

# Shakespeare's Tragedies

DR. DAVID WILSON-OKAMURA

ENGLISH 4090

SPRING 2012

EAST CAROLINA UNIV.

Jan. 9	M	What is tragedy?	
11	W	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , act 1; <b>first paper due</b>	
13	F	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , act 2	
<b>16</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Martin Luther King Day</b>	
18	W	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , act 3	
20	F		Scenes in Performance
23	M	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , act 4	
25	W	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , act 5	
27	F		Scenes in Performance
30	M	<i>Hamlet</i> , act 1	
Feb. 1	W	<i>Hamlet</i> , act 2	
3	F		Scenes in Performance
6	M	<i>Hamlet</i> , act 3	
8	W	<i>Hamlet</i> , act 4	
10	F		Scenes in Performance
13	M	<i>Hamlet</i> , act 5	
15	W	<b>Second paper due;</b>	Scenes in Film
17	F		Scenes in Performance
20	M	<i>Othello</i> , act 1	
22	W	<i>Othello</i> , act 2	
24	F		Scenes in Performance
27	M	<i>Othello</i> , act 3	
29	W	<i>Othello</i> , act 4	
Mar. 2	F		Scenes in Performance
<b>4–10</b>		<b>Spring Break</b>	
12	M	<i>Othello</i> , act 5	
14	W	<i>King Lear</i> , act 1	
16	F		Scenes in Performance
19	M	<i>King Lear</i> , act 2	
21	W	<i>King Lear</i> , act 3	
23	F		Scenes in Performance
26	M	<i>King Lear</i> , act 4	
28	W	<i>King Lear</i> , act 5	
30	F		Scenes in Performance
Apr. 2	M		Scenes in Film
4	W	<b>Third paper due;</b>	Scenes in Film
<b>6</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>	
9	M	<i>Macbeth</i> , act 1	
11	W	<i>Macbeth</i> , act 2	
13	F		Scenes in Performance
16	M	<i>Macbeth</i> , act 3	
18	W	<i>Macbeth</i> , act 4	
20	F		Scenes in Performance
23	M	<i>Macbeth</i> , act 5	
24	T	What is tragedy?	

## REQUIREMENTS

Written assignments must be typed and are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments delivered after that will receive a lower grade according to the following schedule: an A- essay that is delivered up to 24 hours late will receive a B+, an A- essay that is delivered between 24 and 48 hours late will receive a B, and so on.

**Quizzes (25%).** Monday and Friday quizzes are based on the reading for that day. Friday quizzes are based on the previous two days of lecture and discussion; you may use your notes but not your books. Each quiz is worth 1% and there will be 26 quizzes. *There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes.* However, because there is an extra (26th) quiz, you can miss one quiz without harming your grade. Think of it as a free pass: you can use it to go to the beach, or you can use it when you're sick. Because this system is based on numbers, you don't need to explain why you missed class; the math will take care of it automatically. Of course, you'll still be responsible for the material discussed in class. But once you've used that free pass, it's gone. My advice is to save it for when you're sick or need to care for a relative.

**Recitation (10%).** Part of becoming intimate with a play or poem is learning it by heart. I will ask you to memorize two speeches (twenty lines or longer) over the course of the semester; at least one of these speeches must be in verse. (They can both be in verse if you prefer.) You choose the speeches. Grades will be assigned on the following basis: you know the speech, but stumble your way through it and don't observe the meter = C range; you know the speech letter-perfect and observe the meter, but haven't done much with pauses, emphasis, tone = B range; you know the speech letter-perfect, observe the meter and dramatize it with your voice = A range. Don't memorize a speech you don't understand: we'll have a conversation afterward about what it means.

**Staged Reading (10%).** For each of the plays there will be at least two staged readings of one or more scenes. Over the course of the semester you will be asked to perform in two of these readings as an actor. Some things to consider in preparing your scenes:

- **Blocking.** Where should characters stand? How and where should they move? At what point in the action? Do the words imply gestures that are not specified in the text of the play?
- **Language.** Be prepared to talk about what the words mean. Think about where to put the pauses in your speeches. Which words are you going to emphasize? You don't need to memorize your lines, but you do need to practice them until you can read them smoothly and expressively.
- **Dialogue.** Practice your timing together.
- **Character.** Be prepared to talk about why your character says what he or she says. Think about what your face will look like while you're speaking.
- **Dramatic Structure.** Be prepared to talk about how this scene contributes to the structure of the play as a whole. (One way to think about this is to ask yourself what would happen to the play if this scene were cut.)

In preparation, you will also type up a couple of paragraphs (250 words) about the language your (main) character uses and what you infer from it; these paragraphs will be due at the beginning of your staged reading. Don't write about what your character does or even what he says; instead, comment on how he speaks. For example, what seem to be his favorite words or images?

**Essays (55%).** Over the course of the semester you will submit three essays; due dates are given above. The first essay will have an assigned topic (from the first act of *Romeo and Juliet*) and be short (only 750 words). The second essay (1,850–2,000 words) will be on some aspect (you choose) of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Hamlet*. The third essay (1,850–2,000 words) will be on *Othello*, *King Lear*, or *Macbeth* (your choice). Due dates are on page 1.

- Essays should be typed and include a list of Works Cited in MLA format. (You can find it with Google.) Most essays for this course will have only one item in their list of Works Cited, an edition of Shakespeare.
- When you're done, do a word count and write the result on the first page of your paper. Word count should not include such things as long quotations and list of works cited.
- Pages should be (a) stapled and (b) numbered by computer. Ask someone at the computer lab if you don't know how to do this already.
- First impressions count; so do spelling, punctuation, and grammar. If you have trouble with these, I recommend *Grammar in Plain English* by Harriet Diamond and Phyllis Dutwin.
- Double-space. Take pity on my eyes and use 12 point Times Roman (or a similar font of the same size).

**Midterm and Final Exams.** There will be no midterm or final exams in this course. However, all work for this course must be completed on or before the last day of class, Apr. 24.

Please don't read, send, or monitor **text messages** in class. Please do turn off your **cell phone ringer** before class begins. **Laptops and tablets** might be helpful in some courses, but not this one; please keep them shut during class.

**Using secondary sources.** ENGL 1200 is a prerequisite for this course. What you learned there you should practice here: how to construct an argument, evaluate sources, and cite them. For example, you know that random web pages are not considered a reliable or authoritative source—so don't use them. Your main source for this class should be the text of Shakespeare himself; if you absolutely must consult something else, it should be a journal article or a scholarly book; our library has plenty of both.

#### PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas in such a way that they seem your own. Give credit where credit is due; if you don't, it's cheating. If you have questions about plagiarism, please ask them before a paper is due; after a paper is handed in it's too late to claim ignorance. If you do it in this class, expect an F for the course. I will also report the offense and, if you've done it before, ECU may impose additional penalties, such as suspension or expulsion.

#### ACCOMMODATIONS

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 (Voice/TTY 252-737-1016).

#### OFFICE HOURS, EMAIL

Office: Bate 2137

Office hours: MWF 10:50–12:00 and 2:00–2:30. This spans two class periods: if you have class during both, grab me after class or call me on the telephone and we'll set up an appointment. My home number is in the book but, please, no phone calls after 9:00 pm.

Email: Instead of exchanging emails, let's have a conversation. That's what office hours are for.

#### RESERVE

Bullough, Geoffrey, ed. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. 7 vols. London: Routledge, 1957–. PR2952.B8

Rosenberg, Marvin. *The Masks of Hamlet*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1992. PR2807.R656.1992

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Masks of King Lear*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972. PR2819.R65

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Masks of Macbeth*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. PR2823.R67

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Masks of Othello*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961. PR2829.R6.1961