

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Communication and the Arts
Programme:	Study Abroad
FHEQ Level:	5
Course Title:	Shakespeare & his World
Course Code:	THEA LITR 5601
Total Hours:	160 (Lev 3-5) (4 US Credit)
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	15
Independent Learning Hours:	100
Credit	16 UK CATS credits 8 ECTS credits 4 US Credits

Course Description:

Shakespeare's plays sit at the core of English literature: his contribution to English language still resonates through words and phrases that we continue to use today and some of his plays are the foundations of modern stories and films. Shakespeare's plays may be considered "highbrow" now, but they were general entertainment enjoyed by the masses at the time. His plays were meant to be watched but closer study also reveals the richness of his language. This course provides historical and theoretical contexts to Shakespeare's plays and approaches them with a variety of different critical methods, including looking at his sources and placing them in a contemporary context. Shakespeare in performance is an integral part of the course and students are expected to see productions of most texts studied. An additional fee is required for outside trips and productions.

Prerequisites:

40 Credits

Aims and Objectives:

The course aims to develop transferable skills which include:

- Reading closely for nuance and appreciating how language and form impact the production of meaning.
- Engaging with a variety of critical approaches to both primary and secondary texts to develop informed opinions and make incisive interpretations.
- To explain how Shakespeare's plays fit into a long and varied literary tradition.
- To study the significance of Shakespeare's plays with modern popular British culture and to recognise the impact which the genre has had on Britain's contemporary identity, culture and creative industries.
- To examine intertextuality and influence in literary history and practice.
- Writing carefully and clearly to present persuasive critical arguments that demonstrate good critical thinking skills.
- The ability to research purposefully, quote cogently and engage with critical arguments.
- The ability to keep multiple contexts in mind when discussing the text and understanding how these contexts affect the production of meaning.

Programme Outcomes:

A5II

B5II

C5I

D5I

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of cultural and political contexts of the plays discussed and show evidence of wider reading.
- Articulate ideas that identify, analyse and communicate principles and concepts of the Shakespeare plays discussed, while considering competing points of view.
- Undertake research to demonstrate detailed knowledge of theories and concepts in Shakespeare studies as applied to the plays discussed.
- Demonstrate their knowledge of an appropriate range of texts from the Shakespearean canon whilst presenting in a reasonably complex manner their awareness of the contexts for these writings.
- Develop knowledge of the impact of Shakespearean literature through reading, engaging with and responding to both primary and secondary texts.
- Demonstrate their understanding of a range of critical and theoretical approaches through reference to literary history and thematic analysis.
- Demonstrate the ability draw out the connections between texts through comparison, through reference to literary history, through thematic analysis and through employing and engaging with the insights of other critics.
- Demonstrate a sense of the continuities and transformations in the historical development of English literature, appreciating both the common background of texts and their unique specificities.
- Demonstrate the ability to write analytically, exercising independent critical judgement and applying relevant critical sources.
- Demonstrate their ability to work as a group to provide an oral/visual presentation, demonstrating clear interpretation and analysis of primary texts and secondary criticism.

Indicative Content:

- Introduction to the complex field of Shakespeare studies.
- In-depth study of 4-5 key Shakespeare plays, including comedies, histories and tragedies (Each semester the chosen plays are based on productions currently on in London and possibly at other locales, such as the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford).
- Theatre visits to see plays in performance.
- Overview of Shakespeare's literary contexts: his sources and influences.
- Overview of Shakespeare's historical contexts: London in the 1590s and early 1600s.
- Recognising how Shakespeare's language informs the language we speak today.
- Understanding of Elizabethan and Jacobean politics and thought.
- Understanding of classic-early-twentieth-century Shakespeare scholarship.
- Introduction to contemporary theory and its application in Shakespeare studies
- Appreciation of Shakespeare's use of language and poetic devices.
- Recognising modern films, plays and novels are based on Shakespeare's work.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

Lectures, theatre visits, classroom discussions, video.

Indicative Text(s):

Greenblatt, S. et al (ed.) (2022) *The Norton Shakespeare*. 3rd Ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Secondary Material

Arnold, C. (2015) *Globe: Life in Shakespeare's London*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Bryson, B. (2023) *Shakespeare: The World as a Stage*. UK: Harper Collins.

Greenblatt, S. (2004) *Will in the World – How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Gurr, A. (2009) *The Shakespearean Stage*. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hattaway, M. (ed.) (2002) *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leggatt, Alexander (ed.) (2001) *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maguire, L. (2003) *Studying Shakespeare: A Guide to the Plays*. New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing.

McEachern, C. (ed.). (2013) *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parvini, N. (2012) *Shakespeare's History Plays: Rethinking Historicism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Porter, S. (2011) *Shakespeare's London: Everyday Life in London 1580-1616*. Stroud: Amberley Publishing.

Smith, E. (2020) *This Is Shakespeare: How to Read the World's Greatest Playwright*. London: Pelican Books.

Smith, E. (2007) *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First Edition	Nov 2024	