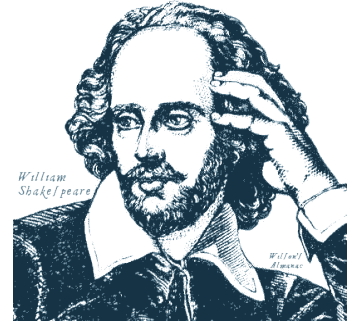


## Shakespeare: Early Plays (English 309)

**Professor: Carla Mazzio**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
**9:30-10:50 AM, 210 Norton**  
**Spring 2009**



**Description:** This course will focus on Shakespeare's comedies, histories, and selected tragedies, introducing students to Shakespeare's language, dramatic techniques, historical surround, relationship to Renaissance humanism (the poetry and drama of classical Rome in particular), and innovations as he moved from play to play. At the same time, we will also examine some central issues that traverse many plays and genres, including the status of error, itself a pivotal dramatic pre-occupation that we will trace out from *The Comedy of Errors* to *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*, the plays that open and close the course. So too, we will investigate Shakespeare's ongoing experiments in the domain of staged poetics, material objects (including props, bodies, costumes, monetary instruments, etc.), and forms of metamorphosis in the early plays. Other plays include *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV, Part I*, *Henry V*, and selected poems will be examined as well in order for us to begin to understand the art of poetry as it shifts from page to stage.

**Course Materials:** *The Norton Shakespeare, 2nd Edition*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (now at Talking Leaves Bookstore on Main Street). All other materials will be provided by me (as class handouts, emailed documents, or links posted on our course website, under construction at: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~cjmazzio/early-plays.html>).

**Requirements:** This course requires regular attendance; informed and active participation (which includes discussion participation and occasional in class writing assignments and quizzes); a midterm paper (4-5 pages) and a final paper (5-6 pages).

**Grading:** The grade breakdown is: participation (including attendance, in class discussion, short assignments or quizzes): 30%; midterm paper: 30%; final paper 40%.

**My office hours** are every Thursday, from 11 to 12 (or by appointment). My office is located in Clemens Hall, #513, and my email is [cjmazzio@buffalo.edu](mailto:cjmazzio@buffalo.edu). Please email me in advance to set up office hour times or other appointment times.

**Technicalities:** Read the plays before the date assigned on the syllabus. Punctual and informed attendance is important. Two absences from class are allowed—any more absences, however, will lower your grade for the course (more than three absences may result in a failing grade). Late papers or assignments will be deducted a half grade per day. Finally, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. This course is designed to help *you* engage with—and enjoy--Shakespeare's dramas through various approaches and techniques of analysis.

## SYLLABUS

### Week One

Tu 13<sup>th</sup> January: Introduction: Shakespeare's Worlds

Th 15<sup>th</sup> January: Introduction: Shakespeare's Words

### Week Two: Making Mistakes: Shakespeare & Classical Comedy

Tu 20<sup>th</sup> Jan: *Comedy of Errors*

Th 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan: *Comedy of Errors*

### Week Three: Gender, Poetics, Hurt: Shakespeare, Ovid, Petrarch

Tu 27<sup>th</sup> Jan: *The Rape of Lucrece*, and Sonnets, 1-18, 20, 24, 45, 53, 55.

Th 29<sup>th</sup> Jan: *The Rape of Lucrece*, and Sonnets, 1-18, 20, 24, 45, 53, 55.

### Week Four: Learning, Poetry, and Public Embarrassment

Tu 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb: *Love's Labour's Lost*

Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman  
and Scattered Rhyme" (class handout)

Th 5<sup>th</sup> Feb: *Love's Labour's Lost*

### Week Five: Dying for Love: Revolutionizing the Sonnet

Tu 10<sup>th</sup> Feb: *Romeo and Juliet*

Th 12<sup>th</sup> Feb: *Romeo and Juliet*

### Week Six: Dreams Undone, Romeo Revisited

Tu 17<sup>th</sup> Feb: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Th 18<sup>th</sup> Feb: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Feb: \*First Paper Due (4-5 pages) to my faculty mailbox in 306 Clemens Hall by 4PM.**

### Week Seven: Mercantilism, Melancholy, Letters of Law

Tu 3<sup>rd</sup> March: *The Merchant of Venice*

Th 5<sup>th</sup> March: *The Merchant of Venice*

### Week Eight: Shattering Mirrors

Tu 24<sup>th</sup> Feb: *Richard II*

Th: 26<sup>th</sup> Feb: *Richard II*

## Spring Break March 9<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>

### Week Nine: History in the Making

Tu 17<sup>th</sup> March: *Henry IV, Part I*

Th 19<sup>th</sup> March: *Henry IV, Part I*

### Week Ten: Investigative Technologies: Tragedy & the Avoidance of Error

Tu 24<sup>th</sup> March: *Hamlet*

Th 26<sup>th</sup> March: *Hamlet*

### Week Eleven: Sensory Disintegration: From Vision to Touch

Tu 31<sup>st</sup> March: *Hamlet*

Th 2<sup>nd</sup> April: *Hamlet*

### Week Twelve: Cinematography and Visual Culture

Tu 7<sup>th</sup> April: \*Discussion of *Hamlet* (2000), Screening time TBA

Th 9<sup>th</sup> April: *Special Research Assignment*

### Week Thirteen: The Erotics of Error I

Tu 14<sup>th</sup> April: *Twelfth Night*

Th 16<sup>th</sup> April: *Twelfth Night*

### Week Fourteen: The Erotics of Error II

Tu 21<sup>st</sup> April: *Twelfth Night & Shakespeare in Love* (1998), Screening time TBA

Th 23<sup>rd</sup> April: *Celebration: Shakespeare's Birthday*

**Mon 27<sup>th</sup> April: Final Papers Due (5-6 pages) to my faculty mailbox in 306 Clemens Hall by 4PM.**