

Intro to Shakespeare

ENGL 2300

SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Class Information

Semester: [REDACTED]
Section Number: [REDACTED]
Meeting Days/Times: [REDACTED]
Campus: [REDACTED]
Bldg. & Classroom: [REDACTED]

Instructor Information

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Office: [REDACTED]
Office Hours: [REDACTED]

Course Description

This course introduces students to the works of William Shakespeare, emphasizing interpretive strategies for reading his texts. Students will explore Shakespeare's plays and poems through traditional and contemporary critical lenses, considering their historical, cultural, social, and political contexts. Additionally, students will examine contemporary retellings and adaptations of Shakespeare's works, drawing connections between the past and present to understand the enduring relevance of his literature.

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: ENGL 1010 with at least a "C"



William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

About the Course

Why Take This Course?

Shakespeare's works remain some of the most influential texts in the English language, shaping literature, performance, and culture for over four centuries. In *Intro to Shakespeare*, you'll dive into a selection of his most celebrated plays and poems, exploring their timeless themes of love, power, identity, and ambition. This course invites you to ask why Shakespeare

still matters, how his works speak to the human condition, and what they reveal about the past and our present.

How Does This Course Fit Into Your Academic Experience?

This course is an integral part of a humanities education, fulfilling requirements that emphasize critical thinking, cultural literacy, and the ability to engage with complex texts. Whether you are an English major, a theater enthusiast, or simply curious about Shakespeare, this course will deepen your analytical skills, strengthen your interpretive abilities, and broaden your understanding of cultural history. It connects literary study with broader discussions about ethics, aesthetics, and the social questions that continue to shape our world.

What Skills Will You Develop?

- *Critical Thinking:* Analyze intricate plots, characters, and themes within Shakespeare's works.
- *Interpretive Strategies:* Employ literary theories and methods to develop nuanced readings of texts.
- *Cultural Analysis:* Examine how historical and cultural contexts influence literature and its interpretations.
- *Communication:* Articulate your ideas clearly through writing, discussion, and collaborative projects.
- *Creative Problem-Solving:* Adapt Shakespearean texts into contemporary forms, reflecting on their relevance today.

Pedagogical Approach

This course blends close reading with creative exploration. Through lectures, discussions, performances, and projects, you'll engage with Shakespeare's texts in multiple ways. Scaffolded assignments will guide you from foundational skills to more advanced analysis, while formative and summative assessments will ensure continuous feedback and growth. Collaboration and interactive learning are at the heart of this course, providing opportunities to share perspectives and challenge assumptions.

Literary Theories Employed

To enrich your understanding of Shakespeare's works, the course introduces a variety of interpretive frameworks, including:

- *Historical and Cultural Criticism:* Situating texts within the social, political, and artistic contexts of Elizabethan England.
- *Feminist and Gender Studies:* Examining representations of gender, identity, and power.

- *Postcolonial Theory*: Analyzing issues of race, empire, and cultural dominance in Shakespeare's plays.
- *Performance Studies*: Exploring how different productions and adaptations interpret the texts for modern audiences.
- *New Historicism*: Investigating the interplay between the literary works and the cultural forces that produced them.

Why Is This Meaningful?

Studying Shakespeare isn't just about reading old texts—it's about uncovering universal truths and understanding the roots of storytelling as an art form. His works challenge us to think deeply about morality, politics, identity, and the complexities of human nature. By engaging with Shakespeare, we gain insights into how literature can bridge time and place, offering perspectives that resonate with our own lives and shaping our understanding of what it means to be human.



Shakespeare's plays are performed at the Globe Theatre, London, England, U.K.

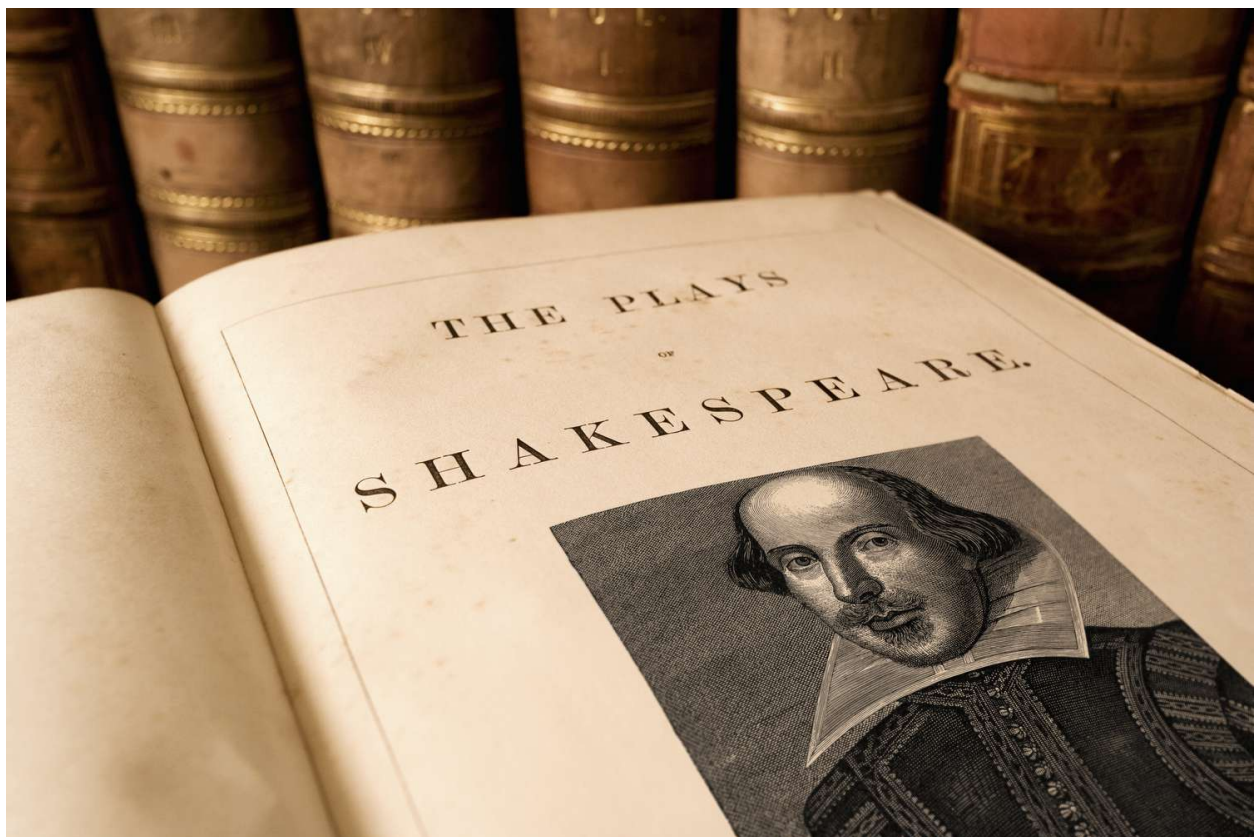
Connecting the Course Aims to Your Learning Journey

This course is an invitation to explore some of the most influential and dynamic works in the English literary tradition. My goal is to guide you through Shakespeare's plays and poetry, not as dusty relics of the past, but as vibrant texts that continue to challenge, inspire, and provoke thought. Together, we'll delve into these works to uncover their complexity, wrestle with their questions, and appreciate their artistry.

This course is designed to help you connect Shakespeare's writing to the broader questions of what it means to be human. Through close readings of the texts, you'll hone your skills in interpreting complex ideas and identifying the ways Shakespeare uses language to build his world and his characters. We'll discuss not just what happens in the plays but why it matters—both in Shakespeare's time and in ours. You'll have the chance to analyze how historical and cultural contexts influenced his writing and reflect on how those influences echo in our contemporary world.

As we work through the course, you'll also explore how Shakespeare's works have been retold and reimagined. From modern adaptations in film and theater to creative reimaginings in unexpected places, you'll examine why his writing continues to resonate. This exploration will challenge you to think critically about how literature evolves over time and what it means to reinterpret stories for new audiences. By engaging with these retellings, you'll deepen your understanding of the adaptability and enduring significance of Shakespeare's works.

Finally, this course is about you—your voice, your interpretations, and your ideas. Shakespeare's texts often raise profound questions about power, identity, morality, and love. You'll have the opportunity to grapple with these questions, reflect on your own perspectives, and connect what you learn to your own life. My hope is that you leave this course not just with a deeper appreciation for Shakespeare, but also with sharpened analytical skills, a richer understanding of cultural history, and a sense of how literature can illuminate the world around you.



Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify and analyze characters, themes, settings, and plots in a selection of Shakespeare's plays and poems, demonstrating close reading skills and literary appreciation.
2. Apply literary criticism, historical contexts, and performance interpretations to develop nuanced arguments about Shakespeare's works.
3. Compare and contrast Shakespeare's plays with contemporary retellings, critically evaluating their cultural relevance and reinterpretation over time.
4. Investigate and articulate the historical, cultural, and aesthetic significance of Shakespeare's works, connecting them to broader humanistic questions.
5. Reflect on the ethical, aesthetic, and philosophical questions raised by Shakespeare's works and their application to contemporary life.

This course is for you to discover, question, and grow. Shakespeare's works are rich with meaning and possibility, and I'm excited to see how you will engage with them. Let's make this a semester of exploration and connection, where literature comes alive in ways that matter to you.

How This Course Aligns with the English Studies Program

This course fulfills a program elective for the English Studies, A.S. and is designed to help you build essential skills in English Studies, such as analyzing and interpreting texts, understanding diverse literary traditions, and exploring the cultural, historical, and ideological contexts of literature. Through assignments like close readings, performance critiques, and creative adaptations, you'll engage with Shakespeare's works in ways that connect to broader program goals. These include applying critical and creative thinking, using disciplinary approaches like literary theory and historical analysis, and reflecting on how texts reflect and shape relationships of power and culture. Ultimately, this course will deepen your understanding of the value of literary study—not just as an academic pursuit, but as a way of seeing the world and your place within it.

The course also counts as an elective for all programs that have open electives available.

Grading Policies

Assignments in this course are structured to help you progress in academic skills, so timely submission is important for receiving feedback and building skills sequentially.

Late Submissions

Assignments should be submitted by the due date to allow for timely feedback and skill development. If you submit an assignment late, a 10% deduction will apply per day, up to three days. After three days, the assignment will not be accepted without prior arrangements. Communicating any anticipated delays ahead of time is essential to discuss possible extensions.

Grading Rubrics and Criteria

The grading rubric and criteria are designed to provide transparency in the evaluation process by clearly outlining the expectations for each assignment. These tools help students understand what areas they are mastering and where improvement is needed. Each component of the rubric is aligned with specific course learning outcomes, ensuring that students' performance is directly tied to their progress in meeting the key skills and knowledge outlined for the course. This alignment supports both fair grading and a clearer path to academic success.

Resubmitting Revised Work

To support continuous improvement, specific assignments are eligible for resubmission. Revisions must reflect significant effort to address feedback and enhance the quality of work. Revised work is due within one week of receiving the graded assignment and may receive an improved grade. Resubmissions foster a growth mindset, encouraging you to build on your understanding and proficiency.

Graded Coursework

This course structure is designed to balance formative and summative assessments, allowing students to build and refine their language and analytical skills across the semester. Each assignment type connects directly to specific CLOs, ensuring alignment between course goals and assessment strategies.

- A. Close Reading Assignment (15%)
- B. Annotated Bibliography (20%)
- C. Performance Analysis Paper (15%)
- D. Group Project: Retelling Shakespeare (20%)
- E. Final Exam (30%)

A. Close Reading Assignment (15%)

This assignment invites you to slow down and deeply engage with Shakespeare's language, focusing on a short passage from one of the plays we've read. Through careful analysis of literary devices, imagery, and themes, you'll uncover the layers of meaning that make Shakespeare's work so rich. In doing so, you'll practice critical reading and interpretive skills, which are foundational for the rest of the course. To succeed, you'll need to select a passage of 10–15 lines, craft a clear thesis, and support your ideas with evidence from the text. This formative assignment directly supports CLO #1 and CLO #2 by training you to analyze and interpret Shakespeare's work with precision.

- *Due Date:* Week 4
- *Grading Criteria:* Clear thesis, depth of analysis, textual evidence, and writing clarity.

B. Annotated Bibliography (20%)

The annotated bibliography allows you to explore the vast landscape of Shakespearean scholarship, introducing you to the critical conversations that shape our understanding of his works. You'll select 5–7 scholarly sources related to a play or theme, summarize their main arguments, evaluate their perspectives, and reflect on how they inform your interpretation. This assignment helps you develop research and synthesis skills while encouraging you to think critically about different viewpoints. It connects to CLO #2 and CLO #4, as you'll be integrating historical, cultural, and critical contexts into your work.

- *Due Date:* Week 7
- *Grading Criteria:* Quality of sources, clarity and thoroughness of annotations, and relevance to your chosen play or theme.

C. Performance Analysis Paper (15%)

One of the joys of studying Shakespeare is seeing his plays come alive through performance. For this assignment, you'll attend or watch a recorded performance of a Shakespearean play and analyze how the production interprets the text. How do staging, costumes, acting, and directorial choices shape the meaning of the play? This summative assignment bridges the gap between text and performance, helping you understand the dynamic ways Shakespeare's works are brought to life. In analyzing a performance, you'll deepen your critical thinking skills and apply the interpretive strategies we practice in class. This assignment supports CLO #2 and CLO #3 by connecting textual analysis to broader cultural and artistic perspectives.

- *Due Date:* Week 10
- *Grading Criteria:* Depth of analysis, connection to textual evidence, consideration of performance elements, and writing clarity.

D. Group Project: Retelling Shakespeare (20%)

This collaborative project invites you to bring Shakespeare into the present, exploring how his works can be reimagined for contemporary audiences. Working in small groups, you'll adapt a scene or act from a play into a new medium—such as a podcast, short film, or live performance—and present your adaptation to the class. Alongside your creative work, your group will submit a brief written explanation of your choices, discussing how your adaptation engages with the themes and questions of the original text. This assignment combines creative problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking, aligning with CLO #3 and CLO #5 by encouraging you to reflect on Shakespeare's relevance and cultural significance today.

- *Presentation Due:* Week 13
- *Grading Criteria:* Originality, depth of engagement with the text, and quality of the presentation and explanation.

E. Final Exam (30%)

The final exam is your opportunity to synthesize everything you've learned throughout the course. It will include a mix of short-answer questions, passage analyses, and an essay, asking you to apply your knowledge of Shakespeare's plays, historical contexts, and critical perspectives. The essay will challenge you to compare themes, characters, or cultural questions across multiple plays or to analyze a play within its historical and cultural context. This summative assessment ties together all the CLOs, with a focus on critical thinking, textual analysis, and cultural understanding.

- *Date:* Week 16 (Finals Week)
- *Grading Criteria:* Clarity and depth of responses, quality of analysis, and originality and coherence of the essay.

These assignments align with the weekly topics and scaffold your learning, building critical and creative skills while deepening your engagement with Shakespeare's works. They offer opportunities to develop and showcase your interpretive, analytical, and collaborative abilities, ensuring a meaningful and rigorous academic experience.

Canvas

This course uses the Canvas course management system. All students must use Canvas to retrieve course readings, access web pages, upload assignments, receive course announcements, and review the class section's Simple Syllabus.

Course Readings & Textbooks

Selections may include:

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- *Macbeth*
- *Romeo and Juliet*
- Sonnets: "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"
- *West Side Story* as a contemporary retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*

*Other readings will be posted to our Canvas course-site.

Key Scholars:

- Stephen Greenblatt (*Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*)
- Margreta de Grazia (*Shakespeare Verbatim*)
- Ayanna Thompson (*Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America*)

Important Dates

- Last day to add a class: [REDACTED]
- Last day to drop a course with 100% refund: [REDACTED]
- Last day to withdraw without refunds: [REDACTED]
- Dates/holidays when classes are not held: [REDACTED]
- Last day of class: [REDACTED]
- Reading Day: [REDACTED]
- Final Exam Period: [REDACTED]

(See <https://www.slcc.edu/schedule/final-exam-schedule.aspx>)

The "Student Academic Calendar" contains important dates including registration, tuition payments, holidays, and significant deadlines. Refer to the webpage for the most up-to-date information. [website link: <https://www.slcc.edu/academiccalendar/index.aspx>]



The Globe Theatre, London, England, U.K.



A scene from *Hamlet*.

Course Calendar

Wk	Topics	Readings	Assignments
1	Introduction to Shakespeare	Selected Sonnets	
2	Elizabethan England & Theater	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	
3	Comedy & Social Order	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	
4	Tragedy: Love and Ambition	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Close Reading Assignment
5	Tragedy: Power and Betrayal	<i>Macbeth</i>	
6	Historical Plays & National Identity	<i>Henry V</i>	
7	Poetry & Historical Contexts	Selected Sonnets	Annotated Bibliography
8	Mid-Semester Review	No new readings	
9	Contemporary Retellings	<i>West Side Story</i> (film)	
10	Performance Contexts	View <i>Macbeth</i> (Film)	Performance Analysis Paper
11	Cultural Relevance of Shakespeare	<i>Othello</i>	
12	Gender and Identity	<i>As You Like It</i>	
13	Group Presentations	No new readings	Group Project
14	Shakespeare in Popular Culture	Selected Clips/ Readings	
15	Review and Reflection	No new readings	
16	Final Exam	No new readings	Final Exam

Note: Dates and topics are subject to change. Any changes will be made in writing to you on Canvas and announced during class.

Attendance, Withdrawals, Drops, Incomplete Grades, and Failing Grades

Non-attendance at any point during the semester does not guarantee you will be automatically unenrolled from the class. The course instructor may unenroll a student, called an “administrative drop”, if the student doesn't attend the first scheduled class or made prior arrangements.

Most failing grades arise because the student has stopped attending class and subsequently has not completed graded coursework. The reasons for non-attendance are wide and diverse. Nevertheless, students are expected to be aware of withdrawal and drop deadlines and act accordingly to unenroll themselves.

- *Last day to drop a course with 100% refund:* [REDACTED]
- *Last day to withdraw without refunds:* [REDACTED]

Receiving an “E” grade (fail) can negatively impact a student’s future ability to access financial aid, register for classes, or take part in the college in other ways. When distributing “E” grades, your course instructor must report the student’s “last day of attendance”.

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is a temporary option for students experiencing specific circumstances. Institutional policy states that in order for a student to be eligible to receive an “I” grade, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student has attended at least 70% of the class’s scheduled meeting periods and/or completed at least 70% of the coursework. [Example: “For this course, the student must have completed at least 80% of the coursework and attended 80% of the total scheduled class periods.” (Or other language that you elect to use).]
2. The student must have already been passing the course at the time of request.
3. Circumstances considered are major life events that prevent a student from continuing in the course, such as serious illness, death of family member, or change in employment. The college asks for documented evidence to substantiate the requesting student’s claim.

The student requesting the incomplete must coordinate with the course instructor to create a contract outlining the coursework to be completed and/or tests to be taken, and include the time allowed to complete them. Any contract not fulfilled within one year after receiving the incomplete grade will automatically convert the incomplete “I” grade to a failing “E” grade. Note that due to some circumstances not all instructors may be willing or even able to offer the incomplete grade option.

Time Commitment

Success in this course — and in your other courses — depends upon dedicating sufficient time to learning and completing course assignments, tasks, and activities. Your time in the classroom accounts for only a portion of what you'll need to dedicate to the course overall. Most of the work will be done outside the scheduled class time.

What's a "credit hour"?

A credit hour is the amount of work you'll put in to achieve the course learning outcomes equaling 45 hours of student work. It's measured as one hour in the classroom (or direct faculty instruction) and two hours of student work outside of class for a total of three hours per week over 15 weeks. It can also be measured as three hours of student work per week over 15 weeks.

How much time should I set aside for this course?

For this 3-credit hour course, you can expect to dedicate:

- *Time in class (or direct instruction):* 3 hours per week
- *Time outside of class:* 6 hours per week

How much time should I dedicate to all my classes this semester?

For a "full-time" load of coursework (12+ credit hours), you should plan for:

Full-Time Status:	12 Credit Hours	15 Credit Hours
Number of courses:	4	5
Time in class:	12 hours per week	15 hours per week
Time outside of class:	24 hours per week (minimum)	30 hours per week (minimum)
Total time:	36 hours per week (minimum)	45 hours per week (minimum)

Please note that different kinds of courses and delivery models (i.e. labs, online courses, hybrid courses, directed studies courses, etc.) may organize direct instruction/classroom time and outside of class time differently. The general rule is that the total number of hours dedicated to the course is consistent across modalities.

Class Norms and Policies

Email

Please use your official student email to communicate with me, and include the course name in the subject line (e.g., “ENGL 2300 Question”). I will respond to emails within 24–48 hours on weekdays. Emails received after 5 p.m. on Fridays will be responded to the following Monday. For urgent matters, such as emergencies or time-sensitive issues, indicate this clearly in your email subject line.

Asking Questions

For general course-related questions (e.g., about assignments or course content), please check the syllabus and course website (Canvas) first. If your question is not answered there, feel free to email me or ask during class or office hours. For questions relevant to the entire class, I encourage you to post in the course’s discussion forum on Canvas, where I or your peers can respond. This ensures everyone benefits from the answers.

Excused Absences

If you need to miss class due to illness, a family emergency, or any other valid reason, please notify me via email as soon as possible. Include documentation if necessary (e.g., doctor’s note). Make sure to communicate excused absences in advance whenever possible.

Unexcused Absences

If you miss class without prior notice or a valid reason, you are responsible for catching up on missed content. Check Canvas for updates and reach out to a classmate for notes before contacting me with specific questions.

Instructor Communication

I will primarily communicate with you via Canvas announcements and your official student email. Important updates, changes to the syllabus, assignment deadlines, or cancellations will be posted on Canvas, so please check both your email and Canvas regularly. If a class meeting is canceled or we need to meet outside our normal time or location, I will notify you via email at least 24 hours in advance when possible.

Office Hours

What Are Office Hours?

Office hours are dedicated times each week when I am available to meet with you one-on-one outside of class. This is your opportunity to ask questions, get clarification on course material, discuss assignments, or seek advice on academic success. Office hours are a valuable resource and are here to support your learning.

Benefits of Office Hours:

By attending office hours, you can:

- Receive personalized feedback on your work.
- Get help with understanding difficult concepts or assignments.
- Discuss strategies for improving your academic performance.
- Build a stronger connection with your instructor, which can be useful for academic recommendations or future advice.

Taking advantage of office hours can significantly enhance your understanding of the course material and contribute to your overall success.

Expectations for Using Office Hours

You do not need to have a specific problem or question to attend office hours! Feel free to stop by even if you just want to chat about course topics or potential projects. However, if you have detailed questions about an assignment or course content, it's helpful to come prepared with specific points or questions.

By Appointment

In addition to my regular office hours, I am also available by appointment. This means if my scheduled office hours do not work for you, you can request a meeting at another time. To book an appointment, send me an email with your availability and a brief description of what you'd like to discuss. I will do my best to accommodate your request and set up a time that works for both of us.

Office Hours Schedule

My office hours are [REDACTED], and I'm located in [REDACTED]. If you need to meet at another time, email me at [REDACTED] to schedule an appointment.

Institutional Syllabus Statements

The following are statements listed in the “Institutional Syllabus” found on Canvas:

Institutional Policies:

- Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Grades and Grading Policies
- Title IX Statement
- Hate and Bias Incident Reporting
- Pronouns in Canvas
- Name Changes in Canvas

Learning Support and Tutoring Services:

- General Services
- Out-of-State Licensure

Advising, Counseling, and Student Support Services:

- Academic Advising and Career Support
- Counseling Support Services
- Veterans Services
- Gender & Sexuality Student Resource Center (GSSRC)
- Accessibility & Disability Services (ADS)
- Student Pregnancy
- Food, Childcare, and Crisis Resources
- Student Engagement, Experience, and Achievement (SEEA)
- The Dream Center



Movie still from *West Side Story* (2021)