GLOBAL SHAKESPEARE

Professor Katherine Schaap Williams
(Pathways of World Literature)
COREP-AD27
Fall 2013: 4.0 credit hours
Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00-5:15pm
Office: TBD / Email: TBD
Office hours: Tuesday, 1-2:30pm / Wednesday, 1-2:30pm

Description:
William Shakespeare’s plays are one of the defining legacies of early modern English literature. While the plays bear witness to distinct political, economic, and historical transitions of Shakespeare’s moment, generations of writers, actors, critics, and audience members have found these texts to be highly adaptable to other places and times. In this class, we will read key plays by Shakespeare—Hamlet, Richard III, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Tempest, Othello, and The Merchant of Venice—in relation to their sources and their adaptations, to explore how they have become global texts, produced and re-fashioned around the world. The course begins with a unit on Hamlet, perhaps the most popular of Shakespeare’s plays, and we will ask the question: how (and why) has this text seemed both distinctively early modern and English, and uniquely adaptable? The next two units pair Shakespeare’s comedies and tragedies in order to consider how ideas about ethical action and forms of social community are transformed by adaptation. The final unit takes Venice—for Shakespeare, the emblematic “global” city—as a test case to examine how dramatic fictions illuminate and re-conceive representations of the world outside the playhouse.
Pre-requisites: None.

Learning Outcomes:
Students who successfully complete the course will be able to critically interpret literary texts; identify characteristics of dramatic genre; describe and analyze a play in production; and produce and refine a sustained written argument about a literary text. These outcomes will be assessed through class discussion, focused writing exercises, a formal examination, a research presentation, and a term paper.

Teaching and Learning Methodologies:
This course will function as a seminar, in which all students participate in lively discussion. We will attend closely to the formal features and historical contexts of the literature, but we will do so remembering that the objects of study are (mostly) dramatic texts, and we will incorporate dramaturgical strategies in order to understand these texts in and through performance. In addition to the assigned readings (primary
texts and supplementary materials on the online site), students will view films outside of class and pursue independent research on the adaptation of Shakespeare’s plays through online archives and databases; they will contribute the new expertise they have acquired through presentations at the close of the term.

**Required texts:**
William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (Bedford / St. Martin’s, 2002)
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Bedford / St. Martin’s, 2008)

**Recommended** (also available): Aimé Césaire, *Une Tempête* (Points French, 1969)

**Additional Readings** (available through the NYUClasses Website):
Laura Bohannon, “Shakespeare in the Bush”
Bertolt Brecht, *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*
Giraldi Cinthio, *Gli Hecatommitthi* (excerpt)
Margaret Litvin, *Hamlet’s Arab Journey* (excerpt)
Welcome Msomi, *uMabatha*
Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (excerpt)

**Films:**
Akira Kurosawa, *Throne of Blood* (1957)
Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Che Cosa Sono Le Nuvole [What Are Clouds Like?]* (1968)

**Assessment:** [Percentage of final grade given in brackets]
All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Late submissions will not be accepted without prior approval.

1) Class Participation: In addition to completing the assigned reading before class, students should arrive at the seminar room prepared to contribute to the discussion. This could take the form of a thoughtful question or two, or an extended
observation—in any case, come with something to say about the text and 2-3 places in the text to which we could turn to take up the question you raise. [10%]

2) Close-Reading Exercises (6 Exercises / 12 pages total): Students will produce a two-page close reading of a short section (10-15 lines) of each Shakespeare play we read, practicing focused writing that attends to the formal features of the dramatic text. [20%]

3) Research Journal / Production Analysis: In order to understand the ongoing process of adapting Shakespeare’s plays, students will research performances of Shakespeare’s plays, using sources such as the Global Shakespeares Video and Performance Archive (and other archives, to be discussed in class). Students will keep a research journal throughout the semester with notes on the productions they view. From these notes, students will produce a short analysis (3 pages) of a production, and give a short presentation (5-7 minutes) in class during the final week. [20%]

4) Mid-term examination: Students will demonstrate their knowledge, synthesizing and making connections between the texts and concepts we have discussed throughout the first half of the semester. [20%]

6) Final Essay: Students will submit initial (6-7 pages) and revised (9-10 pages) drafts of a final essay on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. [30%]

Classroom Etiquette and Expectations:
--Attendance will be taken at each class, and students who are late will be counted as absent. More than 3 absences may result in a failing grade for class participation.
--With the exception of the student presentations in our final class meetings, all electronic devices must remain off and out of sight during the class period.
--Class participation is vital: please bring the text for the day’s reading and come prepared to think, imagine, perform, and discuss the text we study.

Class Schedule: [please read each text prior to class in which it is assigned]

Unit 1: Adapting the Humanist Self
28 Aug (Wed): Thinking “Global” “Shakespeare”
2 Sept (Mon): Shakespeare, Hamlet

*Close-Reading Exercise 1 [2 pp.] due: 5 September

9 Sept (Mon): Almereyda, Hamlet (2000) [watch film before class]; Smith, “Performance”

Unit 2: Tragedy: On Power and Politics
16 Sept (Mon): Shakespeare, Richard III
*Close-Reading Exercise 2 [2 pp.] due: 19 September* (*Richard III*)

23 Sept (Mon): Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

25 Sept (Wed): Smith, “Character”  
*Close-Reading Exercise 3 [2 pp.] due: 26 September* (*Macbeth*)

28 Sept (Sat): Kurosawa, *Throne of Blood* (1957) [watch film before class]

30 Sept (Mon): Msomi, *uMabatha*

2 Oct (Wed): Smith, “Sources”

**Unit 3: Comedy: Social Order, Local and Global**

7 Oct (Mon): Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

*Close-Reading Exercise 4 [2 pp.] due: 10 October* (*Midsummer*)

14 Oct / 16 Oct: NO CLASS (Eid al-Adha / Fall break)

21 Oct (Mon): Shakespeare, *The Tempest*  
*Mid-term Examination: 23 October* (during Wednesday class period)


30 Oct (Wed): Césaire, *A Tempest*

**Close-Reading Exercise 5 [2 pp.] due: 31 October* (*Tempest*)

**Unit 4: Venice in the Globe**

4 Nov / 6 Nov: NO CLASS (Al-Hijra/Hijri New Year's Day)

7 Nov (Thurs): Shakespeare, *Othello*

11 Nov (Mon): Cinthio, *Gli Hecatommithi* [selection]; Smith, “History”  
13 Nov (Wed): Pasolini, *Che Cosa Sono Le Nuvole* [What Are Clouds Like?] (1968)

*Close-Reading Exercise 6 [2 pp.] due: 14 November* (*Othello*)

18 Nov (Mon): Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*  
*Close-Reading Exercise due: 21 November* (*Merchant*)


*Initial Draft [6-7 pp.] of Final Essay due: 28 November*

**Unit 5: Endings and Beginnings**

2 Dec (Mon): NO CLASS (UAE National Day Holiday)

4 Dec (Wed): Performance Analysis: Student Presentations

9 Dec (Mon): Performance Analysis: Student Presentations

*Research Journal + Production Analysis [3 pp.] due: 10 December*

11 Dec (Wed): Conclusions

*Revised Final Essay [9-10 pp.] due: 16 December*