

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, COMMERCE AND EDUCATION (ACE)

Grande Prairie Regional College

EN 4103 FA2: Shakespeare on Film

Fall 2003

Literary Genres & Themes:

45 hours / 3 credits

- EN 4103 FA2 (Shakespeare on Film) meets every **Wednesday evening**, from 6-8:50 p.m., in Room C316 ("The Old Bard Room").
- In addition, **weekly or bi-weekly screenings** may be required for out-of-print Shakespeare films unavailable from local video / DVD rental outlets.

INSTRUCTOR: George Hanna

OFFICE: C419

- **OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays 12 Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Thursdays 10:30 a.m. – 12 Noon
- Office hours are as posted.
- Students, however, may also arrange an appointment to see me at a mutually convenient time.

PHONE NUMBER: (780) **539-2090**

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DELIVERY MODE: Lecture / Class Participation and Discussion / WebCT

PRE-REQUISITES: EN 1000, EN 1010 or an equivalent six credits of first-year English.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As dramas written and conceived for Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, Shakespeare's plays rely on the power of printed words read or spoken aloud by trained stage actors. Film, by contrast, is a highly visual medium. About one hundred years ago, cinema directors began adapting Shakespeare texts for mass audiences. For the last six decades, directors from Laurence Olivier to Franco Zeffirelli and Kenneth Branagh have brought Shakespeare's plays to life on the big screen.

As an academic course, "Shakespeare on Film" examines the many points of intersection between the page, the stage and the screen. As a participant in weekly seminars, you will appreciate the astonishing versatility of Shakespeare's plays, which, increasingly, are being translated into the exciting new medium of film.

This course examines up to **ten** film adaptations of **five** Shakespeare plays:

1. Romeo and Juliet
 - Romeo and Juliet (1968). Directed by Franco Zeffirelli.
 - William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet (1996). Directed by Baz Luhrmann.
2. Much Ado About Nothing
 - Kenneth Branagh (1993)
3. Richard III
 - Laurence Olivier (1955)
 - Richard Loncraine (1995); [starring Ian McKellan]
4. Henry V
 - Laurence Olivier (1944)
 - Kenneth Branagh (1989)
5. Hamlet.
 - Laurence Olivier (1948)
 - Franco Zeffirelli (1990)
 - Kenneth Branagh (1996)

Recommended Textbook:

David Bevington, ed. The Necessary Shakespeare. Toronto: Addison-Wesley Longman, 2002.

Evaluation:

Film term quiz: 10%

1st essay: 30%

2nd essay: 30%

Oral Presentation: 20% [in pairs or groups. to be scheduled according to interest]

Oral Participation: 10%

Why is a course on "Shakespeare on Film" desirable or necessary?

At the centenary "Shakespeare on Screen" conference in Málaga, Spain, in September, 1999, Shakespearean scholar Kenneth Rothwell readily conceded that "cinema [has] pushed Shakespeare back into the realm of popular entertainment after centuries of academic reverence" Kerr, Darren. "An Interview with Kenneth Rothwell." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 6.1 (May, 2000): 6 <URL: <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/06-1/rothinte.htm>>.

To what extent has this new development proved desirable? In the words of Charles H. Shattuck,

In . . . [the twentieth] century the most significant mutation of Shakespeare has been from stage to film, a phenomenon which, with the growth of film technology (*movement* plus *sound* plus *color*), has given us increasing pleasure. In recent years, however, as film esthetics have grown more sophisticated - as strong-minded directors have introduced more avant-garde camera techniques and imposed upon the texts more insistently "modern" interpretations - filmed Shakespeare has provoked heated argument among the critics, sometimes even sharp hostility. . . . In order to judge a Shakespeare film fairly we must measure it evenhandedly against two standards: its validity as film art and its validity as an interpretation of the original play. The partisan film enthusiast and the partisan Shakespearean will argue at cross-purposes *ad infinitum* unless each acknowledges the other's premises.

(The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd.ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997, Appendix A, p. 1925).

With varying degrees of success, directors from Laurence Olivier to Franco Zefferelli and Kenneth Branagh have exploited the full potential of film as a highly visual medium. In adapting Shakespeare plays for television or feature-length films, directors bring to bear a wide range of techniques:

- effective use of cuts to improve cinematic flow, coherence or momentum;
- inclusion of new dialogue or invented scenes;
- introduction of bold, imaginative plot twists or anachronistic details to enhance the production's originality and relevance for modern audiences;
- well constructed sets and period costumes;
- effective use of original scores or more traditional music to heighten audience mood or intensify atmospheric effects;
- and technical expertise in directing films.

The course will require one three-hour session per week plus required weekly screenings. Although we shall consider the relationship between the five Shakespeare plays and their respective film adaptations, we shall also, as a matter of course, examine these films as works of art separate and distinct from Shakespeare's plays.

Alpha Grading System

GRADES

Grande Prairie Regional College uses the alpha grading system and the following approved letter codes for all programs and courses offered by the College. All final grades will be reported to the Registrar's Office using alpha grades. Alpha grades will be converted to four-point equivalence for the calculation of grade point averages.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalence	Descriptor	Conversion of Percentage to Alpha Grade * Guideline only. * Used for assigning marks on tests, essays, or other course requirements.	Conversion of Alpha Grade to mark out of 10.
A+	4.0	Excellent	A+ = 90-100%	A+ = 9-10
A	4.0		A = 85-89	A = 8.5-8.9
A-	3.7	First Class Standing	A- = 80-84	A = 8-8.4
B+	3.3		B+ = 76-79	B+ = 7.6-7.9
B	3.0	Good	B = 73-75	B = 7.3-7.5
B-	2.7		B- = 70-72	B- = 7-7.2
C+	2.3	Satisfactory	C+ = 67-69	C+ = 6.7-6.9
C	2.0		C = 64-66	C = 6.4-6.6
C-	1.7		C- = 60-63	C- = 6-6.3
D+	1.3	Poor	D+ = 55-59	D+ = 5.5-5.9
D	1.0	Minimal Pass	D = 50-54	D = 5-5.4
F	0.0	Failure	0 = 0-49	F = 0-4.9

The following letter grades may also be used:

- A** Audit; no credit given and not calculated into the grade point average
- W** Withdrawal with permission; not calculated in Grade Point Average (GPA)
- WF** Withdrawal after the deadline; carries a weight of "F"
- CR** Credit; indicates a passing grade; used in some programs and courses
- IN** Incomplete; indicates that course requirements are not complete. This grade permits a one-month extension to complete course requirements. The grade of "IN" must be cleared within the one month period. The deadlines for clearing grades of "IN" are listed in the Academic Schedule.

MINIMAL PASS

A grade of D will be considered a minimum passing grade and will normally meet the prerequisite requirements for the next level of study. Exceptions to this will be clearly stated in prerequisite requirements in the course description or in program progression criteria.

Other post secondary institutions may not consider grades of D sufficient to award transfer credit.

Currently, the University of Alberta will not accept for transfer courses completed with grades of "D" or "D+". Some post secondary institutions, for example, the University of Calgary, may accept grades of "D" for transfer but may consider that the student is insufficiently prepared for courses in the next level of study.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF EN 4103 SHAKESPEARE ON FILM FALL 2003

- **EN 4103 FA2 consists of 14 classes extending from September 3 to December 3.**
- **Films / Plays will be studied in the order listed on the first two pages of this course outline.**

September 3

Introductions

Course Outline: Course Objectives and Assignments.

Pop Goes the Bard: Popularizing Shakespeare through Film

One Hundred Years of Shakespeare in the Cinema

A Glossary of Film Terms.

September 10

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

"O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?":

Shakespeare in Love and Pop Culture:

A History of Romeos from Zeffirelli to Luhrmann and Beyond.

Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film adaptation of Romeo and Juliet.

September 17

From Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet (1968) to Baz Luhrmann's film adaptation (1996):

Romeo + Juliet.

September 24

Baz Luhrmann's film adaptation (1996): Romeo + Juliet.

Film Terms Quiz

October 1

Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing

Kenneth Branagh's 1993 film adaptation of Much Ado About Nothing.

October 8

Kenneth Branagh's Much Ado About Nothing (1993).

1st film analysis essay is due **Wednesday, October 8**
 Weighting 30% of course grade.
 Minimum Length: 2000 - 2500 words (about 8-10 typed, double-spaced pages).

No Classes on Scheduled Thanksgiving Day Holiday:
Monday, October 13th, 2003. Limited access to College.
Long Weekend: October 11-12-13.

October 15

Shakespeare's Richard III

Laurence Olivier's 1955 film adaptation of Richard III.

October 22

Richard Loncraine's 1995 film adaptation of Richard III.

[Loncraine's film stars Ian McKellan, who co-authored the screenplay]

October 29

Shakespeare's Henry V.

Laurence Olivier's 1944 film adaptation of Henry V.

November 5

From Laurence Olivier's Henry V (1944) to Kenneth Branagh's Henry V (1989)..

Fall Session Break: 4 days, Nov. 8-9-10-11 inclusive.

Sat. Nov. 8 + Sun. Nov. 9 (Weekend)

Mon. Nov. 10 (Fall Session Break). No Classes.

Tues. Nov. 11 (Remembrance Day Holiday). No Classes.

November 12

Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of Henry V (1989).

November 19

Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Laurence Olivier's 1948 film adaptation of Hamlet.

2nd film analysis essay is due **Wednesday, November 19**

Weighting 30% of course grade.

Minimum Length: 2000 - 2500 words (about 8-10 typed, double-spaced pages).

November 26

Franco Zeffirelli's 1990 film adaptation of Hamlet.

December 3

Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film adaptation of Hamlet.

Past and Future Hamlets: Expropriating Shakespeare or Democratizing the Bard?

END OF COURSE

