E 321: Shakespeare - Selected Plays

In this course, students are introduced to a selection of Shakespeare’s sonnets and plays. The goal is to assist students in heightening their perception of Shakespeare as a poet and dramatist; his use of language; recurring patterns and themes of Shakespeare’s works centering around family, love, sexual, social, and political relationships; literary genres and kinds (sonnets, drama, comedy, tragedy, domestic tragedy, romantic tragedy, romance the history play, and pastoralism); and various critical approaches to literary works.

Prerequisites

E 321 is an upper-division English course. Students should have completed RHE 306, E 316K, and at least three additional hours of lower-division rhetoric or English coursework prior to enrolling.

Course Organization

This course is divided into three learning modules containing a total of ten lessons. All, except the first one which studies Shakespeare’s sonnets, concentrate on one play. The chronology of the lessons reflects the order of their creation, as generally accepted by Shakespearean scholars. Each lesson contains instructor commentary, links to supplementary resources, self-assessment exercises, and an assignment to be completed and submitted for grading. All lessons within a learning module must be completed before moving onto the next module. An instructor is available throughout the course via a message center to answer questions and provide guidance.

Module 1

- Lesson One presents a selection of Shakespeare’s sonnets, demonstrating how his language works and how it is different from our modern language.
- Lesson Two is devoted to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In addition to the explication of the term romantic as understood by the Elizabethans, the lesson is devoted to the study of the structure of his plays.
- Lesson Three concerns *Richard II* and views it mainly from the angle of Shakespeare’s way of “building” dramatic characters.

Module 2

- Lesson Four deals with *1 Henry IV*, focusing on dramatic manipulation of the reader/audience response to characters and language.
- Lesson Five views *Henry V* as Shakespeare’s attempt to mold epic into a dramatic form, again a question of literary kind or genre.
- Lesson Six on *Twelfth Night* allows students to appreciate Shakespeare’s mature romantic comedies.
Module 3

- Lesson Seven explores *Othello* as a domestic tragedy.
- Lesson Eight studies *King Lear* as Shakespeare’s genus tragedy, examining how all the elements of the dramatic world of the play evoke an aesthetic response.
- Lesson Nine on *Antony and Cleopatra* provides an example of his Roman tragedies. The lesson is devoted mainly to the dramatist’s presentation of the setting as a means of evoking tonal effect.
- Lesson Ten on *The Winter’s Tale* introduces students to Shakespeare’s romances, stressing the play’s pastoral variation on the romance genre.

**Required Materials**

The readings for this course come from the following texts:


*Shakespeare: Selected Plays - Collection of Selected Readings*. This is a digital coursepack that may be purchased through XanEdu, Inc., at [www.xan.edu.com](http://www.xan.edu.com).

**Grading**

This course consists of five (5) computer-graded assignments (multiple choice questions), five (5) instructor-graded assignments (essay questions), and a final exam. The exam must be taken in a proctored location, with arrangements to be made by the student.

- Computer-Graded Assignments: 25%
- Instructor-Graded Assignments: 25%
- Final Exam: 50%

In addition to earning the minimum number of points on assignments to receive a passing grade, students must earn a score of at least 60% on the final exam in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

This course is independent study and is self-paced. Students have five (5) months upon registration in which to complete all coursework, plus an additional thirty days in which to take the final exam.

**University Extension**

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