

Shakespeare

English 127.4

Spring 2002

Meeting: MWF 12:20-1:10 in TBA

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Course Description

This writing seminar will help you develop critical reading and writing skills that you will find indispensable to the rest of your college career and beyond. We will explore the notion of “what you say” (content) vs. “how you say it” (style)—and through your own writing experience and learning to write as good readers you can come to your own conclusions and attack or defend my argument that “what you have to say IS how you say it.” What you have to say is so inextricably intertwined with how you say it that you can’t have one without the other—content (great ideas) cannot be delivered unless it is conveyed by (and packaged in) the vehicle of language. This statement is similar to the statement that there are no true synonyms; every synonym is a different word, with its own nuances of meaning. On the phrase, sentence, paragraph, and essay levels the phenomenon is magnified. Minor revisionary changes in sentence structure, diction, grammatical choices, and concision deliver a different constellation of meaning to the reader. I might have been more specific in the wording of my slogan, addressing what we will be focusing on in this class, which is how you “write” it rather than how you “say” it, but I made a decision based on the connotative power of the phrase “how you say it.” You might also notice that I purposely opted to use the passive voice in the sentence that contains the phrase “conveyed by.” This is an example of the close attention that we will give to writing and reading in this course, through lively discussion as well as through our writing.

Texts (available at the Campus Bookstore, Signet Classic editions)

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Romeo and Juliet

Twelfth Night

Othello

Titus Andronicus

Antony and Cleopatra

Engl 127.4 Course Packet. Instructor, Michael N. García. Cornell Store, Spring 2001.

The Elements of Style. 3rd ed. William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979.

Course E-reserves

From the library catalog's main search page click on Course Reserves. Search for Engl 127.5. You will be required to read all materials on course e-reserve.

Writing Assignments

You will write six essays, totaling a minimum of 30 pages of writing. For two of these papers (papers 2 and 6) you will make substantial revisions. There will also be some informal writing assignments during class.

Formatting Formalities

All assignments to be handed in must be typed and double-spaced, 12 point font, paginated, and printed on laser jet or bubble jet. Papers are to be written in the MLA style. Assignments must be handed in (IN CLASS) on the day that they are due. Late assignments will drop one letter grade for each day that they are late. Keep copies of all your work to be handed in as a portfolio (also part of your grade) at the end of the semester.

Course Objectives. In this course you will learn to:

- Freewrite, brainstorm, and mindmap
- Develop a clear, precise, and well-defined thesis statement
- Paragraph unity and keeping only paragraphs that relate to your thesis
- Read a text closely and write papers as your own toughest reader
- Develop and support your thesis with apt examples and persuasive reasoning
- Structure your paragraphs optimally with clear and smooth transitions
- Master the nuances of diction
- Be mindful of the mechanics and grammar of formal written English
- Revise as re-vision—writing as a process of discovery and critical thinking

Grades

- 75% Papers and exercises
- 20% Attendance, class participation, and pop quizzes
- 5% Portfolio

Class Participation

This is a seminar class, not a lecture class, making it imperative that all students come to class prepared to talk about the text. Reading the text closely and engaging in mock dialogue with the text as you read (asking questions of the text as you read) will, no doubt, bring you to class full of questions, observations, and arguments for the text and the community of literary critics, readers, and writers that the class will provide.

I may occasionally require that you write 150-200 word pre-discussion notes (to hand in before class). I will often ask you to bring to class one or two questions to be queried of the text.

Pop quizzes may be given at any time. As long as you have read the text the quiz will be easy, though I might ask a detailed question that is readily answerable if you have

carefully read the text but not something that would be provided in a Cliff's Notes or website summary, etc..

Citing and Potential Plagiarism

You are required to read the chapter “The Code of Academic Integrity and Acknowledging the Work of Others” (approximately pages 54-60) in Cornell’s **Policy Notebook for Cornell Community**. Every student was issued one of these booklets as part of orientation. Having read this there is no excuse for unintentionally failing to cite a source when required. There are gray areas as to when to cite and when a paraphrase is adequate, but we all recognize blatant intended plagiarism when we see it. In such cases the paper will receive an immediate grade of F and the student will be referred to the College Academic Integrity Hearing Board.

We all stand on the shoulders of (collective) giants; we all benefit from the ideas of others. The issue of plagiarism has a lot to do with my earlier statement: “what you have to say IS how you say it.” Many of our best ideas are common knowledge, societally and globally shared. It is hard to imagine an idea that has not been thought, a phrase that has never been uttered or written, a great idea that did not have its seeds in someone else great (or less than great) idea. This class will be largely about finding your own voice. When you write down the great ideas that have undoubtedly been thought before you should do so in your unique voice. If your great idea (or agreement with a great idea, or realization that somebody else has stolen your own idea before you ever thought it) was inspired by a passage in a book you just read five minutes ago you will have to be more mindful of your wording, making sure that you are writing with your own voice and nuance and not having your thought and writing overshadowed by the phraseology of the author. **When in doubt, cite.** When you must acknowledge a true debt, cite. When your paraphrase can’t run the risk of deviating too much—perhaps because the kernel of truth to be gleaned cannot exist independent of the (other person’s) language that it is wrapped up in—then cite your source (parenthetically—pardon the pun—or otherwise).

Student Conferences

I will hold conferences with each of you at least twice this semester. The first set of conferences will be at the end of September and the second set the first week of November. I will hand out sign-up sheets a week or so prior to each conferencing period. Everyone must sign up for a time slot. Failure to attend the time you have signed up for will negatively affect your Participation grade.

Writing Center and other Resources

Cornell boasts one of the top writing programs in the country. The John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines provides one-on-one assistance with writing. The writing center is located in 174 Rockefeller Hall, 255-6349.

Uris library has several useful handouts: MLA Citation Style; Research Strategy: Finding Information Efficiently; How Literature is Structured; English Literature: A Reference Bibliography.

Website

I have created a website for this course. The website has many useful links to Shakespearean and other sites. One of the links is to an MLA style guide. I will e-mail direction to all students about how to enroll in the course website.

Course Reserves

URIS 2-DAY RESERVES:

- Epstein, Norrie. *The Friendly Shakespeare*. New York: Penguin, 1993.
Olin PR2987.E64
- Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.
PE1408.L68x 1997
- Muir, Kenneth and Schoenbaum, S. *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*.
Cambridge: UP, 1971.
Uris PR2890.M95
- Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter
Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. New York: Norton, 1997.
Uris PR2754.G74 1997
- Tillyard, E.M.W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1948.
Uris PR428.T57 1958
- Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. New York: Addison-
Wesley, 1997.
Uris PE1421.W545x 2000

E-RESERVES:

- Baker, Sheridan. *The Practical Stylist with Readings*. 7th ed. New York: Harper Collins,
1991 (26-31; 256-261; inside front and back covers).
- Bogel, Rick. "Beyond Rhetoric." Ithaca Times
- Burroughs, Catherine. "William Shakespeare in the Context of British Theatre History /
Dramatic Literature" Handout. Engl 131.03 Sum 2001 at Cornell.
- Dunbar-Odom, Donna. *Working with Ideas: Reading, Writing, and Researching
Experience*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001 (10-37).
- Fakundiny, Lydia. "Talking about Style." In *The Art of the Essay*. Boston: Houghton
Mifflin, 1991. 713-40.
- Freedman, Diane. "Improving Sentences." In *Teaching Prose*. Eds. Fredric Bogel and
Katy Gottschalk. New York: Norton, 1988. 216-44.
- Grossenbacher, Laura. "Some Basic Guidelines for Reading Literature."
<http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/stu/handouts/reading.html> 7/15/01.
- Marius, Richard. *A Writer's Companion*. 4th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999 (7-15).
- Shakespeare, William. *A Midsommer nights dreame*. 1600 and 1623 (first two pages).
- Trimble, John. "Readability." In *Writing With Style: Conversations on the Art of
Writing*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000. 64-81.
- Wells College. Course Catalog. "Academic Standards for Analytical and Evaluative
Writing." (one page).

Schedule

The date that an item appears on the syllabus is the date that it is **due in class**. The first writing assignment is due the third day of class, Friday, the 25th of January. Reading assignments are usually listed first on each day.

I recommend that you read each play in its entirety by the date that we discuss Act I. This first reading can be a faster reading that acquaints you with the text. Since so much of what happens later in the play informs our understanding and perception of earlier events in the play it is hard to discuss the exposition, for example, without making references to later events in the play. Consider that often the major difference between a tragedy and a comedy is how the play ends. We would read *Twelfth Night* much differently had Orsino killed Viola/Cesario in the end, as he threatens to do.

January

- Week 1 21 M Intro, Sonnet discussion; Write two page pro or con on Diamond
 W Uris Library visit, meet in Uris lobby
 F *Titus Andronicus*; “Shakespeare: an Overview”;
 Discuss Diamond; **Paper 1 (2pp)**
- Week 2 28 M Titus, Introductory material, Acts I-III
 Thesis statement exercise
 W Titus, Act IV; **Thesis Paragraph for Paper 2 (200-300 words—1pp)**

February

- 1 F Barnet (CP); Stoloff (CP); Titus film (Julie Taymor)
- Week 3 4 M Titus Act V; **Draft of Paper 2 (3pp)**
 **T Student Conferences (sign up for a time between 10a-2p)
 W *Romeo and Juliet*, Introductory material, Act I
 F Romeo, Act II; Grossenbacher (CP); **Final Version of Paper 2 (3pp)**
- Week 4 11 M Romeo, Act III; “The Write Attitude” (CP)
 W Romeo, Act IV; Dunbar-Odom (both chapters) (CP)
 F Romeo, Act V; Marius (e-reserve)
- Week 5 18 M *Antony and Cleopatra*, Introductory materials, Act I; **Paper 3 (2pp)**
 W Antony, Act II; Bogel (CP)
 F Antony, Act III; Baker (both chapters) (CP)
- Week 6 25 M Antony, Act IV; **Draft of Paper 4 (3-4pp) for peer editing** in class
 W Antony, Act V

March

- 1 F Antony (capstone discussion); **Final Revision of Paper 4 (4pp) due**

- Week 7 4 M *Othello*, Introductory materials, Act I
 W *Othello*, Act II
 F *Othello*, Act III;
- Week 8 11 M *Othello*, Act IV; **Paper 5 (2pp)**
 W *Othello*, Act V
 F Bogel (CP); *Othello* discussion
 Portfolio with final versions of Papers 1-5 due
- 18 M Spring Break
 W Spring Break
 F Spring Break
- Week 9 25 M *Othello* film (Oliver Parker, dir.); “Generating a Paper Topic”
 W *Othello* film; “Narrowing Down Early Paper Topics”;
 F *Othello* film; “Composing a Working Thesis”; “Writing as Discovery”

April

- Week 10 1 M *Twelfth Night*, Introductory material, Act I; “Thesis Statements”;
 “Topic Sentence Trees”
 W *Twelfth*, Act II; “Titles and Epigraphs”
 F *Twelfth* Act III; “Peer Editing at the Conceptual Level”
 Three copies of draft of Paper 6 (5-6 pp) for Peer Editing
- Week 11 8 M Conference with peer editors
 **T Conference with Instructor (sign up for time slot between 10a-2p)
 W *Twelfth*, Act IV; Freedman, “Improving Sentences” (e-reserve)
 F “Final Peer Editing: Style”; Fakundiny, “Talking About Style” (CP);
 Bring one copy of revised draft
- Week 12 15 M *Twelfth* film (Trevor Nunn, dir.); Conference with Peer Editors;
 W *Twelfth*, Act V; film; Trimble, “Readability” (e-reserve)
 F *Twelfth* film
- Week 13 22 M, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream (MND)*, Introductory material, Act I
 W MND, II
 F MND, Act II
- Week 14 29 M MND, Act IV

May

- 1 W MND, Act V
 3 F **Final Version of Paper 6 (5-6pp) due in class**