

I will use Canvas Announcements to keep you updated throughout our study together. The syllabus schedule provides you a general overview of our work. But the Canvas Homepage will be the site you check regularly to locate and access your weekly learning tasks. Week by week, I will use the Canvas Announcements feature to update you on course materials and lessons available to you: You can expect an email from me every Friday that will link you to the course work for the week. This same Canvas announcements system will allow me to respond to any unexpected disruptions in our study together—cancellations or last-minute revisions to our plans. These same systems help you to stay in touch with your project teams as you begin work on your team project in Module 2 of the course.

You are responsible for regularly checking your campus email to follow weekly and emergency course updates.

What Will We Study in This Course?

In this course, we will collaborate to research modern productions of Shakespeare's scripts. Questions we ask will include: What value does "production" add to the work of a playwright? What happens when we encounter a script? We will together examine four plays in-depth to tease out the interrelationship of performance and interpretation as a script becomes a "play." Through post-reading tasks prompted in Canvas and rehearsed in our Zoom sessions, you will learn to translate words on a page into stage action and dialogue, into scene. You will share your translations in Canvas.

Catalog Information

4 units. Course examines in depth several of Shakespeare's plays, specifically addressing issues of performance. Plays are discussed in the context of their original performance during Shakespeare's time and their life on stage and screen in the ensuing centuries.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Grading: Graded A-F.

Cross-listed with TA 145.

Through our weekly Canvas and Zoom discussions, the class will take a look at modern productions, on both stage and screen, to raise larger issues about the complex relationships between the Shakespearean canon and its ever-changing audiences. Does re-imagining Shakespeare's works help them retain their vitality and cultural relevance? How do modern production elements such as setting, casting, staging, costumes, editing, and individual performances shape and generate meaning for today's audiences?

In production design teams, you will choose a play and lead your fellow students and me to explore it with you. We will consult scholarship and historical texts to place each play in

the context of its original performance (during Shakespeare's time). Through a series of research, writing, and multimodal projects, each team will help us to apply our growing awareness of speech and dramatic performance to understand of the complexities of their chosen play's plot, characterization, and dramatic form. In the latter half the course, the team will propose, design, and document a production of one play for the Bay Area audiences hosted at our SJSU/City of San José Hammer Theater.

Our Hammer Theater Project: Producing Shakespeare for a Divided Bay Area

"Why has America embraced Shakespeare?" James Shapiro asks (xi). His 2020 book, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, points to and probes the mystery of Shakespeare's role in American culture. He begins with early Americans' improbable "adopt[ion of] England's national poet as their own," and he ends with an examination of the "fresh controversies surrounding his work" in the early 21st century's America, divided between left and right (x, 203). Along the way, Shapiro reflects on productions of Shakespeare throughout American history. He demonstrates how Shakespeare's scripts have throughout our history "spoken to what Americans care about" and prompted Americans watch and reflect on "some of their darkest nightmares or most lurid fantasies" (xi).

Shapiro's work will be a critical text for our investigation of Shakespeare texts as performance. When we focus on Shakespeare in production, we confront what it means to produce a text. We do not just read it, do not just discuss what it means or has meant. Rather, we think about how it "plays" to and for and *with* an audience. A text is never complete in

itself—all texts are received and processed by readers. Dramatic scripts are particularly interesting texts because a reader’s reception is mediated through a production. Directors, designers, dramaturgs, actors—an entire production team process the script, design its staging, build its staging infrastructure. Each production is a collaboration that reproduces the text anew. How that collaboration stages Shakespearean text determines the trans-historic, trans-geographic conversation between that text and its audience. Productions use the stage to generate from Shakespeare’s texts a conversation about things that matter to that audience.

In this course, our goal is to propose and develop productions of Shakespeare’s work for today’s American audience. Toward this end, you will work in teams to choose a play to produce, define the context and purpose of the conversation that drives your team’s production of the play, and describe and document the means of its production.

How Does This Course Advance Your Studies?

This is one of the few courses in the SJSU literature program dedicated to a single author and to plays as performed. The advantage of such a focus is that it promises a deep dive into one literary figure and an intensely collaborative artistic medium. Despite its singularity, our study nonetheless exercises the strategies for engaging text that will help you to do your work as an English or a Theater major.

Course Learning Goals:

- Explore several of Shakespeare’s plays as performance, both on stage and screen.
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of the language and principles of visual composition and theatrical design (e.g., set design, costume, lighting, sound, props).
- Observe and evaluate to deliver and produce oral performance in a variety of forms.
- Learn and apply the fundamentals of stage directing, including conceptualization, blocking (movement patterns), tempo, and dramatic arc (rising and falling action).
- Analyze and evaluate contemporary productions of the plays and explore their contemporary social intersections.
- Attend and experiment with basic elements of character analysis and approaches to acting, including physical and vocal techniques that reveal characterizations and relationships.
- Document and evaluate individual performance skills (e.g., diction, enunciation, vocal rate, range, pitch, volume, body language, eye contact, and response to audience).
- Collaborate to explore and to perform production team roles that translate text into “play.”

Relationship to the Department of English and Comparative Literature’s Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

The list below identifies the intersections between the work of this course (in parentheses) and the Department of English CLOs for the major in literature. Upon successful completion of this course, students in the English Major will be able 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. (Canvas Discussion Posts and Annotated Scenes in Project Portfolio).
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British literature (Canvas Discussion Posts and Critical Essay).
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively (Canvas Discussion Posts, Multimodal Production Archive, Critical Essay, and Production Design Documents in Project Portfolio)
4. Develop and carry out research projects (Canvas Discussion Posts, Multimodal Production Archive, Critical Essay, and Production Design Documents in Project Portfolio)
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts (Canvas Discussion Posts, Multimodal Production Archive, Critical Essay, and Production Design Documents in Project Portfolio)

What Will We Read and Study?

There are 23 plays in the Shakespearean canon. We will read and study four of these together this semester as a class: *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Part 1 of Henry IV*, and *The Tempest*. Using these texts, we will prepare for and rehearse together the work that you and your team will engage to complete your production project. Lessons and activities will help you to 1) process a script for action, 2) understand and engage the collaborative roles behind a stage production, 3) research the contexts that inform the scripted action and how to cue context through staging, 4) develop a well-defined and fully conceived production plan.

As we do this work together in class sessions, you will also work in teams to select, study, research, and stage one of the other 19 plays from the Shakespeare cannon. As teams share this work with the class, we all will thus be exposed to 5 to 7 more plays.

Required Textbooks for This Study

In the interest of keeping book prices down, I have tried to locate alternative formats for the books we will use. Other readings and study materials will be provided in Canvas as PDFs: overviews of the job of theater, reviews of plays, historical background, videos, images. I will curate some of these, but you will also curate readings and materials to support our work.

Greenblatt, Stephen. Managing Editor. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 3rd Edition.
You can buy any version you choose. I recommend the digital version.

Shapiro, James. *Shakespeare in a Divided America*. 2020. Penguin. (Paperback not available until March.)

- Kindle edition: \$10.49; ASIN : B07T5Z6VZJ.
- Hardcover: \$24.30 on Amazon; ISBN-13: 978-0525522294.

Other Readings and Resources in MLK Library and on Canvas

In Martin Luther King Library, you will find an e-copy of *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus*. While there is no purchase required, the book is required; you will use this valuable resource to annotate your texts.

Lloyd-Williams, Maggie and Marina Caldarone. *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus*.

- MLK: E-book available.
- Available as Kindle book or in paperback (ISBN-13: 978-0896762527).

The Technology for Our Project

To do your production design work, you will need to be able to collaborate on documents with the class and your production team, access and archive YouTube samples of Shakespeare productions, video-record your readings of scenes, video-record your production archive, and share these electronic files with the class. Canvas provides tools for all this work. You may use other tools so long as you can share the files in Canvas—and so long as you can share with all of us in the class the access to those files.

Who Can Help Us Find Materials in the Library?

Our library liaison is Peggy Cabrera. She is available to help you find resources to do your work in this course. She has set up a library resource page here: <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=230087&p=1527093>

What Work Will We Do as We Complete Our Study?

Ours is a project-based study of Shakespeare texts and their performance. I have designed the work you do in this course to build the learning base needed to read Shakespeare productively. As you develop the personal, social, and cognitive

strategies to engage his texts and learn from them, you will be building a knowledge base you can carry forward into future reading and learning.

Daily Text-Based Discussions in Canvas. Twice a week before coming to class, you will post a response to the Canvas Discussion Prompts I have published for you in Modules. These discussions are grounded in your readings of the texts assigned. Discussion posts are generally due the morning before logging in to the Zoom session. On occasion, there are special due dates to accommodate sharing and responding to other students' work.

Discussion prompts are directly tied to the learning you will achieve and use in this course. Each prompt is part of sequence of learning tasks that develop and rehearse the skills and knowledge you will need to work with your production team. These will include annotated scenes, audio logs of talk-aloud sessions, blogs and production notes, a collaboratively written proposal.

Multimodal Production Archive. Once you and your team have chosen a play to produce, you will start researching modern productions of the play and hunting down production samples on YouTube.* These samples will provide the team an archive of productions that you can use to define and to resource your own production plans and to develop your production goals and tactics. You will present a video archive of these samples that introduces to the class your team's production project.

*You can also access scenes directly from videos, but you will need to negotiate that work and manage it as a team: slicing scenes from videos requires editing processes and software that Canvas does not provide. Please keep track of the production information for these and all samples, as you will need to provide a list of references in your archive.

Critical Essay. You will individually write critical essays for your production team and for other members of the class. The critical essay will identify, document, and discuss a key production value and/or challenge as you see it from your role within the production team: for instance, as Director, as a Designer (Scene and Lighting or Sound and Effects or Costume), as Dramaturg. By the time you are due to write this essay, your team will have assigned these production team roles based on the work your proposed production undertakes. You will share the essays within your teams (to advance your production plans) and among your production colleagues (to better understand your production roles and share challenges, tips and tactics across projects). Dramaturgs will, for instance, read all essays written by dramaturgs, etc.

Production Project Portfolio. Your project will culminate in a Production Project Portfolio that documents the production plan you have researched. The portfolio will include: Director Notes, Dramaturg Notes, Designer Notes, and Annotated Scenes. It will also include a 3-minute video trailer for the production. More information about the Portfolio will emerge as we see where your project ideas lead us.

Your Time Commitment for This Course of Study

In this course, as in all SJSU courses, the unit value assigned to the course provides you the information you need to decide how much work you can expect to do in this course. For each unit you earn, the university and its faculty expect you will spend a minimum of 3 hours per week.

To be successful in this course, you can expect to spend 12 hours a week. This is math: Yes, even in an English class you spend time at a mathematical rate: 3 hours per unit per week in our case is 3 hours x 4 units = 12 hours per week. The 12 hours per week includes class time (2.5 hours/week) as well as your out of class study time (9.5 hours minimum). Outside of our Zoom class time, you will be reading, writing, researching, collaborating with your production team.

Final Evaluation

Our final examination period is scheduled from 12:15 – 2:30 pm on May 19. During that Zoom session, we will survey the final production plans by viewing each of the team's production trailers and discussing with the team the proposed project for the Hammer's return season. Teams will be expected to name the play to be produced, cogently define its production

value for the Hammer’s post-pandemic season (a 2023 return to live performances!), and discuss specific tactics and challenges for a successful performance of this play at the venue.

During this period, you will write a brief self-reflection to describe what you take away from this project into future studies.

How Will We Assess Our Learning?

All learning experiences culminate in some sort of final assessment—an opportunity for a student to gauge how far they have come since beginning the course ([University policy S17-1](#)). Traditionally, this is the Final Examination. A reflection essay that you write during the final viewing of your team’s production trailer will account for what you learned, how you learned it, and how you will use it in future learning.

How Will My Progress Be Assessed During the Course?

The course will be graded according to our learning contract. A **contract learning system** guides you to regularly monitor and describe your own progress as you work toward a culminating project—in this class, that will be the multimodal production assignment you will complete with your team. The contract weighs equally all the work you submit—discussion posts, critical essays, multimodal submissions, and final portfolio documents. The smaller assignments (bi-weekly posts, for instance) are no less “weighty” in your and our learning process. They are in fact critical: they build the ground for the effective design of your chosen play’s production. Your final reflection essay will make explicit the learning that you transacted as you completed the smaller assignments to design a play with your team.

My goal in grading by contract is to emphasize the cumulative effect of a learning experience over individual artifacts of your learning. Your goal in a contracted learning community is to apprentice yourself within the community, to join its members as we all engage the learning experience designed and guided by a faculty mentor. The contract spells out the terms of your work with the community, its norms and practices, expectations and standards. This agreement allows you to advance your own educational goals and measure your own learning outcome, but also to contribute your learning to advance the learning of others.

The contract is not a unilateral document. In our first class meetings, we will work together to establish the norms, practices, and standards of the group. Our bottom line will be defined by our common purpose: What advances our study of Shakespeare’s scripts and their performance? That is work we will value and put to immediate use. What disrupts our collective progress as researchers in the field of Shakespeare’s dramatic production; that we will not immediately value, though we will collectively work to raise the value of every member’s contribution—and put it to use. All the work you do will be measured against norms and standards that advance our common research and production goals. You will succeed in this system if, every time you begin, execute, and complete a task, you allow yourself to be guided by the purpose we share as fellow researchers: *How is the work I am about to do, am doing, have done increasing my own and my fellow researchers’ understanding of how we immerse ourselves in and draw on traditions of the stage when we read, design, and produce Shakespeare’s text?*

What Are the Terms of the Learning Contract?

By signing up for this 16-week 4-unit course, you agree to perform at least 12 hours of study toward our collective research as writing scholars. The products of your labor—the discussion posts, your team’s multimodal production archive, the critical essay, the production design portfolio, and the reflection essay—will all be submitted in Canvas as discussion posts. That means that every one’s post is available to everyone else at all times. We are all learning from each other—on one big collaborative learning adventure. Each submission will each be awarded points toward the final course grade based on its usefulness and relevance to our shared research.

Each activity in the modules is worth 2 points. You will earn one point for each of the following:

1 point for Completeness

- You complete and submit on time the tasks outlined in the daily discussions.

- You complete all the replies prompted for the discussion in our Zoom follow ups.

1 point for Relevance to Our Collaborative Study

- You explicitly apply what we are reading and discussing together in Canvas and on Zoom to each task you do and submit.
- You refer to and document the reading and discussions you are applying in each submission.
- You submit work that advances our collaborative study—that is, work that curates and documents resources, contributes observations, curiosities and questions, articulates confusions or urges insights useful to our collective study of *how we immerse ourselves in and draw on traditions of the stage when we read, design, and produce Shakespeare’s text.*

If you miss points by not completing one assignment, you can earn back one extra point later. Here’s how:

If you miss an assignment, you do not earn the points for that work. However, you can and should still engage that work to make progress as a learner. If in a subsequent learning activity, you dedicate extra time to go back to the missed lesson and you carry forward into the current activity its materials and your fellow learners’ insights or questions, you will make an exceptional contribution. For that exceptional contribution, you will earn an extra point.

As I read and score your submission, I will recognize the exceptional when you:

1. Include explicit and documented references to the readings and discussions you missed but are now carrying forward.
2. Use the previously missed work in the current assignment to help us find a new connection that extends and advances our work together.

How Will Each Contribution to Our Shared Learning Be Evaluated?

I will use the following rubric to score each assignment completed in Canvas.

Does the work submitted help us to achieve our research goals?		
Criteria	Ratings	Points Possible
Completeness	Completes & submits the tasks outlined on time.	1 point
	Completes all replies prompted during the Zoom follow up.	
Relevance	Explicitly applies to each task what we’ve read and discussed together in Canvas and on Zoom.	1 point
	Helps us refer back to the reading and discussions by paraphrasing or quoting, naming the author & source, & providing page or date references.	
	Contributes observations, curiosities and questions, confusions or insights useful to our collective study.	
Extra Point to Make Up Missed Learning Activity	Announces the intent to make up work missed and names in the current post the specific topic and task now addressed.	0 – 1 point
	Helps us to draw connections between previous and current material to contribute exceptional observations, curiosities, questions, confusions, and/or insights to our collective study.	
Total Points		1-2 points, 3 if make up work is included

There is no extra credit built into our syllabus. There is ample opportunity for everyone to learn defined in the work I have laid out for us, and I’ve built in a way to give some credit to work made up because of unforeseen interruptions in your study. I can’t imagine any of us having the bandwidth for extra credit!

How Will Professor Baer Calculate Course Grades?

The grade you earn in the course is based in the points you earn in each learning activity: The Total Possible Points is equal to <the total number of discussion tasks recorded in Canvas x 2 points per task>.

Your final grade in the course will be recorded as a letter grade, ranging from A to F. I will use plus (+) and minus (–) grades to refine the evaluation within the letter-grade categories.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Possible Points</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>Over 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>95 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 94%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>88 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>85-87%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 84%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

What Is the Working Protocol in This Classroom?

In our first few meetings, we will negotiate standards for participation, attendance, arrival and departure times, behavior, safety, cell phone use, instructor and peer feedback, and time management.

Where Can You Find More Information about University Policies?

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), you can find relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) by clicking on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>).

Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

ENGL 145 / Shakespeare and Performance, Spring 2021

An Initial Overview of Our Course Schedule

The following is my plan for our project-based learning this semester. The class sessions will be conducted via Zoom. The link for class sessions will get you to the final exam as well, though I will change the time for the meeting's start time on that day. The schedule is subject to change as our work evolves. I will publish weekly updates and agendas on the Canvas Home Page. Any last-minute changes to our schedule—to accommodate unforeseen disruptions due to climate change, pandemic, general or specific chaos—will be communicated via Canvas Announcements.

Course Schedule

SiDA = *Shakespeare in a Divided America*; MSND = *Midsummer Night's Dream*; H4 = *Part I of the History of Henry IV*. All plays are in *The Norton Shakespeare*. Other reading will be available in Canvas, and you will find tasks and texts there. I will publish specific discussion prompts for the reading in Canvas. You will have access to the new week's prompts every Friday. But if you want to get busy on the next week's work right after our Wednesday Zoom session, read the plays as outlined in this schedule. You've got the books—and that is always TASK 1!

Module and Lesson	Date	Topic	Readings and Activities <i>Other reading materials and tasks will be posted in Canvas as needed.</i>	Production Project Milestone
MODULE 1		ACTORS AND ACTIONS		
Lesson 1, Joining a Production Project	1-27	How do we study a play?	Read syllabus. Post questions to Canvas.	
	2-01	How has Shakespeare played in America?	Read Introduction (ix-xxx) and Conclusion (201-221), SiDA. Post notetaker to the Canvas Discussion	Read the assignment sheet.
	2-03	How do words on a page become action?	Read Act 1 MSND. Post your think aloud.	Choose a topic of interest in SiDA.
Lesson 2, Working a Script	2-08	How do we read for action?	Read Act 1 Hamlet. Post your think aloud.	Identify actions in a script.
	2-10	How do lines embody motives for action?	Read Act 1 H4. Post annotated script.	Identify objectives.
Lesson 3, Analyzing a Speech	2-15	How do lines structure actions into performance?	Read Act 1 The Tempest. Post annotated script.	Identify objectives.
	2-17	How do actions reveal character?	Read Act 2 MSND. Post your think aloud.	Identify objectives.
Lesson 4 Embodying a Character	2-22	How does dialogue reveal plot?	Read Act 2 Hamlet. Post your think aloud.	Identify beats.
	2-24	How do actions structure audience response?	Read Act 2 H4. Post annotated script.	Identify beats.
Lesson 5 Structuring Spectacle	3-01	How do actions invoke audience expectations?	Read Act 2 The Tempest. Post annotated script.	So-Far Production Blog
	3-03	How do audience expectations constrain performance?	Read your chosen chapters in SiDA and post your notetaker.	Analysis of a Scene.
Lesson 6 Thinking toward Productions	3-08	What roles do production teams play to stage a script?	Share and respond to SiDA notetakers.	
	3-10	How do production roles collaborate to realize a script.	Read Act 3 and 4 MSND. Post your notetaker.	Establish your team.

Module and Lesson	Date	Topic	Readings and Activities <i>Other reading materials and tasks will be posted in Canvas as needed.</i>	Production Project Milestone
MODULE 2		COLLABORATIONS AND CONTEXTS		
Lesson 7 Production Roles	3-15	What elements of production are cued in a script?	Read Act 3 and 4 Hamlet. Post your notetaker.	Choose your play.
	3-17	What extra-textual elements do production teams stage?	Read Act 3 and 4 H4. Post notetaker.	Name production inquiry.
Lesson 8 Beyond Words	3-22	What elements of production are cued in a script?	Read Act 3 and 4 The Tempest. Post notetaker.	So-Far Production Blog
	3-24	How are intersections between text and contexts cued?	Read Act 5 MSND. Post annotated script.	
Lesson 9 Dramatic Intersection	4-05	What production elements cue critical stage-audience dialogue?	Read Act 5 Hamlet. Post your annotated script.	
	4-07	How do productions cue context for the audience?	Read Act 5 H4. Post annotated script.	
MODULE 3		REFERENCE. RESONANCE, & MEANING		
Lesson 10 Stage Reference	4-12	How can we name vital contemporary intersections with a Shakespeare text?	Read Act 5 The Tempest. Post annotated script.	
	4-14	How can we name vital contemporary intersections with a Shakespeare text? Lines.	Collaborate to write a production proposal	Production Team's Video Archive
Lesson 11 Staging Resonance	4-19	How can we name vital contemporary intersections with a Shakespeare text? Dialogue.	Read reviews of your play in production. Post golden lines for the team's project.	
	4-21	How can we name vital contemporary intersections with a Shakespeare text? Actions.	Read reviews of your play in production. Post golden lines for the team's project.	
Lesson 12 Projecting Meaning	4-26	How can we name vital contemporary intersections with a Shakespeare text? Tactics.	Read reviews of your play in production. Post your critical essay.	Critical Essay
	4-28	Production Workshop 1	Collaborate with team. Post your production plan.	Production Plan
Lesson 13 Producing a Play	5-03	Production Workshop 2	Collaborate with team. Post your annotated dialogue.	One dialogue annotated for production.
	5-05	Production Workshop 3	Collaborate with team. Post your annotated scene.	One scene annotated for production.

Module and Lesson	Date	Topic	Readings and Activities <i>Other reading materials and tasks will be posted in Canvas as needed.</i>	Production Project Milestone
Lesson 14 Visualizing and Documenting a Production	5-10	Trailers Workshop	Collaborate with team. Post your annotated act.	One act annotated for production.
	5-12	Team Meetings and Peer Reviews	Write your production notes. Peer review others who play your role.	Production notes.
	5-17	Team Meetings and Peer Reviews	Write your production notes. Peer review with your team.	Production notes.
Final Exam	5-19	12:15 – 2:30 p.m.	View Video Trailers Write Individual Reflection on Learning	Production Design Portfolio