

## IF SHAKESPEARE HAD A PODCAST

English 4600-38

Spring 2018

**Instructor:** Dr. Jane Wessel

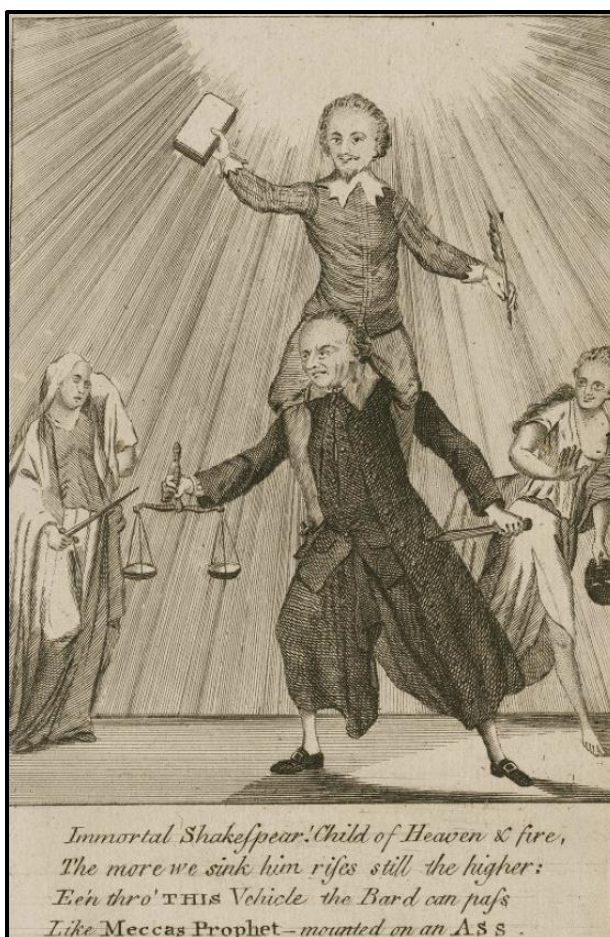
**Course Meeting Time:** TR 11:10-12:35, Harned Hall 207

**Office:** Harned Hall 204

**Office Hours:**

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**PLEASE NOTE:** All information in this syllabus is subject to change. All policy and schedule changes will be announced in class.



Caricature of Shakespeare atop Charles Macklin in the role of Shylock  
Image Courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library

This is not a class about Shakespeare.

This is a class about the things that we do to Shakespeare.

Today you can read a choose-your-own adventure *Hamlet* and experience Shakespeare's plays reimaged in works like *The Lion King* and the interactive, site-based theatre experience *Sleep no More*. Shakespeare's image has spawned bobble heads, finger puppets, tea caddies, and Shakespearean insult mugs. We treat Shakespeare, more than any other author, as our artistic raw material. And we've been doing this since the 17<sup>th</sup>-century, when dramatists began adding operatic music, flying witches, and new characters to his plays. In this course, we will study the ways that Shakespeare and his works became our literary silly putty. How did Shakespeare rise from working playwright to the "be all and end all" (to quote the man himself) of the Anglo-American literary tradition? What makes his works so tempting to adapt? To answer these questions, we will study Shakespeare's changing reputation over the centuries. Beginning with the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Samuel Pepys declared that *Romeo and Juliet* was the "worst [play] that ever I heard in my life," we will study the ways that writers "improved" Shakespeare. As we read these adaptations, we will also work to reconstruct their performance histories, allowing us to imagine what these plays would have been like in performance.

In the spirit of the course, we will do one more thing to Shakespeare: turn him into a podcast. This is a linked course, and we will be working with students in the departments of Theatre & Dance and Communication to create a four-episode podcast about early Shakespearean adaptation. As part of the work for this course, you will be doing historical research, compiling a script for the podcast, and advising the theatre students performing the work. The final outcome will be a series of podcasts featuring your original research.

### Course Goals

- Students will have a better understanding of why we read who we read and the cultural, economic, and political factors that influence our choices
- Students will be able to talk and write about interpretations, adaptations, and performances of Shakespeare's plays in the Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Students will be able to locate and analyze various types of primary source materials
- Students will consider various methodological approaches to studying theatre and performance
- Students will learn some basic skills of dramaturgy
- Students will be able to write in a range of modes, including descriptive, narrative, analytical, and argumentative writing
- Students will learn to work collaboratively

### Required Texts

Shakespeare, William. *The Oxford Shakespeare: Macbeth*. Ed. Nicholas Brooke. New York: Oxford World's Classics, 2008.

Shakespeare, William. *The Oxford Shakespeare: Merchant of Venice*. Ed. Jay L. Halio. New York: Oxford World's Classics, 2008.

Shakespeare, William. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Tempest*. Ed. Tiffany Stern. New York: Oxford World's Classics, 2008.

Additionally, I will post some of our readings on D2L. Unless otherwise noted, you must print copies of these texts and bring them to class. I expect you to have access to a computer with a word processing program and an internet connection. These will include:

George Granville, *The Jew of Venice*

William Davenant, *Macbeth*

William Davenant and John Dryden, *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island*

## **Assignments and Assessment**

### **Class participation**

This is a highly collaborative class. You will be working extensively with each other and collaborating with students in theatre and communication. Because of this, the course will not succeed if students are not fully engaged and active participants in all class discussions. Students are expected to attend all class meetings. You should come prepared with an open and inquisitive mind, and always with the appropriate reading in hand. Your class participation will make up 15% of your final grade. Here is a general sense of the grading criteria for class participation: someone who engages actively and contributes constructively to class discussion every day will receive an “A”; someone who listens politely but rarely contributes will receive a “C”; and someone who consistently falls asleep, is rude to me or to fellow students, or is otherwise detached from class will receive an “F.” You will get much more out of class if you actively participate.

### **Scene Selection Papers**

Over the course of the semester, you will write three scene selection papers. For these papers, you will choose a scene from the adaptation we are reading and pair it with a corresponding scene from the original Shakespeare play. For instance, if we were reading Nahum Tate’s *Lear*, you might pair the final death scene in the original with Tate’s happy ending. Then, in a 3- to 4-page paper, you will make an argument for the significance of the adaptation’s changes. You might approach this through any of the following questions: What does this scene tell us about changing tastes or audience values? How does this specific scene affect the play as a whole? How does the new scene change the development of a particular character? How does it alter one of the themes of the original play? Etc. Be prepared to discuss your selections with the class, as we will choose from among your selections as we prepare a dramaturgical file to hand off to the actors.

### **Group Project: Dramaturgical File**

The class will be divided into three groups. Each group will be responsible for taking the lead as the dramaturgs for one of our scene pairings. In order to do this, you will do additional archival and secondary research and compile a “dramaturgical file” to hand off to the actors. This file will include the scenes from the Shakespeare play and the adaptation that we want the actors to perform, along with a brief introduction and contextual information. A detailed prompt will be provided.

### **Theatre History Report**

For the theatre history report, you will each choose a theatre-related topic (for instance, Restoration sound effects, stage/theatre structures, play publication, etc.), and do primary and secondary research in order to teach the class about your topic. You will present your reports to your classmates on the penultimate day of class; this exercise will also help prepare us as a group of

experts on the Restoration theatre for the final class period, when we will meet with the actors and producers for talkbacks and interviews.

### **Final Paper: Research-based Reflection**

The final assignment will offer you an opportunity to reflect on the experience of the course, considering how working with performers has affected your understanding of the plays we have read. However, this is not a straightforward reflection: instead, you will use your experiences as a springboard to research a particular dimension of Shakespeare, the Restoration theatres, early adaptations, etc. A detailed prompt will be provided.

### **Final Grade Calculation**

Each assignment is worth a number of points, and your final grade will be based on the percentage of your sum total over the total possible number of points.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Class participation	150 points
Scene Selection Papers	250 points (1 <sup>st</sup> @ 50pts; 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> @ 100 pts)
Group Project: Dramaturgical File	300 points
Theatre History Report	100 points
Final Paper: Research-based Reflection	200 points
<b>Total Possible</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

Grade Conversion Chart:

A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	Below 600

## **Course Policies and Additional Information**

### **Attendance**

You are allowed to miss three class periods. For each additional absence, your final course grade will be dropped by 30 points. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. Arriving to class late will negatively affect your participation grade. Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class constitutes an absence. Unpreparedness and/or disrespectful behavior may also constitute an absence.

### **Classroom Decorum**

I expect you to be respectful of each other, yourselves, and me. If you are disrespectful, you will be asked to leave and will be marked as absent for the day. You may eat and drink in class and leave to use the bathroom without asking permission.

### **Phone Policy**

Cell phones must be silenced and put away at all times. If I see a cell phone, I will ask you to leave class, and you will be marked absent.

## **Late Papers**

We are working on a schedule with two other classes: their ability to do their work depends on us finishing ours on time. Because of this, late scene selection papers and late dramaturgical files *will receive no credit*. For all other assignments, the following policy applies: for each day after the paper deadline, I will deduct 20% from your grade. “Day” does not refer to class periods, but to days; a paper due on a Friday that is handed in the following Monday will lose 60%, not 20%.

## **Revision Policy**

Writing is a process: you should begin writing well in advance of the deadline so that you leave yourself time to revise your work. I am happy to look at drafts of your work during office hours (or to help you brainstorm ideas before you have a complete draft). I also highly recommend visiting the [Writing Center](#), located in the Woodward Library. Once the final draft is submitted, there will be no further opportunities for revision.

## **Academic Integrity**

Any work that you submit at any stage of the writing process must be your own. Additionally, any work, ideas, or data that you borrow from other people and include in your work must be properly documented in MLA style. Failure to do either of these things (whether intentionally or not) is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated in this class and is grounds for failure of the assignment or class. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with APSU’s Academic Honesty Policy, excerpted here:

“Austin Peay State University strives to promote values and attitudes that are reflective of solid academic character and integrity. All students are expected to complete their own work, conduct research and author assignments independently of others (unless specifically authorized to work together by your respective faculty). Academic integrity is the cornerstone of any student’s educational experience. When students participate in behavior that is considered academic misconduct, the scholarly value of their education is diminished. Academic misconduct is defined as the following:

- Plagiarism. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images or works of another person as one’s own without proper attribution.
- Cheating. Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- Fabrication. Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Facilitation or Collusion. Assisting or attempting to assist another to violate a provision of the institution’s Student Code of Conduct regarding academic misconduct.

Students should be aware that a violation of the University’s Academic Misconduct Policy can result in disciplinary action which could include failure for an assignment, failure for an entire course, probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. If students are not certain whether a practice would be considered academic misconduct, they should always consult their instructor.”

*Student Academic Misconduct Policy: 3:035*

## Office of Disability Services

If you are a student with a learning disability, physical disability, or other special need, please let me know as soon as possible if you need special accommodations. At any time during the semester a student who has a disability which may affect his/her academic performance is encouraged to make an appointment with me to discuss this matter, or you may contact [the Office of Disability Services](#) (ODS), located in the Morgan University Center, room 114 (phone: 931-221-6230).

## Minors in the Classroom

Minors (any non-student under the age of 18) accompanying staff faculty, students, or visitors on campus are not permitted in the classroom.

## Course Schedule

### **Week One:**

- Jan 16 – Introduction to the Course and Restoration Theatres
- Jan 18 – *Merchant of Venice* (Read full play)

### **Week Two:**

- Jan 23 – *Merchant of Venice*
- Jan 25 – Granville, *Jew of Venice* (D2L) (Read full play)

### **Week Three:**

- Jan 30 – Granville, *Jew of Venice* (Scene Selection Paper Due)
- Feb 1 – Dramaturgy Workshop; read Dobson, “Improving on the Original”

### **Week Four:**

- Feb 6 – *Macbeth* (Read full play); Group 1 – *Merchant of Venice* File Due
- Feb 8 – Table Read with Actors\*

### **Week Five:**

- Feb 13 – *Macbeth*
- Feb 15 – Davenant’s *Macbeth* (Read full play)

### **Week Six:**

- Feb 20 – Davenant’s *Macbeth* (Scene Selection Paper Due)
- Feb 22 – Music and dance in Davenant’s *Macbeth*; Read: Winkler, “Introduction” to *Music for Macbeth* (D2L) and selections from Winkler, *O Let us Howle some Heavy Note* (D2L)

### **Week Seven:**

- Feb 27 - Reading TBA; Group 2 – *Macbeth* File Due
- March 1 – Table Read with Actors\*

## **Spring Break**

### **Week Eight:**

- March 13 – *The Tempest* (Read full play)

**March 15** – *The Tempest*

***Week Nine:***

**March 20** – Dryden and Davenant's *Tempest* (Read full play)

**March 22** – Dryden and Davenant's *Tempest* (Scene Selection Paper Due) [Professor at ASECS conference – students will meet as a class to workshop the potential scenes and collaboratively choose a pairing]

***Week Ten:***

**March 27** – Dryden and Davenant's *Tempest*

**March 29** – Reading TBA

***Week Eleven:***

**April 3** – Restoration Performance Style – read Roach, “Performance”; Group 3 – *Tempest* File Due

**April 5** – Table Read with Actors\*

***Week Twelve:***

**April 10** – The biographical tradition: read Hume, “Before the Bard” (D2L)

**April 12** – Sensory Shakespeare: read Gil Harris, “The Smell of Macbeth” and Smith, “Within, Without, Withinwards” (D2L)

***Week Thirteen:***

**April 17** – The 1769 Jubilee: reading TBA

**April 19** – Theatre History Report due – be prepared to present and discuss your findings

***Week Fourteen:***

**April 24** – Talkback and Interviews\*

Research Reflection Paper Due: April 30