

**San José State University**  
**Fall 2012**  
**Humanities/English & Comparative Literature**  
**English 78: Introduction to Shakespeare**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Mark Dowdy
<b>Office Location:</b>	Faculty Offices 109
<b>Telephone:</b>	(408)924- 4447
<b>Email:</b>	mark.dowdy@sjsu.edu
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1:30 – 2:30 a.m.; Thursdays: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.; or by appointment.
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 Noon – 1:15 p.m.
<b>Classroom:</b>	Sweeney Hall 414
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	English Remediation completed or a post baccalaureate.
<b>GE Category:</b>	GE/SJSU Studies Category: GE Area C2

**Course Description:** Why is Shakespeare such a “big deal”? Why do his plays continue to be staged throughout the world, and why do they keep being made into movies? Why do scholars continue to study him? Why can I fulfill a general education requirement just by reading this one author? What, in short, makes him so “great?” This course invites you to ask such questions. Our purpose is not to praise Shakespeare, yet at times we may do so; nor is it to bury him with criticism, although we will indeed scrutinize his plays very carefully. But before we can offer any kind of critical assessment of his plays, we must first come to terms with the challenge of reading plays written over 400 years ago. We will thus pay particular attention to Shakespeare’s language, to his use of literary and dramatic conventions, and to the cultural and historical conditions under which he produced his plays. We will read, study, and discuss six plays – three comedies and three tragedies – as well as other primary and secondary reading materials related to Shakespearean drama. Required work in this course includes two formal essays, three examinations (two midterms and a final), two class presentations, and daily informal reading and writing assignments.

**Course Objective:** Our goal here is to become intimately familiar with a representative sample of Shakespeare’s plays, to become comfortable reading and interpreting texts from a distant historical period, and to consider in-depth the relevance of Shakespeare’s drama to our world.

**Texts by Shakespeare (Available in the Spartan Bookstore)**

- *As You Like It*, ed. Leah S. Marcus (Norton Critical Edition)\*
- *Twelfth Night*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat (Simon & Schuster)
- *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat (Simon & Schuster).
- *Macbeth*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (Oxford)

- *Othello*, ed. Edward Pechter (Norton Critical Edition)\*
- *King Lear*, ed. A.R. Braunmuller (Penguin)

\* You may use other editions of Shakespeare's plays. However, the Norton critical editions of *As You Like It* and *Othello* both include **important primary and secondary texts that will be included on the midterms.**

### **General Education: Student Learning Objectives**

SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how Shakespeare's plays illuminate enduring human concerns.

SLO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

### **Department of English & Comparative Literature: Student Learning Goals**

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. **read** closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, and/or rhetoric;
2. **show familiarity** with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American and World Literature;
3. **write** clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. **develop and carry out research projects**, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. **articulate** the relations among culture, history, and texts.

**Dropping and Adding:** Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/) web page located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/academic\\_programs/calendars/academic\\_calendar/](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/). The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

## Assignments and Grading Policy

**Midterms and Final Examination (SLOs 1-3):** There will be three in-class examinations – two midterms and a final. The two midterms – one on comedy and another on tragedy – will consist of character and passage identification, short answer questions, and a longer (around 500 words) essay response which will require you to bring a blue book to the exam. The final exam will consist of an in-class essay. Prior to the exam, I will distribute a list of questions related to Shakespearean drama. On the day of the final, you will choose one of these questions and write a response to it during class. Before the class begins writing, I will check to make sure everyone has brought a blank blue booklet.

**Formal Essays (SLOs 1-3):** There will be two out-of-class essays due this semester – a Brief Formal Essay (500 words) and a Formal Research Essay (2,000 words). Each must be typewritten, double-spaced, and written in a standard, non-script font (i.e. Times-New Roman). Early in the semester, I will distribute a list of potential topics for both of these essays. Please select one of these topics. If you have another idea for an essay in mind, I am open to inquiries, so please ask me. The Brief Formal Essay will require you to interpret a scene or passage from one of Shakespeare's plays. The Formal Research Essay will require outside library research and will address a broader topic than the Brief Formal Essay.

**Turnitin.com:** In addition to providing me with hard copies of your out-of-class essays, you must submit both your Short Formal Essay and your Formal Research Essay to Turnitin.com. To sign up for the class, visit the site and enter the following information:

**Class ID: 5374685**

**Password: Vote**

**Desire2Learn:** I will make class announcements on Desire2Learn (D2) so please be sure to check your account. If you have not used D2L before, go to [sjsu.desire2learn.com](http://sjsu.desire2learn.com) and enter the following information:

Username: Your first name followed by your last, separated by a period (i.e. mark.dowdy).

Password: Your Tower ID. (Once you log in, you will be prompted to change your password)

**Participation:** You should come to every class session prepared to speak. In order to do so, you must have read the assigned readings listed in the schedule *before* you come to class. Merely attending class is not enough to assure participation credit in this course.

**Student Presentations:** Throughout the semester, we will be performing passages from Shakespeare selected by you and your peers. This is not an acting course, so I won't grade your performance per se. But I will assess the choices you make in your interpretation of the dramatic scene. Students may perform alone or in groups. Each participant must speak at least 14 lines. At the end your presentation, you will be asked to explain your creative and interpretive choices to the class. I think you will discover that performing Shakespeare yields insights into his drama and language that would otherwise

be unavailable to you. Beginning with the first day of class, I will be distributing a sign-up sheet. If you want to present a particular play, I urge you to sign up early.

**Additional Readings:** In addition to reading Shakespeare's plays (and a few of his poems), we will be reading other materials, including historical documents from the Renaissance as well as present-day scholarship and criticism. You can find these readings in the Norton critical editions of *As You Like It* and *Othello*. In addition, I have reserved the *Bedford Companion to Shakespeare* in the Martin Luther King library's reserved book room. As I assign selected essays from this volume, I will notify you through D2L.

**English Department Grading Policies:** In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The "A" essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The "B" essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the "A" essay. The chief difference is that the "B" essay will show some more weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The "C" essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the "B" essay.

The "D" essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment – that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The "F" essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall

follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students' GPA.

### **The Grade:**

● Two Midterm Exams (SLOs 1-3)	40%
● Formal Research Essay (2,000 words; SLOs 1-3)	20%
● Final Exam (SLOs 1-3)	20%
● Participation (SLO 1)	10%
● Short Formal Essay (500 words); SLOs 1-3)	5%
● Student Presentation (SLO 1)	5%

**Late Work:** Unless you approach me in advance, late papers will be penalized 1/2 letter grade for each day late.

**Classroom Protocol:** To help foster a classroom environment in which everyone feels comfortable enough to participate, I will not tolerate blatant displays of disrespect towards your peers or towards me. There are ways to disagree with others respectfully and sincerely. In the unlikely event that anyone should exceed the boundaries of civility, he or she will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class session.

**Headphones/Cell Phones/Texting etc.** Attendance is both a physical AND mental state of being. Use that nifty gadget at your own risk. I won't interrupt class if I see you engaged in a spirited parley with your little electronic friend. I'll just write it down. Each time I see you texting/surfing/gaming/talking etc., I'll lower your participation grade by one letter grade.

### **University Policies**

**SJSU Academic Integrity Policy:** Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.htm>. The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) the act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

**Campus Policy on Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with

me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability. The DRC website is <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu>.

### Tentative Class Schedule\*

**\*If any changes to schedule are made, I will notify you at least one class period PRIOR to the change.**

1		Thursday, 8/23
In Class		Introductions
2	Tuesday, 8/28	Thursday, 8/30
In Class	<i>As You Like It</i> (Act 1)	<i>As You Like It</i> (Act 2)
3	Tuesday, 9/4	Thursday, 9/6
In Class	<i>As You Like It</i> (Act 3)	<i>As You Like It</i> (Acts 4 & 5)
4	Tuesday, 9/11	Thursday, 9/13
In Class	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Act 1)	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Act 2)
5	Tuesday, 9/18	Thursday, 9/20
In Class	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Act 3)	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Acts 4 and 5)
6	Tuesday, 9/25	Thursday, 9/27
In Class	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Act 1)	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Act 2)
7	Tuesday, 10/2	Thursday, 10/4
In Class	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Act 3)	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (Acts 4 & 5) <b>Brief Formal Essay Due</b>
8	Tuesday, 10/9	Thursday, 10/11
In Class	Comedy Exam Review	Comedy Exam
9	Tuesday, 10/16	Thursday, 10/18
In Class	<i>Othello</i> (Act 1)	<i>Othello</i> (Act 2)
10	Tuesday, 10/23	Thursday, 10/25
In Class	<i>Othello</i> (Act 3)	<i>Othello</i> (Acts 4 & 5)
11	Tuesday, 10/30	Thursday, 11/1
In Class	<i>King Lear</i> (Act 1)	<i>King Lear</i> (Act 2)
12	Tuesday, 11/6	Thursday, 11/8
In Class	<i>King Lear</i> (Act 3)	<i>King Lear</i> (Acts 4 & 5)
13	Tuesday, 11/13	Thursday, 11/15
In Class	<i>Macbeth</i> (Act 1)	<i>Macbeth</i> (Act 2) <b>Formal Research Essay (SLOs 1-3) due</b>
14	Tuesday, 11/20	Thursday, 11/22
In Class	No class	Thanksgiving holiday
15	Tuesday, 11/27	Thursday, 11/29

In Class	<i>Macbeth</i> (Act 3)	<i>Macbeth</i> (Acts 4 & 5)
16	Tuesday, 12/4	Thursday, 12/6
In Class	Review for Tragedy Exam	Tragedy Exam

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 18, 9:45 - noon**