

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. COURSE ID: LIT. 835 **TITLE:** Shakespeare

Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; 96.0-108.0 Homework hours; 144.0-162.0 Total Student Learning hours

Method of Grading: Pass/No Pass Only

2. COURSE DESIGNATION:

Non-Degree Credit

Transfer credit: none

3. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

Catalog Description:

Study of representative plays and poems, with a focus on exploring the development of Shakespeare's art — in its poetic, dramatic, and philosophical dimensions — over the course of his career. The course involves reading, discussion, and optional writing.

4. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Using close reading and other methods, analyze a variety of representative works from Shakespeare, identifying major literary, cultural, and historical themes.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how literary study encourages us to interrogate the world we live in, and fosters awareness of diverse social, cultural, and historical perspectives, as well as varied individual experiences.

5. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze major themes in Shakespeare's writing (tragedies, comedies, history, and romance plays; also, sonnets and/or longer poems).
2. Develop independent critical responses to Shakespeare's works
3. Identify and analyze Shakespeare's dramatic and poetic technique
4. Place Shakespeare's works within a historical and literary context.
5. Analyze Shakespeare's work from different cultural and social perspectives, to explore its relevance to today's world.

6. COURSE CONTENT:

Lecture Content:

A. The course covers a representative sample of Shakespeare's works, and so combines breadth with the possibility for some in-depth analysis. From each of the following categories, the course should highlight at least one work and include at least three more for discussion, selected by the instructor (including but not limited to suggestions below):

Tragedies (e.g. King Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Anthony and Cleopatra, etc.)

Comedies (e.g., As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing, Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, All's Well That Ends Well, Love's Labours Lost, etc.)

Histories (e.g., Henry IV Parts I and II, Henry V, Richard II, Richard III, etc.)

Romances (e.g., The Tempest, Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, etc.)

Poetry: Sonnets, Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece

B. The course encourages exploration of Shakespeare's works from a variety of perspectives; lectures include both coverage of Shakespeare's life and times, as well as an exploration of his continued place in English literature, and contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare reflecting a variety of cultures, languages, and backgrounds.

C. The course encourages students to develop independent critical analysis of Shakespeare's works, and

provides an introduction to the discipline of English literature (e.g., close reading and other methods of analysis, literary techniques, etc.)

D. The course introduces students to methods of presenting critical analyses of literary works, including the writing of critical papers, and/or presentations and projects.

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Directed Study
- C. Critique
- D. Discussion
- E. Field Trips
- F. Guest Speakers
- G. Other (Specify): Typical methods of instruction may include: A. Guided discussion: Students can respond to specific questions on text, technique or other aspects of the work under discussion. Readings can be assigned ahead of time, in class, broken up by group, etc. (jigsaw discussion). Students as well as instructor can develop questions for discussion. B. Lecture: Instructor gives oral presentation to introduce students to the genres (comedy, tragedy, romance, history) as well as historical and literary themes. C. Journals & informal writing: Students write journal entries in response to specific questions, or use journal work to develop questions. D. OPTIONAL - scaffolded writing, project, and/or presentation assignments: Guided support for independent work in research, literary, and/or written analysis.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Representative assignments may include (but are not limited to) small-group and class discussions, optional writing (journals, critical essays), presentations, and projects.

Topics might include analysis of Shakespeare's use of poetic language or technique; exploration of recurring themes, imagery and/or motifs in Shakespeare's work; presentation of research into Shakespeare's life, times, literary sources, dramatic background, or critical history; discussion of contemporary critics presenting different responses to themes in Shakespeare's work; reflection on Shakespeare's place in the canon; an exploration of a Shakespeare play in different contexts (through adaptations in different media, languages, and cultural contexts).

Reading Assignments:

Writing: To meet the course objective of analyzing Shakespeare's work from different cultural and social perspectives, to explore its relevance to today's world, an assignment might focus on representations of "the other" in plays like *Titus Andronicus*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *The Tempest*, and connect these to contemporary discussions of racism, anti-semitism, colonialism etc. For example, in discussing *The Merchant of Venice*, by focusing on the history of antisemitism in Europe, students can better understand both the traditional scapegoat role assigned to Jewish communities and the ways in which Shakespeare's play both reflects and undermines traditional antisemitic and other racial stereotypes. Contemporary debates can include perspectives by Jewish authors such as Stephen Greenblatt, who defends the work, and Cary Mazer who argues that the play's racism is unacceptable. Class debates about this topic can lead to close reading of the character of Shylock in addition to (optional) historical research. Similarly, discussion of the role of women in almost any of the plays (for example, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure*, or *Much Ado About Nothing*) can be supplemented both by optional historical research on the status of women in Renaissance England, as well as contemporary analysis from feminist critics.

Other Outside Assignments:

Contemporary performances provide an excellent way to introduce discussions of different perspectives; performances by local theater companies, particularly San Francisco's African American Shakespeare Theatre, can support discussion of representation in plays, as can adaptations in different cultural and language settings.

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Work
- C. Exams/Tests
- D. Group Projects
- E. Homework

- F. Oral Presentation
- G. Portfolios
- H. Written examination
- I. Critical papers should be optional.

10. **REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):**

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Greenblatt, Stephen et al (eds). *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Norton ed. W. W. Norton, 2008

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Course Originator: Madeleine Murphy