Political Shakespeare
FYS 1000.67 First Year Seminar
TR 3:00-4:15, University Hall 1403
Fall 2013

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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 7:00-9:00, 10:50-11:50; and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
To the audiences of Shakespeare’s time, the stage was not only a source of popular entertainment but also a space where political hopes and fears could be acted out. The bitter criticism of Philip Stubbes, a Puritan who feared that theatre would corrupt its audience, indirectly testifies to the early moderns’ belief in the power of drama. The London playhouses, Stubbes claimed in 1583, offered an education in worldly vice and disobedience. “If you will learn to murder, slay, kill, pick, steal, rob, and rove; if you will learn to rebel against princes, to commit treasons […] you need to go to no other school, for all these good examples may you see painted before your eyes in interludes and plays.” This First Year Seminar will take another look at these “good examples” of imaginary crime and revolt, exploring the complex political implications of Shakespeare’s representations of monarchical power and aristocratic privilege, and seeking to understand what we mean, and what the early moderns meant, by “politics” itself. Many early modern thinkers followed Aristotle’s conception of the “polis” as the highest form of community, which seeks the highest moral good. Accordingly, early modern thinkers often stressed the continuities and analogies between social forms of varying scale: the father, as head of a family, ruled his wife and children like a miniature king, while the monarch was thought to act as the head of the symbolic “family” of the body politic. But how might early modern drama reaffirm the legitimacy of patriarchal and monarchical power, and how might tragic spectacles of assassination, revenge, and illicit desire call into question the “natural” basis of established authority? We will explore these questions and others through the careful study of several of Shakespeare’s major plays.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students who successfully complete this course will acquire greater familiarity with several of Shakespeare’s most canonical dramatic works and their political contexts. They will strengthen their ability to engage analytically with dramatic texts, and they will develop their understanding of how the elements of drama (such as plot, characterization, setting, speech, movement, and theme) interact to produce meaning.

REQUIRED TEXTS
  o Timon of Athens
  o Measure for Measure
  o Othello
  o Julius Caesar
  o The Tempest
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- The Winter’s Tale
- Titus Andronicus

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Preparation and Participation
2. Critical Writing Projects
3. Oral Presentation Project
4. Information Literacy Modules
5. Attendance

Class Preparation and Participation

Our class meetings are invaluable opportunities for you to share and to develop your understanding of our texts through active discussion and debate. Given the importance of this task, you are expected to participate in class activities, and to complete all assigned readings, weekly writing assignments, class projects, and presentations thoughtfully and with attention to detail. Students are expected to bring relevant texts to class to facilitate their participation. Students who neglect to bring their texts will be considered absent.

A cornerstone of our weekly meetings is class discussion. You are expected to contribute several ideas in each class: this means that you should be prepared to share at least two questions, observations, or passages from the readings that you would like the class to pursue. Merely showing up to class without contributing to our conversation is not truly participation, and the grade for your performance in this course will reflect this.

While many of the questions we will ask in this course may not have fixed ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers, informed comments are not the same as unfounded opinions. Informed comments show that you have completed the readings and have thought about them, even if questions remain about the text. Unfounded opinions suggest that you have not finished the day’s reading, or that you have not taken time to think about it.

Alongside oral discussion, weekly written contributions to the course “Discussion Board” on Blackboard/MyLMU Connect are a required component of class participation. Written contributions to the discussion board should respond to themes, problems, and questions that arise in our readings. Responses must be between 100-150 words in length, and typed in single-spaced, 12-point font. Be prepared to share your written thoughts in class, as you may be called upon to discuss your ideas. Keep in mind that written contributions supplement, but cannot replace, oral discussion: they are not substitutes for lively intellectual debate in the classroom.

You are expected to post one written contribution to a reading(s) each week. You are welcome to post more than once each week. To ensure that fellow students have the opportunity to read and to respond to your thoughts, you must post your response to the day’s reading no later than 10:00 AM on the morning of our scheduled class meeting, when that reading will be discussed. You may choose the day’s readings (Tuesday’s or Thursday’s) on which you want to comment. For instance, if you want to respond to Tuesday’s scheduled reading(s), your written comments must be submitted by 10:00 AM on Tuesday. Late submissions will receive partial or no credit.
Critical Writing and Oral Presentation Projects and Information Literacy Modules

Building on our work in classroom discussions, you will complete a variety of projects that analyze our dramatic works and course topics from multiple perspectives: critical, interpretive, and performative. Projects will include critical writing and an oral presentation. Projects may also include exams. In the critical writing projects, you will examine an important theme or problem presented by our course readings. In the oral presentation project, you will work in collaboration with selected group members to direct and produce your own dramatic interpretation of one of our plays. Students will rely on the individual commitments and efforts of their fellow performers in completing this project. Performances will correspond to our scheduled readings and should enhance our understanding of our readings as texts in action.

Information literacy is a crucial component of all assignments in our course. Alongside formal projects, you will complete a four-part series of modules and corresponding quizzes that will advance your understanding of different types of critical and scholarly engagement, research methods and tools, and citation practices used to acknowledge the work of others. Grouped under the heading of “Information Literacy,” modules may be accessed on our course website and quizzes must be completed on-line on their scheduled due dates. Access the Information Literary Modules following these steps:
1. Log on to MYLMU Connect (https://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu) and navigate to our course website.
2. Click on the “Information Literacy” link in the menu on the left-hand side of the page.
3. Click on the link for the tutorial you are assigned (“Starting Your Assignment”; “Types of Information”; “Finding and Evaluating Information”; “Using Information Ethically”). The tutorial will open in a new window.

All projects are due in class, and information literacy modules/quizzes due on-line, on their designated due dates, unless otherwise stated. Projects or modules/quizzes submitted after their due date will be late and will receive a one-half grade deduction in letter grade, with further deductions for every additional day late. Given the collective spirit of the oral presentation project, missed attendance on the part of any one group member cannot be made up by that group member.

Attendance

Because this class needs your participation to work, I have an attendance policy. I do not differentiate between unexcused and excused absences. Rather, I provide a generous policy that takes into consideration unexpected circumstances and personal commitments you may have. As such, you are allowed four absences and six days of tardiness without penalty. Participation, a required element of the course, is closely connected to attendance: a student who does not attend class cannot be recognized for participation. Attendance at office hours will not compensate for missed classes, and lectures, discussions, or any other information delivered during class time will not be reproduced at office hours.

Absences and days of tardiness that exceed the allowed number will not be excused and cannot be negotiated. Each subsequent absence or tardiness beyond the excused limit will result in a one-half deduction from a student’s final grade in the course, with further one-half deductions for every additional missed day or late attendance. (For instance, a student with five absences and a grade of ‘B+’ will receive a final grade of ‘B’ for the course; a student with six absences and a grade of ‘B+’ will receive
a final grade of ‘B−’). A student with more than seven absences should expect to receive a failing grade in the course regardless of current grade.

Cases of extended illness or unexpected hardship will be considered at the instructor’s discretion on an individual basis. In general a student who misses more than four classes should consider withdrawing from the course, since regular attendance is a necessary condition for successfully completing this course and its requirements.

**Evaluation**

1. Class Preparation and Participation 25%
2. Critical Writing Projects 50%
3. Oral Presentation Project 15%
4. Information Literacy Modules 10%
5. Attendance

*Your grade in our course will reflect your achievements both inside and outside the classroom.* Grades will not be awarded on the basis of perceived effort. You are encouraged to visit office hours or to make an appointment to discuss your progress in the course. Grades will not be discussed by phone or by email. Grading scale: A = 94-100%; A− = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B− = 80-83; C+ = 75-79; C = 70-74; C− = 65-69; D = 60-64.

**WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS**
The workload expectations for this course follow LMU’s Credit Hour Policy. For every 50 minutes of classroom time or direct faculty instruction per week (in a 15-week semester), you are expected to devote two hours of study time outside of class. A three-unit course translates to two and a half hours (150 minutes) of classroom time/faculty instruction per week, and a minimum of six hours of study time per week outside of class for a 15-week semester course.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**
Plagiarism is the improper or unacknowledged use of another’s words and ideas and is a severe offence. *Any plagiarized work will result in a failing grade, and may result in automatic failure in the course.* Academic dishonesty will result in serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments to expulsion. It is never permissible to submit any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source, including the Internet, without properly acknowledging the source. By contrast, academic honesty, as stated in the LMU Community Standards Handbook (2013-2014), “respects the intellectual and creative work of others, flows from dedication to and pride in performing one’s own best work, and is essential if true learning is to take place” (28). LMU “expects all members of its community to act with honesty and integrity at all times, especially in their academic work. [...] It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that his/her work meets the standards of academic honesty set forth in the Honor Code.* If the student is unclear about how these definitions and standards apply to his/her work, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor to clarify the ambiguity” (28; emphasis added). You can consult the LMU Community Standards Handbook (2013-2014) at:

[4]
http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/media/lmustudentaffairs/administration/judicialaffairs/Community%20Standards%20Booklet.pdf

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION, E-RESOURCES, AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

E-mail Communication
The best way to reach me outside of class and office hours is by e-mail. I am keen to help students outside of the classroom and I will be glad to respond to your communication. However, since you are contacting me in a professional and educational capacity, your tone and language should reflect that. Your e-mail should incorporate these basic features:
  o “FYS Political Shakespeare” in the Subject Heading followed by a short description of the e-mail
  o The salutation: “Dear Dr. Park” or “Dear Prof. Park”
  o An appropriate sign-off, such as “Best, Will Shakespeare” or “Sincerely, Jane Austen”
I will communicate with you outside of class regarding readings, projects, announcements, exams, etc. via the university’s e-mail systems. You should check your “lion.lmu.edu” e-mail account regularly, or forward your “lion” e-mail to your preferred e-mail account. This course requires you to access the course website on MYLMU Connect (https://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu/). The course website will contain valuable information regarding our class.

Electronic Devices
Electronic devices can dilute your attention and distract your fellow students. I do not permit the use of electronic devices during class time. Turn off all electronic devices, including computers, iPads, Kindles, Nooks, cell phones, iPods/music players, etc. before coming to class, and keep them out of sight until the end of class.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS
Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their requests to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, Psychiatric) needing academic accommodations should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2nd floor, 310-338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussion will remain confidential. Please visit the DSS website for additional information: http://www.lmu.edu/dss

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
To report an emergency or suspicious activity, contact the LMU Department of Public Safety by phone (x222 or 310-338-2893) or at the nearest emergency call box. In the event of an evacuation, follow the evacuation signage throughout the building to the designated safe refuge area where you will receive further instruction from Public Safety or a Building Captain. For more safety information and preparedness tips, visit: http://www.lmu.edu/resources/emergency.htm
EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Respect for Self and Others
As a LMU Lion you pledge to honor The Lion’s Code, and you join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship to show respect for staff, professors, and other students: “I will own the actions of my mind, hand and heart and build the community that sustains us. The respect and support that nurtures me is born of my respect for others. The dignity of the other, the stranger, grants me dignity” (“The Lion’s Code” in Community Standards Handbook 2013-2014, p. 7).

Respecting The Lion’s Code, I will not tolerate disruptive or threatening behavior. Any behavior that impedes the aims of this course and its code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action and referred to the Department of Judicial Affairs in accordance with university policy. Further information regarding LMU’s expectations for student conduct can be found in The Lion’s Code, and in the Community Standards Handbook (2013-2014):
http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/media/lmustudentaffairs/administration/judicialaffairs/Community%20Standards%20Booklet.pdf

Ground Rules for Classroom Interaction
  o Arrive on time.
  o Be ready with reading materials and completed projects.
  o Take responsibility for the quality of the class discussion.
  o Listen and participate actively and attentively.
  o Approach everyone with an attitude of openness.
  o Respect everyone’s speech: do not conduct personal conversations during class discussion.
  o Do not interrupt someone who is speaking.
  o Do not monopolize discussion.
  o Allow others to learn: do not distract others with unproductive behavior.
  o Build on classroom dialogue: contribute to each other’s understanding by offering knowledge.
  o Challenge each other’s views, but do so respectfully.
  o Critique ideas, not your classmate.
  o Seek win/win situations and shared understanding with others, even if you do not share the same opinions.
  o Ask for clarification if there is something you do not understand.
  o Do not make claims without supporting evidence.
  o Respect others’ trust: treat anything that is shared in class confidentially.
  o Do not leave class early without the approval of the instructor.

UNIVERSITY DATES
F Aug 30 Last day to add or drop a class without a grade of “W”
F Nov 1 Last day to withdraw from classes or apply for Credit/No Credit grading
F Dec 6 Last day of classes
TENTATIVE NATURE OF THE SYLLABUS
If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision. Students are responsible for any changes or modifications distributed or announced in class or posted on LMU’s course management system, MYLMU Connect.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Note: Course readings, projects, exams, and scheduled due dates are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class or by e-mail.

WEEK 1
T Aug 27  Introduction
R Aug 29  *The Tempest*, Act 1. INFORMATION LITERACY MODULE 1 QUIZ DUE (“Starting Your Assignment”). Complete the module on our course website.

WEEK 2
T Sept 3  *The Tempest*, Acts 2 and 3

WEEK 3
T Sept 10 *The Tempest*, Act 5
R Sept 12  PROJECT 1: DRAFT 1 DUE. Writing workshop with Jessica Suver, writing instructor.

WEEK 4
T Sept 17 *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 1
R Sept 19  PROJECT 1: DRAFT 2 DUE. *The Winter’s Tale*, Acts 2 and 3

WEEK 5
T Sept 24 *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 4

WEEK 6
T Oct 1  *Othello*, Acts 1 and 2
R Oct 3  PROJECT 1: FINAL DRAFT DUE. *Othello*, Act 3-Act 4, scene 1

WEEK 7
T Oct 8  *Othello*, Acts 4, scene 2-Act 5
R Oct 10 Film, *Othello*. INFORMATION LITERACY MODULE 4 QUIZ DUE (“Using Information Ethically”). Complete the module on our course website.
In this course, you will strive to develop and hone your skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing. While this course will encourage you on an individual level to evaluate our sources critically, your success in achieving this goal will depend on your own vigorous engagement with our texts, and on your own informed and engaged contributions to our class discussions.

Developing the skills of critical analysis requires personal commitment and persistent practice. You are therefore expected to prepare for class discussions by giving careful consideration to our assigned
readings. Committing your thoughts to writing in your weekly contributions to our discussion board will provide you with the opportunity to work through your ideas and questions about our literature, as well as to develop your own critical understanding.

Inasmuch as all language attempts to present ideas and viewpoints on a specific subject, you may approach the literature in our course as ‘arguments’. We may think of an argument as language that is intended to persuade. Yet not all arguments have the express purpose of winning you over to a particular point of view. Rather, the language that we encounter in a literary work may simply invite us “to enter a space of mutual regard and exploration,” seeking to establish shared understanding, openness, and trust about issues whether or not we reach an agreement (Lunsford 7).

In fact, successful ‘arguments’ typically strive to anticipate and respond to differing perspectives. Such inclusive arguments seek “‘both/and’ or ‘win/win’ solutions (rather than ‘either/or’ or ‘win/lose’ ones) whenever possible” (Lunsford 8). In our course, we will aim at inclusive approaches to class discussion and to our critical responses to our texts.

Composing a critical response to a text requires preliminary groundwork. Begin by reading actively. Ask questions about a text as you read along and after you have completed your reading. Asking questions while you read will enliven your experience of the text, and guide your reading toward specific goals. As you read, seek answers to your questions; if you cannot find an answer, attempt to determine why, and formulate new questions based on your initial encounter with the text. Ultimately, your informed answers to your questions will become the substance of your journal entry.

The following list provides some general suggestions you may ask yourself as you embark on your reading and formulate your critical response, which you will post to our course discussion board:

- What is the argument presented by the text? How is the argument presented? What strategies are used in making that argument? (Strategies may include rhetorical devices, a literary genre, or appeals to reason or emotion.)
- What direct or indirect assumptions are made by the work? Does the text privilege certain points of view? What biases, if any, are present? Similarly, be mindful of your own biases and assumptions you may have about the concerns addressed by a literary work.
- What are the central ideas, themes, concepts, or words introduced by the work? Does the work include specific terms? Do you understand those terms? If so, what meanings do they convey?
- What direct or indirect claims are made by the work? What evidence or examples are used to support those claims?
- Are there any weak points or ambiguities in the work’s argument? Is the argument illuminating or persuasive?
- Who may be the intended audience of the work? How can we infer that?
- In the case of multiple texts, how do the texts relate to each other? Compare the texts: do they make similar or different arguments?
- What does the work tell us about its own society and historical context? What can the work teach us about our own society?
- What is your own relationship to this work? How does this work reflect on your experiences?
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- Do you agree or disagree with the argument presented in the work? Why or why not?

To the extent that you actively cultivate these habits of textual inquiry, and practice the critical thought processes that they require, you will be well prepared to participate in informed classroom discussion and to meet the expectations for written work. Your successful completion of this course requires your own personal commitment to exercising and further developing your skills in critical reading, thinking, and writing.