

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 225, Seminar in Shakespeare: Critical Race Studies
Spring 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor(s):	Dr. José Juan Villagrana
Email:	jose.villagrana@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	By appointment via Zoom and/or in person
Office:	FOB 108
Class Days/Time:	Wednesday 4:00pm – 6:45pm (Online)

Course Description

This course examines the dramatic works of Shakespeare, as well as those by contemporaries such as Marlowe, Kyd, and Lyly. Students will become familiar with the theoretical frameworks of historicism and cultural studies; practice close reading works with regard to early modern literary conventions; and integrate these analytical approaches in their original research essay.

Course Format

This course takes place entirely online. We will meet weekly via Zoom, and we will conduct the course as a seminar.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course will engage four of the five learning outcomes for the MA program:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.

SLO 2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.

SLO 3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.

SLO 4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) evaluate their discipline and d) write under time constraints.

Required Texts/Readings

Students are not required to purchase any texts for this course. All readings will be made available in digital format through Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography, 10% [SLO 2-4]

Research Paper (15-20 pages), 25% [SLO 1-4]

Peer Review, Revision, and Resubmission of Research Paper, 25% [SLO 1-4]

Research Project/Early English Books Presentation, 10% [SLO 2]

Participation: 15% [SLO 1-4]

Online reading responses (posted to Canvas by 2pm on Wednesdays): 15% [SLO 1-4]

Paper Regulations: Write your papers double-spaced, in 12pt. Times New Roman font, with one-inch page margins all around, and no additional spacing between paragraphs. Include page numbers in the top right corner. Sources must be cited according to MLA citation style. Use the OWL site produced by Purdue (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>) as your citation and style manual. Upload papers to Canvas as MS Word files. Late papers are subject to grade reduction.

Participation: Every student will come to class prepared for a critical discussion. Every student will read all of the assigned readings, come to every class meeting, engage with the texts and participate in the discussion, offer interpretations, ask and answer questions, and be respectful to others.

Weekly Discussion Questions/Analyses: Each week, you will post questions about the readings—both the literary text and the critical text—suggest possible passages for close readings, and/or suggest possible readings of specific passages.

Grading Information

Please see Appendix A.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Please see Appendix B. Incidents of plagiarism and cheating will be reported to SJSU's Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development and they will result in a grade of 0/F in the course.

Classroom Protocol

Please arrive to our online seminar on time, and complete the assigned readings for that day before class begins.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Please note that there will be additional, short readings (1-2 pages, maximum) that we will read in class together that are not listed below

Date (Class meets on Wednesdays)	Readings and Assignments
26 January	Course Introduction
Unit 1: Embodiment, Behavior, and Bloodline	
2 February	Read: Shakespeare, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , acts 1 – 3; Feerick, “Introduction,” in <i>Strangers in Blood</i>
9 February	Read: Shakespeare, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , acts 4 and 5.
16 February	Read: Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , acts 1 – 3; Adelman, Chapter 3, “Her Father’s Blood,” in <i>Blood Relations</i> .
23 February	Read: Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , 4 and 5; Hall, “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?”
Unit 2: Orientalisms	
2 March	Read: Marlowe, <i>Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1</i> , acts 1 – 3.
9 March	Read: Marlowe, <i>Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1</i> , acts 4 and 5; Heng, Chapter 3, “War/Empire,” in <i>The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages</i>
16 March	Read: Marlowe, <i>Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2</i> , acts 1 – 3. Due: Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography
23 March	Read: Marlowe, <i>Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2</i> , acts 4 and 5
30 March	NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS
6 April	Read: Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i> , acts 1 – 3; Floyd-Wilson, “Moors, Race, and the Study of English Renaissance Literature: A Brief Retrospective”
13 April	Read: Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i> , acts 4 and 5.
Unit 3: Colonialism	
20 April	Read: Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> , acts 1 – 3; Feerick, Chapter 4, “Tragicomic Island Plays,” in <i>Strangers in Blood</i>
27 April	Read: Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> , acts 4 and 5 Due: Research paper
4 May	In class office hours Due: Peer review
11 May	Due: Research presentation

Date (Class meets on Wednesdays)	Readings and Assignments
19 May	Due: Final, revised research paper

Appendix A: Grading Policy

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi:

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. 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.

This scale is based on the following criteria:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight that teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

Your class participation will be assessed as follows:

A = Regular, pertinent questions and comments; fully engaged

B = Occasional, pertinent questions and responses; good listening

C = Infrequent, tangential questions or comments; attentiveness questionable

D = Rare interaction; disengaged from discussion; not prepared for class

F = Regularly absent, physically or mentally

Appendix B: Academic Integrity

“San José State University defines cheating as the act of obtaining credit, attempting to obtain credit, or assisting others to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.”

“San José State University 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.”

For full definition, see <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>