholarship, educational curricula, music, and film, we will ask the question "Why Shakespeare?" That is, how and why has the "cultural capital" of Shakespeare been evoked since at least the publication of the First Folio in 1623? More specifically, how has Shakespeare been presented to the masses in terms of sexuality, gender, race, violence, and nationalism? What happens when Shakespeare's name is evoked in "lowbrow" entertainment or appropriated in popular culture forms? What can the serious study of reception, adaptation, appropriation, and other such engagements teach us about Shakespeare and his considerable influence?

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Availability: Generally speaking, email is the best way to communicate with us. We recommend that you email both of us simultaneously to ensure the fastest possible response. During the week, we will respond to all emails within 24 hours. On weekends, we may need more time to do so. Please email us about any questions you have pertaining to course content, assignments, or similar items.

Course Materials

Required course materials should be obtained before the first day of class.

We will be studying five plays in depth this term: *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. We will not require a specific edition of these plays so that you may acquire the most affordable ones available, or use either library editions or ones you already own. The only caveat here is that these should be "scholarly" editions that contain useful supplemental material such as contextualizing introductions, explanatory footnotes and line glosses, etc. Our recommendation would be to pursue either cheap single-volume scholarly editions of individual plays (such as the Signet Classic or Folger Library paperbacks

[often a few dollars each online, used]) or a single-volume "complete works" edition (such as the Norton Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare, or Riverside Shakespeare). Any decent local library will have multiple editions of each of these plays, for free, of course. Please let us know if you have any concerns about the specific editions to which you have access.

You will also need to watch a film in Week 4: Robert Eggers's *The Northman* (2022), which you can rent on many major streaming platforms or acquire for free on DVD/Blu-Ray through interlibrary loan.

Required Plays:

Item 1. *Romeo and Juliet*

Item 2. *The Taming of the Shrew*

Item 3. *Twelfth Night*

Item 4. *Hamlet*

Item 5. *Macbeth*

Additional course readings and media are available within HuskyCT, through an Internet link.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify important **characters, themes, and formal characteristics** of Shakespeare's major tragedies and comedies.
2. Situate the characters, themes, and formal characteristics of Shakespearean drama within the local **contexts of English Renaissance history and culture**.
3. Analyze the complex **layers of meaning** in a typical Shakespeare play.
4. Analyze the **strengths, weaknesses, and usefulness of secondary criticism** on the plays.
5. Evaluate the **impact of interpretive choices** made by directors and performers of Shakespearean drama.
6. Articulate your thoughts about Shakespeare's **influence on modern culture through engagements with several legacy texts**.

Course Outline and Schedule

Module 1: Orientation & Introduction / *Romeo and Juliet*

Module 2: *The Taming of the Shrew*

Module 3: *Twelfth Night*

Module 4: *Hamlet*

Module 5: *Macbeth* / Final Exam

[Course Schedule](#)

Course Requirements and Grading

For this five-week, three-credit course, you should expect to spend approximately 21 hours per week attending to course activities. You should log in to the course every other day *at a minimum* to keep up with the workload (and, at times, you will need to log in every day). Be careful to note the deadlines for each week and to mark them clearly in your recordkeeping system.

Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
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Quizzes	15%
Play Discussion Board with 2 Replies	30%
Legacy Shakespeare: Film Analyses	25%
Journal	10%
Final Exam	20%

Quizzes

Five fact-based quizzes this session will test your careful reading of the plays and certain secondary readings, as well as your attention to instructor presentations.

Play Discussion Board with Two Replies

[Discussion Board Expectations](#)

[Discussion Board Rubric](#)

Film Clips Analysis

[Film Clips Analysis Expectations](#)

[Film Clips Analysis Rubric](#)

Journal

Each week, you will write both a wind-up journal entry and a wrap-up journal entry. The purpose of the "Wind-up Journal" is to promote immediate reflection on the experience of reading each play's opening acts before reading and watching the other module resources. Articulate either the most significant problem the reading poses for you or the most significant question it raises. Be sure to specify which lines, passage, or plot element you're talking about, and offer some initial thoughts about what's at stake for you in seeing how the problem is resolved or the question answered. Take the assignment seriously, follow the guidelines, and you will earn full credit.

After completing the play and the related material, write and submit your "Wrap-up Journal." The purpose of the second journal is to promote and provide space for personal reflection on each week's work. Which issues in the plays tended to pique your interest? Which issues did you find most confusing or problematic? Regarding the article, what did you find most illuminating or infuriating? The point of these questions is not to suggest what you should write on but, rather, to indicate some of the things you might write on. Share whatever thoughts you feel most need to articulate. Take the assignment seriously, follow the guidelines, and you will earn full credit.

(Recommended minimum length of each entry: 250 words)

[Journal Rubric](#)

Final Exam

The timed 3-hour Final Examination will consist of two parts: 1) your response to a prompt requiring comparative analysis of 4-5 plays; 2) your response to a prompt requiring analysis of one filmed scene of Shakespeare.

Grading Scale:

Grade	Letter Grade	GPA
94-100	A	4.0
90-93	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
63-66	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.7
<60	F	0.0

Due Dates and Late Policy

All course due dates are identified in the [Course Schedule](#). Deadlines are based on Eastern Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submission times accordingly. Assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the specified date. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.*

Deadlines are especially important in an asynchronous online course. Therefore, all late work will be penalized according to the logic of each assignment's particular rubric. For example, if you submit a post a day late, you will score 0 points for the "Completeness and Timeliness" section of the evaluation. Any work submitted more than 24 hours after the due date will receive an automatic grade of F.

Feedback and Grades

We will make every effort to provide feedback and grades within 48 hours of submission. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to **My Grades** in HuskyCT. *Be sure to read our written feedback in addition to checking your grades.*

Use of Artificial Intelligence

You are of course aware of ChatGPT and similar types of generative artificial intelligence called Large Language Models (LLM). These models have the capacity to quickly produce essays on a range of topics. LLMs aggregate the ideas and insights of many researchers and real creators without giving them credit. Submitting LLM-generated essays as your own work would be an act of plagiarism insofar as it would involve passing off the work of others as your own. For these reasons, and other related to the cognitive-loading health crisis, *you are not permitted to use any forms of AI to produce essays for this class*. The consequences of doing so will be serious. See below for more on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important [standards, policies and resources](#), which include:

- The Student Code
 - Academic Integrity
 - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- Copyrighted Materials
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

Students with Disabilities

Students needing special accommodations should work with the University's [Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\)](#). You may contact CSD by calling (860) 486-2020 or by emailing csd@uconn.edu. If your request for accommodation is approved, CSD will send an accommodation letter directly to your instructor(s) so that special arrangements can be made. (Note: Student requests for accommodation must be filed each semester.)

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government." (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from Blackboard's website).

Statement on Intellectual Property, etc.

Our lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are our own original expressions, and we've recorded them prior to or during our lectures in order to ensure that we obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in this class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. The recording of our

lectures is not authorized unless, ahead of time, we make exceptional arrangements. If you are so authorized to record our lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from us.

Software Requirements and Technical Help

- Word processing software, such as Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Office is free to UConn students through uconn.onthehub.com. ([Microsoft Accessibility Statement](#), [Microsoft Privacy Statement](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) ([Adobe Reader Accessibility Statement](#), [Adobe Reader Privacy Policy](#))
- Internet access

Help

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). The [Student Help](#) link near the top of the HuskyCT site provides guidance and technical assistance.

The [Academic Resources](#) link provides information on academic assistance, including information on the Academic Achievement Center for one-on-one coaching.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.

University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology.

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the office of Institutional Research.

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.