In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, a troupe of bumbling actors offer to perform a play for Duke Theseus: “A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus / And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.” Theseus, astonished, asks:

*Merry and tragical? tedious and brief?  
That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.  
How shall we find the concord of this discord?*

Comedy (“mirth”) and tragedy seem to be a binary pair: opposites defined by their opposition. Yet throughout his career, Shakespeare makes the two modes merge, overlap, speak to each other, and blow up into blizzards of “hot ice and wondrous strange snow.” We shall explore the two modes (and much else) in a series of wondrous strange plays.

**Texts:**

- *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*
- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *Henry IV, Part One*
- *Troilus and Cressida*
- *King Lear*
- *Much Ado about Nothing*
- *A Winter’s Tale*

We will read these plays in this order. I strongly recommend the excellent Signet Classic paperbacks, and I’ve ordered them at the University Bookstore. You could also use any relatively up-to-date, well-annotated edition.
Requirements:  
— constant attendance, reading on schedule, participation in discussion  
— short quizzes on the reading—at least one per play  
— four papers, from 2 to 5 pages

Some course policies:

1. Regular attendance and active participation in the discussion are essential. If you must miss class, or arrive late or leave early, it’s a courtesy to let me know ahead of time, but there are no “excused absences”: if you’re not there, you’re missing part of the course, no matter the cause. I do understand that emergencies sometimes detain students elsewhere. If you miss class excessively, though, it will hurt your chances of doing well in the course, both because it will hurt your performance on the papers and tests, and because attendance is itself part of the course. If you’re there every time, it will count in your favor.

2. Attendance, part two. Showing up is just the beginning. You also need to do the reading and think about it before coming to class. Bring questions and comments! This is very much a discussion class: the more energy, imagination, and intelligence you can contribute, the better it will be. And do please come on time and stay till the end. Traffic through the door disrupts discussions.

3. No screens in the classroom. Computers, tablets, and phones may not be used in class except with special permission of the instructor. This means you will need to bring books and pdf printouts to class; it’s part of attendance.

4. Come see me. I will announce regular office hours, and I can arrange a conference at many other times of the week as well. Let me quote my colleague Richard Preiss on this subject: “The correlation between getting help from your professor and improving your grade is 100%. Most of college (and a large measure of the content of this course) is about learning how to be a college student, and taking advantage of every educational opportunity available to you; developing a one-on-one relationship with me before then will dramatically change your relationship with the course, and let me get to know you better too.”

The fine print

Prohibition on Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

“Plagiarism” means 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 for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one’s own without attribution, any individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression (Student Code, p. 3 at http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html@SECTIONV

Plagiarism, using others’ work without proper citation, is a serious offense. Plagiarism cases will be reported to the relevant authorities and may result in severe consequences; including, but not limited to, taking a grade reduction, receiving a failing grade for the course, suspension or dismissal from the program. You need to refer to any source even if it is an internet source.

In accordance with University policy (as articulated in the Student Code), academic misconduct—including creating, fabrication of information and plagiarism—is not acceptable. A student found engaging in this behavior may receive a failing grade. If at any time you are unsure whether your actions constitute academic misconduct, please see me in
order to clarify the matter. See the following link for more information: [http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html](http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html).

**Sexual Assault and Harassment**

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, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS).

**Wellness Statement**

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness - [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu); 801-581-7776.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement**

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 Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Veterans Center**

If you are a student veteran, you should know that the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center on campus. They are located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5 pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: [http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/](http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/). Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

**LGBT Resource Center**

If you are a member of the LGBTQ community, I want you to know that my classroom is a safe zone. Additionally, please know that the U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Oplin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: [http://lgbt.utah.edu/](http://lgbt.utah.edu/). Please also let me know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

**Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language**

If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language development and writing. These resources include: the Department of Linguistics ESL Program ([http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/](http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/)); the Writing Center ([http://writingcenter.utah.edu/](http://writingcenter.utah.edu/)); the Writing Program ([http://writing-program.utah.edu/](http://writing-program.utah.edu/)); the English Language Institute ([http://continue.utah.edu/eli/](http://continue.utah.edu/eli/)). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.