ENL 212: Introduction to Shakespeare, Master Syllabus
(University Studies Cluster 3 A)

Course Overview

Content
A course examining an iconic English author from a variety of perspectives, ENL 212 places Shakespeare in his own time and examines his continuing influence and relevance since. Reading his work in cultural, historical, and other contexts, each section of the course is concerned with both specific issues pertaining to literary form and meaning and larger issues concerning literature’s agency in the shaping of cultural or personal identity and the transmission of values, ideologies, and actions. Sections may identify particular themes (like “Shakespeare and Love”), genres (such as “Shakespeare’s History Plays”), or techniques (as in “Shakespeare and Adaptation”); they may highlight selected works; or they may otherwise focus the exploration and analysis. Sections may be conducted in the classroom, blended, or fully online.

Course work
Sections may be organized chronologically, thematically, or in other ways, with readings in anthologies or in several separate texts. Materials online may complement the core reading; these may be visual and/or textual and represent different disciplinary approaches that help students analyze textual issues or offer foundational contexts for understanding them.

Course work varies but typically includes analytical essays requiring comparing passages or texts; expositions in other forms (oral presentations, wikis, PPT slideshows, etc.); reading quizzes and/or essay examinations; guided online and/or in-class discussions; performance exercises; adaptations (written and or performed); etc.

All four outcomes of University Studies Cluster 3A: Literature are addressed in all sections of the course.

Example section (highlighting University Studies goals)

Shakespeare and Adaptation

A. Description:
This course studies Shakespeare's plays and their modern adaptations. Readings include works like Hamlet, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Henry IV Part 1, and King Lear and contemporary reinterpretations of these works in novels, plays, and films. Students explore how adaptations creatively alter Shakespeare’s works and examine how these alterations express and reflect the values of the culture that produced them. By engaging with essays on adaptation theory, students will also be able to identify how modern authors and filmmakers privilege Shakespeare, “talk back” to Shakespeare, and/or threaten to supplant Shakespeare. Ultimately, the course directs students to explore how adaptation across the centuries and across cultures has shaped our understanding of Shakespeare's works, of their meanings, and of the author’s current status as an indicator of cultural literacy.

B. Learning Outcomes

Course-specific Learning Outcomes
1. Enhance critical thinking, oral communication, and writing skills through literary analysis
2. Use the appropriate literary terminology to explain how Shakespeare used and experimented with genre and literary forms
3. Enlarge an understanding of Shakespeare's texts by thinking creatively like adaptors, actors, directors, filmmakers, and illustrators
4. Show how a text's meaning is informed by the cultural and historical contexts in which it was produced and received
5. Experience analyzing literary themes comparatively: cross-culturally, formally, and/or historically
6. Gain insight into the foundations and variety of expressions of ideas about the world and human experience

**Cluster 3 A. Literature Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)** – Students will be able to:
1. Articulate how literature both reflects and helps shape culture, society and history.
2. Explain how a text's literary form, style and content express its meanings using appropriate disciplinary terminology.
3. Evaluate the rhetorical and contextual elements of ideas presented by literary texts and respond to them critically and analytically.
4. Explain the ways in which literature expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences.

**C. Sample Texts**

1. **Sample Anthology**

2. **Sample Individual Works**
D. Example Single Assignment—From Artifact to Art (highlighting language related to University Studies SL # 1, Articulate how literature both reflects and helps shape culture, society and history.)

Description of assignment:
You will give a 7 - 8 minute presentation to the class on the social, cultural, and historical relevance of one Shakespeare play. Your goal in this presentation is to contextualize your assigned play by finding two cultural artifacts—one from the early modern period and one from contemporary society—that display the same themes or social concerns. Your job will be to "show" the class your artifacts and explain 1) how Shakespeare’s text is a reflection of the cultural, social, and historical conditions in which it was produced and 2) how your contemporary artifact proves that our society, history, and/or culture is indebted to Shakespeare’s play.

Artifacts:
Because few students have items from the sixteenth century lying around around their dorm rooms, your early modern artifacts will likely be texts or images of objects. For example, you might find images of art works or maps from the period that express the same concerns as Shakespeare’s play. Your textbook and the Folger Shakespeare Library Image Database is a great place to start.

For a contemporary artifact, you might choose a you-tube video, newspaper article, movie clip, or song that shows how Shakespeare’s play is still influencing culture and society today.

E. Example Mutiple-part Assignment—Group Performance (highlighting language related to University Studies SLOs # 2, 3, and 4)

1. Abbreviated Description of Project
Each group of 5-6 students will write and perform a theatrical adaptation of a scene from A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The performance (lasting 4-5 minutes) must communicate the group’s critical reinterpretation of one important theme in Shakespeare’s play and adopt one of the approaches to adaptation discussed in the assigned readings. In addition to the performance, students will prepare a script for the adaptation that includes dialogue, stage directions, and setting descriptions; write a 6-page paper on the theme and its reinterpretation; and present orally to the class for 6-8 minutes on how their performance reflects the values of the group and their understanding of the values of Shakespeare’s play.

The project is worth 300 points, and those points break down as follows: script (75 points); performance (75 points); paper (100 points); oral presentation (75 points).

2. Related University Studies learning outcomes.
The Group Performance project concerns Outcomes # 2, 3, and 4. See “Artifacts” below for indication of how its components address these learning outcomes individually:

2. Explain how a text’s literary form, style and content express its meanings using appropriate disciplinary terminology.
3. Evaluate the rhetorical and contextual elements of ideas presented by literary texts and respond to them critically and analytically.
4. Explain the ways in which literature expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences.
3. **Artifacts generated by the assignment that can be used to measure student learning:**

   - **Performance (75 points)**
     The Performance component of the assignment addresses **Outcome #3** by asking students to analyze the rhetorical and contextual “meaning” of the original play and then to demonstrate, by dramatic enactment, an adaptation. To do so, students must also comprehend adaptation theory. The performance is assessed by the instructor and audience using a scoring rubric that includes criteria concerning analysis and interpretation, as well as presentation skills, and that represents it as an “artifact.”

     **Instructions:** Each group will perform a 4-5 minute adaptation of a scene from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* that communicates the group’s critical reinterpretation of one important theme in Shakespeare’s play and adopts one of the approaches to adaptation discussed in the assigned readings. Every member of the group must participate in the performance, either as an actor and/or stagehand helping with lighting, music, props or set. Actors should try to memorize their lines; however, notecards or poster prompters are acceptable. Students should dress in costume and use stage space creatively on the UMD campus.

   - **Script (75 points)**
     The script component of the assignment addresses **Outcome #2** by requiring students to demonstrate (rather than to explain) their understanding of dramatic form, style, content, and terminology.

     **Instructions:** Groups will prepare a theatrical script for their adaptations. Each script will include a creative title for the adaptation; a scene description that details the setting, including time, location, props, and historical context; *dramatis personae*; dialogue with speech prefixes; and relevant *stage directions* such as entrances, exits, and gestures that are not otherwise mentioned in the text. The script should be double spaced in Times New Roman 12 point font.

   - **Essay (100 points)**
     The essay component of the assignment addresses **Outcome #2**, as the highlighted language in its instructions below indicates.

     **Instructions:** Each group will compose a 6-page paper (double spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font) that
   1) Articulates how the group’s chosen theme is presented in Shakespeare’s play, using the appropriate literary terminology, citing lines from the text, and close reading those lines
   2) Explains how the group reinterpreted the theme in the adaptation using the appropriate literary terminology, citing lines from the adaptation, and closely reading those lines
   3) Describes the theory (or theories) of adaptation that informed the performance using the appropriate theoretical terminology and citing from at least two of the assigned readings on adaption theory

     Essays must provide in-text citations and a Works Cited page in MLA format.
Presentation (75 points)
The presentation component of the assignment focuses on **Outcome #4** as students explain the contexts (social, political, historical, and other) of their adaptations and the values represented by their choices and design.

After their performance, students will perform a group presentation for 6-8 minutes on how their group’s adaptation of a scene from the play and their representation of a theme **reflects their values, priorities, and social and historical context**. Before students embark on this project, they will have completed three reading assignments and individually written a response paper on how adaptations implicitly or explicitly reflect the political, religious, economic, and social conditions of their creators. In the presentation, groups should focus on 1 - 3 main **cultural values or influences** and explain them fully.