

English 5711: Shakespeare (Epic, War and History)

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Course Description: In his own lifetime, some of Shakespeare's most popular plays were his histories of the English royal line. These plays, particularly *Henry V*, resemble the classical epics of Homer and Virgil and their Renaissance imitations. Like epic poems, Shakespeare's Henry plays recount the wartime exploits of a group or nation's earlier people; people bloated to heroic, even mythic proportions by the working of legend and the



intervening of years. Like epic as Virgil practiced the genre, the Henry plays tell the origin story of the current polity and its leaders. And like epic as the Renaissance understood it, the Henry plays are an attempt to create a near-comprehensive compendium of historical content and generic style.

But by staging his epic story of King Henry V, Shakespeare faced challenges peculiar to the dramatic medium and the theatrical situation. How can you present massive battles with a handful of props and a limited company of actors? How do you bring a celebrated hero of history to the stage without disappointing the audience's expectations? And how can you comprehend so much time and space within only a few hours inside the wooden "O" of an amphitheater? By



confronting these practical questions of dramaturgy, Shakespeare inflects the Renaissance epic tradition with his own ever recurring obsessions as a playwright about how performance works and what the audience gets out of it.

Before diving into Shakespeare's "Henriad," we'll read *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare's comic sendup of Homer's *Iliad*, the granddaddy of all epics. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare exposes all the ways that theater and stagecraft can make the stately epic deliberately ridiculous. In this light, the challenge of creating a sincere theatrical epic like the Henriad becomes even more apparent.

Required Texts: (all by William Shakespeare)

– *Troilus and Cressida* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2017.
ISBN-13: 978-0143131755

– *Richard II* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2017.
ISBN-13: 978-0143130215

– *Henry IV, Part 1* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2017.
ISBN-13: 978-0143130208

– *Henry IV, Part 2* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2017.
ISBN-13: 978-0143131762

– *Henry V* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2017.
ISBN-13: 978-0143130246

Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance and never published them, himself, as books to be read. Relatively cheap print copies (called quartos) of individual plays did circulate during his lifetime, some more reliable than others, but the (arguably) more authoritative folio collection of most of his plays was not published until after his death. Consequently, printed editions of the plays vary, to this day. Not just pagination and lineation but content are editorial choices, when dealing with Shakespeare plays. All of which is to say, if you do not purchase the same editions of the plays that I have ordered, you will have significant difficulty keeping up with this course's online lectures, in which I'll refer to content that may not be in other editions, using page and line numbers that won't match them. It is your responsibility to make any extra effort necessary to keep up and follow along with the readings and lectures, should you choose to use other editions of the plays.

If you are interested in purchasing and/or using a book of Shakespeare's complete works, instead of the individual plays I've ordered, you should be aware that the *Pelican Shakespeare* is a good scholarly resource that includes the same versions of the plays as the individual editions that I've ordered.

Grading and Assignments:

100-93% – A	89-88% – B+	79-78% – C+	69-68% – D+	59-0% – E
92-90% – A-	87-83% – B	77-73% – C	67-63% – D	
	82-80% – B-	72-70% – C-	62-60% – D-	

Grading and Assignments: (continued)

Paper #1 (epithet exercise, 1 page)	– 10% of total course grade
Paper #2 (casting, 2-3 pages)	– 20%
Paper #3 (voice/idiom, 3-4 pages)	– 40%
participation (lecture worksheets)	– 30%

The papers will prompt you to consider how characters are created in a theatrical setting and sustained in an epic narrative that spans multiple plays. In the first paper, you will create (in?) appropriate Homeric epithets for some of the characters from *Troilus and Cressida* and justify your choices in terms of Shakespeare's dramatic text. In the second, you will discuss casting choices, in relation to a particular scene from *Richard II* or *Henry IV, Part 1*. In the third, you will compare two speeches from the same character in two different plays from the Henriad. We will discuss the papers in more detail in class as their deadlines approach.

Each week of the semester, there will be two lecture worksheets, both due at the end of the week (for more specific deadline information, see the course schedule below). These will not be quizzes on the reading or lecture material, but rather a component of the lectures themselves. The lectures will be written documents (pdf format) that I post to Canvas, and the documents will include discussion/response-style worksheet questions for you to answer, as well as exercises to complete. For instance, I may ask you to look over a speech in one of the plays we are reading and identify key words. Or I may ask you to "workshop" drafts of outlines or thesis statements for the upcoming papers. Basically, this is my way of prompting you to actively engage with the lecture material, the way you might with classroom discussions and activities. Because the lecture worksheet questions will not typically be about testing for correct answers, I'll grade the worksheets on a completion basis. If you do them, you get the points; though I reserve the option to give no credit or partial credit for wildly inapplicable or unengaged responses.

Late Work:

I will give short deadline extensions on the papers if you talk to me about this possibility in advance of the assigned due dates. If you do not arrange an extension with me in advance, I will accept late papers only for three-fourths credit. I will not allow you to make up the lecture worksheets, as their purpose is to insure and track your regular engagement with the course.

Now, before you proceed to the course schedule, this may be a good place to mention the pacing challenges of the reading and requirements for this course. This is not a particularly reading-intensive course for upper division English studies, but the reading assignments are from texts written centuries ago, so the language, style and assumptions may be unfamiliar and challenging to you, especially if you are using this

course to satisfy the English major's requirement for pre-1800s literature and don't have experience with other courses that cover early English lit. I've tailored the reading schedule so that with commitment to the course, you can succeed. And if you find yourself struggling, I will be a constantly available resource to help, though unfortunately, due to the unusual circumstances of this semester, I will have to offer that help online, rather than in person and in class meetings. This course shouldn't intimidate you, but given this year's unique scheduling pressures, you should be ready for something of a challenge. And for that reason, you're going to need to keep up weekly with the reading (that's why I've structured the lecture worksheet deadlines in the way that I have). If you already know that you can't spend some time on this course every week, this isn't the course for you.

Course Schedule:

On Friday, 19 June, I will introduce the course with a brief online lecture—it will include a few worksheet questions, for practice and for extra credit. Then, on Monday, 22 June, we'll get rolling with the regular routine of the course schedule.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, I will post lectures (including lecture worksheet questions) on Canvas that correspond to the reading assignments listed below for those days. I recommend you complete the reading assignments on or before their assigned days, then proceed to read the corresponding lectures and do the worksheets.

Of course, since this is an online course, you can budget your reading time throughout the week any way you see fit. However, to insure you keep up with the reading on a weekly basis, you will need to complete and submit the lecture worksheets before midnight on Fridays—note that because I'm giving you time throughout the week to work on the lecture worksheets, thinking of Friday as more of a formal last deadline, I have made worksheets due on the Independence Day and Pioneer Day holidays, on 3 and 24 July. But if you end up submitting those worksheets 2-3 days late, I'll "unofficially" look the other way on the issue of their lateness.

Now without further ado, here's the schedule . . .

F (6/19) Introduction: epic time and theatrical space

Week 2: *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare's Mock-Epic

M (6/22) *Troilus and Cressida* (Acts I, II, III)

W (6/24) *Troilus and Cressida* (Acts IV, V)

F (6/26) lecture worksheets due, Paper #1 due

Weeks 3-7: The Henriad, Shakespeare's Epic

M (6/29)	<i>Richard II</i> (Acts I, II, III)
W (7/1)	<i>Richard II</i> (Acts IV, V)
F (7/3)	<u>lecture worksheets due</u>
M (7/6)	<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i> (Acts I, II, III)
W (7/8)	<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i> (Acts IV, V)
F (7/10)	<u>lecture worksheets due, Paper #2 due</u>
M (7/13)	<i>Henry IV, Part 2</i> (Acts I, II, III)
W (7/15)	<i>Henry IV, Part 2</i> (Acts IV, V)
F (7/17)	<u>lecture worksheets due</u>
M (7/20)	<i>Henry V</i> (Act I)
W (7/22)	<i>Henry V</i> (Acts II, III)
F (7/24)	<u>lecture worksheets due</u>
M (7/27)	<i>Henry V</i> (Act IV)
W (7/29)	<i>Henry V</i> (Act V)
F (7/31)	<u>lecture worksheets due, Paper #3 due</u>

Course Policies:

Plagiarism:

The University of Utah Student Code classifies plagiarism as "academic misconduct." Plagiarism is defined in Part I.B.2.c of the Code as "the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any other individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression." Part V.B of the Code stipulates that students guilty of plagiarism "may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing."

(www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html)

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, talk to me. Simply put, don't cheat. It's not worth it.

ADA Notice:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.

Course Policies: (continued)

Campus Safety Statement:

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, SSB 328, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).