

**English 4331/5331 (Shakespeare II)**  
TTh 10:50; Sections 20195/20196; Irby 303  
**Spring 2008**, Melchior (office Irby 317C)

Phone: 450-5127; Email: bonniem@uca.edu  
Website: <http://faculty.uca.edu/~bonniem>  
Office Hours: TTh 1:00-3:30 (if no meetings)

Text: *The Norton Shakespeare*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, et al., 1997.

*Romeo and Juliet* (1595)

*Merchant of Venice* (1596)

*Othello* (1604)

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595)

*Henry V* (1599)

*King Lear* (1605)

The introduction to each play is excellent. These introductions will help you see lines of development in a play and significant themes that will be explored. Mark key passages in the text as you read and make notes beside it. (No one has time to completely reread for papers, so we need to note what is important and why in order to refer back later.) Also, bring the text to class for further marking up.

### Assignments:

- A reading journal—1-2 pages a week (Save returned journals as source material for papers and final exam). (Ink or typed, one side only; don't worry about grammar/spelling/organization.) (110 pts.)
- A short piece of writing (2-3 pages, typed) called a "seed paper" (20 pts.) Save returned seed paper to turn in with the longer formal essay.
- A longer formal essay (6-7 pages in MLA style), developed directly from the seed paper (100 pts.)
- Recitation of one memorized passage (minimum 12 lines) from a play of your choice (prefaced by the context of the lines and a rationale for your choice) (25 pts.)
- A midterm (terms, identification of passages, and other objective questions) (100 pts.)
- A final examination (an objective section concerning passages and terms and an essay) (100 pts.)
- Frequent in-class discussion and fewer than 5 absences (up to 20 pts.)

### Additional Assignments for Graduate Students:

- A. Read all of the introduction (pp. 1-72) and turn in a 2-page journal consisting of questions, points of interest/confusion and prepare to discuss contents at the weekly meeting. Due Tuesday, Feb. 5.
- B. Four annotated bibliographies—three on this semester's plays plus one on *The Winter's Tale* or *The Tempest*. Two of the bibliographies will consist of **3** sources plus a **response**, two will be **4** sources plus a **response**. (The play you choose to do your seed paper on and *The Tempest* are the 4-source ones.) Choose sources from bibliographies obtained from me, and do a ½ to 1 page summary of each source. The first summary will be due on the first day we deal with the play. Each bibliography thereafter will be due on the last class day dealing with that play. Only one reading journal will be due for plays on which you do an annotated bibliography.
- C. Read *The Tempest*. Do a two-page reading journal on each act and a four-source annotated bibliography (directions in Section B). Come in and discuss the play with me for an hour after you have turned in at least part of the reading journal. Consult with me on due dates.
- D. Weekly meetings in my office: presentation and discussion of an outside reading.

**Absence:** People absent for the equivalent of 3 weeks of classes will be dropped.

**Papers:** Papers that are not turned in the day the syllabus says they're due will be marked down. If you know in advance that the week will be hectic, come talk to me and we can arrange something ("in advance" does not mean the day the paper is due--that's too late.) Everyone will sign up to do a "seed paper" on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry V*, or *Othello* (4 people per play)-- then lead a group

discussion on that play. The longer, formal paper will emerge from the seed paper and the discussion generated by that paper. Seed papers (focused on answering a question put at the top of the paper) will be due two class sessions before the group discussion on that play.

**The Reading Journal:** Each journal will count 10 points. Since one of the purposes is to encourage class discussion and keep people from getting behind, each journal must be turned in at **the beginning of the period** (put it on my desk). Journals not on the desk when class starts will be counted as late journals. To allow for sickness and pressing responsibilities, 2 may be turned in up to 1 week late. You may turn journals in early if you know you will be absent. Also, at the end of the semester, I will drop 1 journal grade. Write on only one side of the paper (in ink or typed). Put the play and act in the upper left corner (for ex., *RJ I*). Fold lengthwise; put your name, “Sh,” and the date to the right of the fold.

Journal questions are on this syllabus or they will be posted on my website. To get the maximum amount of credit on a journal, use **specific evidence** from the play (something from a quote or an action) to answer the question. Draw at least some evidence from the acts assigned for that day. Write a full page. The idea is to think about how things go together to make meaning.

**Objective information you will be responsible for on tests:** (brackets mean you can ignore the terms)

1. The general chronology of the plays
2. The genre of each play (and distinctive features of that genre)
3. The meaning of the following terms (and the ability to apply them): foreshadowing, protagonist, soliloquy, simile, metaphor, oxymoron, malapropism, blank verse, iambic pentameter and tetrameter (rhymed and unrhymed), [Shakespearean sonnet form], quarto, bad quarto, folio, First Folio, comedy, tragedy, history play, Roman play, [romance], gull or dupe, [machiavel], classical unities, “green” world, double plot, microcosm in a macrocosm, [the Vice], [stichomythia], dramatic irony.

**Videotapes available for rental in many stores:** *Romeo and Juliet* (2 versions— 1996 Baz Luhrman’s with diCaprio/Danes and Zeffirelli’s more traditional 1968 version); *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2 versions— 1999 Kevin Kline/Michelle Pfeiffer and an oldie with Mickey Roonie); *Merchant of Venice* (2004 Al Pacino); *Henry V* (2 versions-- 1944 Olivier and 1989 Branagh); *Othello* (2 versions— 1995 Fishburne/Branagh and 1965 Olivier; *O* in 2001 uses the *Othello* plot in a modern high school setting); *King Lear* (1971 Brook/Scofield, perhaps not readily available, and Kurosawa’s Japanese adaptation *Ran*.) Starstruck Video in Conway has many videos not carried at big chains (phone 327-6253).

**Plagiarism:** Papers and journals should be based on your own close encounter with the plays. Using any material from other sources without crediting those sources will result in an “F”.

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of disability support Services at 450-3135. For general academic policy and policy concerning sexual harassment see the Student Handbook.

### **Interpretation:**

**Character:** Everything minor characters say about major characters is true, unless contradicted within a few pages. Only major characters can “change” during the course of a play; other characters stay the same. Minor characters often function as “foils” (contrasting attitudes or character traits— they represent other options in that situation). Look for key speeches that announce a character’s intentions and motivations.

All information that is important to the meaning is provided in the play; what is not provided is not important.

For instance, if the past history of a character is not provided (whether a character did or did not have children, how a character was treated as a child, etc.), it isn't important to interpreting motivation. Look for speeches in which the character himself or herself discusses motivation and reasoning.

Scene Sequence: Frequently, scenes represent various environments where certain values prevail (for instance the city of Venice vs. the city of Belmont in *MV*). Also, the sequence can be ironic or comment on the truth of what has been said (for instance, in *H5* the bishops hold forth eloquently on the patriotic necessity of war right after a scene revealing that their real interests are political payback and money).

Journal questions and other materials will be posted on my web page: <http://faculty.uca.edu/~bonniem>

## **WEEKLY SYLLABUS** (Bring text to class every day!)

### I (Jan. 15-17)

T Read "Introduction," pp. 1-15, 18-24, 35-39, 57-61(no journal)

Th Read Introduction to *Romeo and Juliet* and Act I, pp. 865-71, 872-78 (no journal)

### II (Jan. 22-24)

T Read *RJ*, the rest of Act I and Act II (journal **due** either today on Acts I-II or Thursday on III-IV)

Th *RJ*, Acts III-IV (journal **due** on Acts III-IV if you did not do one Tues.; sign up for seed-paper play)

### III (Jan. 29-31)

T *RJ*, Act V (journal **due**)

Th *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Introduction and Act I (no journal)

### IV (Feb. 5-7)

T *MND*, Acts II-III (journal **due**)

Th *MND*, Acts IV-V (no journal due);

*MND* seed papers **due** (type and include question at the top)

### V (Feb. 12-14)

T Seed paper discussions and enactment of Act 5;

**Journal due**: write a sample answer for midterm (see directions)

Th *Merchant of Venice*, Introduction and Act I (no journal due)

### VI (Feb. 19-21)

T *MV*, Acts II-III (journal **due** either Tues. or Thurs. on that day's reading)

Final draft of *MND* paper due (MLA form; include original seed paper)

Th *MV*, Acts IV-V (short seed papers due)

### VII (Feb. 26-28)

T Seed paper discussions and practice for midterm: Bring a ½-page "practice" answer to a quote-question and 5 quotes (covering 3 plays)-- Make 2 copies, one identified with character and page number, one not. (See the website for characters that will be on the test.)

Th Midterm

### VIII (Mar. 4-6)

T *Henry V*, Introduction and Act I

Th *H5*, Acts II-III (journal **due**)

IX (Mar. 11-13)

T *H5*, Acts IV-V; seed papers due

Th *Othello*: Read Introduction; *H5* seed paper discussions

Final draft of *Merchant of Venice* paper due (MLA form; include original seed paper)

X (Mar. 18-20)

T *Othello*, Acts I-II (journal **due**)

Th *O*, Acts III-IV (journal **due**)

Spring Break

XI (Apr. 1-3)

T *O*, Act V (seed papers due)

Th *King Lear*, Read Introduction pp. 2307-14; Seed paper discussions

Final draft of *H5* paper due (MLA form; include original seed paper)

XII (Apr. 8-10)

T *KL* (conflated text), Act I, pp. 2479-98.

Th *KL*, Acts II-III (journal **due**)

XIII (Apr. 15-17)

T *KL*, Act IV-V, (journal **due**)

Th Catch up

Final draft of *Othello* paper due (MLA form; include original seed paper)

XIV (Apr. 22-24)

T Oral recitations

Th Final exam preparation— "practice" short-answer and quotes due

Final Examination (comprehensive)

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** (in Old English--i.e., Anglo-Saxon)

Faeder Ure,

pbu pbpe eart on heofonum,

si pbin nama (ge)halgod.

Tobecume pbin rice.

(Ge)weorpbe pbin willa on eorpan swa swa on heofonum.

Urne (ge)daeghwamlican hlaf syle us to daeg.

And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfapb urum gyltendum.

And ne gelaed pbu us on costnunge,

ac alys us of yfele.

Sopblice.

(The runic "thorn" symbol pbp represents "th.")

Note: This prayer, in Latin, is called the "Paternoster."

## **Romeo and Juliet Background**

Shakespeare's source is full of sermonizing, as illustrated by the following excerpt:

"[This work is written, good reader] to describe to thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to dishonest desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends, conferring . . .with superstitious friars, . . . attempting all adventures of peril for the attaining of their wished lust, . . .abusing the honorable name of lawful marriage, . . . finally by all means of dishonest life hastening to most unhappy death."

This play, on the other hand, is not structured to support such moralizing. The passion shared by Romeo and Juliet has some of the characteristics of a religion, as indicated in the list below. If you choose to answer the journal question on religion, explore how their love fits several items on this list. Try to find less-obvious evidence (for example images or wording).

Ritual is important to worship.

Unconditional love and sacrifice are seen as good (for instance, people are willing to die for it).

Religion provides a goal beyond life to strive for.

Religion can completely transform someone.

Religion provides a standard for moral conduct.

Religion provides an explanation of the meaning of life.

Religion transcends class and culture, and also provides a sense of community for those in the group.

Religion often brings about conflict and violence.

### **General questions the work explores:**

1. What does it mean to "come of age" in a place like Shakespeare's Verona? (i.e. what does it mean to "be a man" and to "be a woman" and to become an adult?)
2. The lovers, Mercutio, and the nurse represent 3 different ideas of "love" (purpose, value, relation to identity)-- how do these differ?
3. Passionate love can have much in common with a religion-- what?
4. What constitutes our "identity"?
5. How can things be opposites and yet part of each other? (Note verbal puns and oxymorons, symbols such as poison/medicine, and characteristics associated with intercourse/stabbing, day/night, public/private, love/death.)
6. Words can be actions. What does this mean and how do these verbal actions relate to what we normally think of as "action"?

**Journal/Reading Questions for *RJ*:** Write at least 1 page, showing "close reading" of appropriate lines

### **Act I**

1. Find lines where "names" seem important. What do the lines say and what they suggest about the characteristics that identify that person.-- reading question (not for a journal!)
2. Find oxymorons and write them down, noting the page numbers. What do they contribute to our understanding of coming of age or passionate romantic love? – reading question (not for a journal)
3. Romeo, the nurse, and Mercutio have very different ideas of love. Find a key passage indicating either the nurse's or Mercutio's and write on what that character's idea is, backing up the point with evidence.

### **Act II**

1. Mercutio's highest value is not Romeo's. What values/attitudes do Mercutio and Romeo share and what values/attitudes do they not share? (note, particularly, p. 899, 2.3.76-80)
2. How is Friar Lawrence's long speech on herbs symbolic? (see general question #3 and find specifics not dealing with herbs that relate to the friar's comments on herbs)
3. Find lines dealing with identity (naming) and write them down. How do they illustrate competing values in the play?
4. Find lines that show how the nurse's and Friar Lawrence's attitudes typify those of benevolent adults in this play. What gap does this illustrate between teens and adults?

### **Act III**

1. What does the opening conversation in III contribute to our understanding of Mercutio's values and view of the world (and therefore to our understanding of what happens later in the scene?)
2. Consider the effect on the audience of the sequence of the scenes— particularly Juliet's opening speech on 3.2 just after the events of 3.1.
3. Look at what characters say and do to see what counts as "being a man" (or "being a woman") in this society. (This question is also an example of a seed question, if applied to the whole play.)

### **Acts IV and V**

1. In what sense is their love like a religion? (Use points given above or points of your own choosing and support with evidence from the play and explanation.)
2. What do the "A" and "B" (below) contribute to our understanding of one or more of the "general questions" mentioned above? (You may write on one or both.)
  - A) Having Paris at the tomb when Romeo arrives
  - B) The apothecary scene seems extraneous (we could have learned Romeo obtained the poison in one sentence). What things do we learn in this scene that seem to have nothing to do with passionate love? What insights into passionate love do they provide?
3. Find ways Shakespeare disturbs conventional associations, moralizing, or "romanticizing"? Mention them and hypothesize about insights deriving from this.

**Sample Seed Questions** (Seed questions need to be questions that cannot be answered by looking up a "fact"-- they need to be argued for. At the same time, there needs to be material in the play pertinent to the question— it cannot depend on information that isn't there, such as what Romeo's early childhood was like or whether having different parents would have made a difference).

Sample seed questions:

1. Choosing one of several polarities the play sets up (like night/day, public/private worlds, age/youth), and ask "what values and ways of seeing characterize one side vs. the other?" How (and why) does the play call into question the very opposition it sets up?
2. The nurse, Mercutio, and the lovers represent three different attitudes toward "love" or sex. What characterizes each?

See Act III question #3 above for another sample seed question.

## On Seed Questions

Seed Questions are questions

that seem interesting and pertinent to understanding the meaning of the play,  
that have no single “fact” as an answer,  
that relate to evidence that can be found in the play (looking closely at speeches or sequencing or images,  
etc., will supply an insight into the question)

The final paper doesn't have to provide some “definitive” answer, but it should provide some useful insights concerning the question and indicate evidence in the play that supports these insights. The two or three page seed paper should indicate ideas concerning the question or more questions concerning the question and it should indicate what evidence might be pertinent to answering it (what kinds of things you could look at in the play).

Where to find evidence concerning attitudes and values:

Directly: through the character's speeches

Indirectly: through contrasts with other characters and comments by other characters

### **1. Try to treat the character as a character and not a person. Also, try for what is less obvious.**

Initial try: Why does Mercutio not take Romeo's love seriously?

Better: How does Mercutio's idea of “being a man” differ from Romeo's?

### **2. Formulate a “small” question and make it significant by saying how it might represent a larger issue:** If you notice something strange or odd (like the short scene with the apothecary who never appears again), make up a question concerning how it functions to illuminate issues pertinent to the play: What does the apothecary scene contribute to our understanding of the nature of passionate love?)

### **3. Try to supply components to consider in the question:**

Initial try: In what sense are Romeo and Juliet androgynous?

Better: In what sense are Romeo and Juliet androgynous with regard to their attitude toward roles in “courting” (modern dating) and attitudes when thwarted in love?

Initial try: What role, if any, does humor play in the play?

Better: How does Mercutio's wit relate to his view of “being a man”?

### **4. Try to direct people toward evidence in the play (notice how the question gets more focused):**

In what sense is the feud representative of the society's values? 1 Why is the feud perpetuated primarily by the young men in the society? 1 In what sense is the feud a representation of traditional masculine values? 1 In what sense is the feud a perfect vehicle for “proving yourself a man” and is there any evidence other avenues exist?