Spring 2012

ENGL 461

M/W 10-11:50

VKC 256

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OH: Friday 2-4pm (or by apt.)

Rewriting Shakespeare

Today, we think of Shakespeare’s words as sacrosanct and Shakespeare himself as beyond criticism. But this was not always the case. In the eighteenth century, playwrights found in Shakespeare much to praise, but also much to disparage. They felt compelled to rectify (among other things) “what was wanting in the regularity and probability” of Shakespeare’s tales, his violation of the dramatic unities, and the rhetorical language that they saw as a threat to verbal clarity. The results are a *King Lear* with a happy ending, an operatic *Tempest* that approaches bedroom comedy, and *A Winter’s Tale* that removes three acts from Shakespeare’s play.

The eighteenth century, in other words, was devoted to rewriting Shakespeare. At the same time, eighteenth-century playwrights, actors, and adaptations helped raise Shakespeare and his reputation to the level they now occupy: in rewriting Shakespeare, the century ushered in the “national poet” we know today. To explore this trajectory, we will divide our time in class between detailed studies of four of Shakespeare’s plays, and an analysis of these plays’ eighteenth-century adaptations. As opposed to making value judgments about the historical re-imaginings of Shakespeare, we will use these adaptations to reflect on eighteenth-century culture writ-large: how do we account for the indisputable popularity of these productions? What particular aspects of Shakespeare come up for revision, and how do these revisions reinterpret the original text? We will also examine the effect of famous eighteenth-century actors on Shakespearean productions and the influence of performance practices on textual adaptation. Most broadly, we will consider how an emerging eighteenth-century quest for an “authentic” Shakespeare paired paradoxically with the century’s attraction to novelty and revision.

**Required Texts**

I’ve ordered Penguin editions of the following plays, which will be available at the bookstore:

*King Lear*

*The Tempest*

*The Winter’s Tale*

*Hamlet*

However, I am happy to have you use another edition if you already own one. We will work in class by act, scene and line number in order to accommodate users of different editions. If you are interested in Shakespeare and would like to purchase an edition of the collected works, I would recommend the Riverside or the Arden. The paperback Arden is probably the most affordable of the standard editions.

Unless otherwise indicated, other materials are in your course reader, available at the bookstore. I am placing a reader on reserve at Leavey Library, but I would strongly encourage you to purchase your own copy. Readings marked [handout] are uploaded to the handout folder on Blackboard.

**Class Mechanics and Grade Breakdown**

1. Attendance and Participation (**15%)**: I expect consistent attendance and participation. More than three unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. I will take attendance daily. I will also document participation via our class blog: **18thcrewritingshakespeare.blogspot.com**. All of you are responsible for reading and commenting on this blog actively throughout the semester. If you are a quieter student in discussion, I would encourage you to be an even more rigorous blog respondent.
   1. **Posting responsibilities are as follows**: Students will be assigned blogging duties for one play and its adaptation. During our unit on this play, you must submit three blog posts, one per week, of 250-300 words. (You must email me your gmail address during week one so I can add you to the list of blog authors.) For one of the posts I will provide a required prompt or mini-research topic; for the others you can respond simply to some aspect of the reading that interested you or use the blog to experiment with your own creative responses to Shakespeare. Posts must be uploaded by midnight on the Tuesday before our Wednesday class.
   2. Everyone must also participate in our class field trip to the Clark Library, March 5. More details to come.
2. Two 5-7 page written assignments (**40% total, 20% each)**:
   1. The first should be a close reading of a selected passage from either Shakespeare’s *Lear* or Tate’s *Lear*.
   2. The second should be a comparative analysis of a specific change between a Shakespeare play and its adaptation; likely focal points would include the addition or elimination of a character, or the addition or elimination of text.

3) A 10-12 page final paper or creative project (**30%)**. The final paper can be an expansion of your second critical paper, though now your analysis must be supplemented by a minimum of three critical sources and informed by my comments. If you are choosing the creative option, you must meet with me by March 31 to discuss your project. I would be willing to consider collaborative creative projects. All creative submissions must be accompanied by a 5 pp. explication and analysis of your work and its relation to our discussions of adaptation in the 18th century.

4) One MIDTERM EXAM, consisting of short identifications and essays. (**15%**)

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus,* the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

**Schedule of Assignments (subject to change)**

M Jan 9—Introduction: excerpts from Rymer, Collier, Pope; play “Find the Shakespeare”

W Jan 11—Orgel, “The Authentic Shakespeare” [handout]; *King Lear*

M Jan 16—NO CLASS [**blog posts start]**

W Jan 18—*King Lear*

M Jan 23—*King Lear*

W Jan 25—Taylor, from *Reinventing Shakespeare* (Chapter 1)\*

M Jan 30—Tate, Lear\*

W Feb 1—Tate, Lear\*; Lamb, “King Lear” in *Tales from Shakespeare*

**F Feb 3 PAPER #1 DUE in my mailbox by noon, THH 404**

M Feb 6—*Tempest*

W Feb 8—*Tempest*

M Feb 13—*Tempest*; from *Reinventing Shakespeare*, (Chapter 2)\*

W Feb 15—Dryden & Davenant, *Tempest*\*

M Feb 20—NO CLASS

W Feb 22—D&D *Tempest*\*

M Feb 27—**MIDTERM EXAM**

W Feb 29—Barthes “Death of the Author” (handout); “David Garrick,” from *Lives of Shakespearian Actors* [handout]; Dobson, “Embodying the Author” [excerpt; handout]

M Mar 5—**CLARK LIBRARY FIELD TRIP;** Wheeler, “18th-c Adaptations of Shakespeare and the Example of John Dennis” [handout]; Scouten, “The Increase in Popularity of Shakespeare’s Plays in the Eighteenth Century” [handout]

W Mar 7— McNamara, “The Stratford Jubilee: Dram to Garrick’s Vanity” [handout]; from Garrick’s *Jubilee* [handout]*;* “Garrick’s Jubilee” [handout]

**\*\*bring in contemporary example of “bardolatry”\*\***

M Mar 12—SPRING BREAK

W Mar 14—SPRING BREAK

M Mar 19—*The Winter’s Tale*

W Mar 21—NO CLASS [Professor Anderson at conference]

M Mar 26—*The Winter’s Tale*

W Mar 28—Garrick, *Florizel and Perdita*\*

M Apr 2—Taylor, from *Reinventing Shakespeare* (Chapter 3)\*; Holland, “Hearing the Dead: The Sound of David Garrick” [handout]

W Apr 4—*Hamlet*

M Apr 9—*Hamlet*

W Apr 11—*Hamlet*

**F April 13 Paper #2 DUE in my mailbox by noon, THH 404**

M Apr 16— David Garrick, *Hamlet*\*

W Apr 18—Cumberland, Murphy, *Hamlet*\*

M Apr 23—Hazlitt, “On Actors and Acting” [handout]; Holland, “On the gravy train: Shakespeare, Memory and forgetting” [handout]

W Apr 25—Wrap-Up

**FINAL PAPER OR CREATIVE PROJECT:**

**DUE FRIDAY MAY 4th by 4pm**

**Reserve Readings**

The following texts are on reserve at Leavey Library. We will be reading excerpts from all of them, but feel free to look into any of them more closely, especially in preparation for your final paper.

Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995)

Jean Marsden, *The Re-imagined Text: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (Lexington, KY: The UP of Kentucky, 1995).

Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991).