Introduction to Shakespeare and Criticism
Tsinghua University, Institute for World Literatures and Cultures
Tsinghua Academy, Rm. 109
Mondays, 19:20-21:45

Elizabeth Mathie
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Office Hours: Wednesday, 10am-1pm, and by appt.

Class description: In this course, we will use two of Shakespeare’s major dramatic works, The Tempest and Othello, to explore both Shakespeare’s writing and the scholarly discussions that surround it. We will consider how scholars have responded to Shakespeare over time, the stakes of discussing politics through literature, the benefits and drawbacks of various methods of literary inquiry, and the future of Shakespeare studies in a globalized world. Together as a class we will work to think new thoughts with and about Shakespeare and to interrogate the stakes of several critical debates that surround two of his best-known plays.

Class goals: After this course, students will have a thorough understanding of two of Shakespeare’s major works and will have had practice deciphering and closely reading the language of these historical texts. Through several abstract assignments and class discussions, students will also gain familiarity with several central modes of literary criticism and confidence reading and responding to scholarly works. Abstracts and a peer review workshop will also allow students to practice understanding and describing the arguments of others. Through a final research paper assignment, they will gain practice crafting their own original, analytic arguments and positioning their own ideas within an ongoing scholarly conversation.

Grade Break-down:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Modern English Quizzes (3)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstracts (5)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation (1)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Peer Review Feedback</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Readings:

**Shakespearean Plays:**
- *The Tempest*
- *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*

**Scholarship:**
- Reuben A. Brower, “The Mirror of Analogy: The Tempest”
- Frank Kermode, excerpt from *Shakespeare: The Final Plays*


George Will, “Literary Politics”

Stephen Greenblatt “The Best Way to Kill Our Literary Inheritance Is to Turn It into a Decorous Celebration of the New World Order”

Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, “Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: The discursive con-texts of The Tempest”

Lauren Eriks, “Audiences Writing Race in Shakespeare Performance”

Ania Loomba, “Seizing the Book”

Mary Floyd-Wilson, “Othello’s Jealousy,” chap. 6 in English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama


Excerpt of Alexa Huang’s interview, “Ma Yong’an: Excerpt from an Interview”

Faye Chunfang Fei and William Huizhu Sun, “Othello and Beijing Opera: Appropriation As a Two-Way Street”

Rustom Bharucha, “Foreign Asia / Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization”


Course Policies and Other Information:

Grading Policy:
An “A” signifies exceptional work, a “B” signifies very good work, and a “C” signifies adequate work. Grades at the A or B level indicate work that goes well beyond the expectations for the assignment.

Attendance Policy:
Crucial to our class and your growth as a writer are discussions and in-class workshops. For this reason, the success of the class and your own success depend on your attendance and active participation. You are allowed one absence, but missing even one class is unadvisable, and I will hold you responsible for all material that you miss as a result of any absence. Except in exceptional circumstances and excused absences, your overall grade will decrease 5% for every absence after the first. I will count every three instances of tardiness as one absence.

Late Policy:
Unless you procure an extension from me before the deadline, I will deduct one-third of a letter grade for every day an assignment is late. For example, a B paper handed in one day late would become a B- paper. If you think that you won’t be able to hand in your paper on time and that your situation warrants an extension, please be in touch with me as far in advance before the due date as possible. If you have a personal emergency that will prevent you from completing the paper on time, please let me know as soon as you can.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is submitting a piece of work (for example, an essay, research paper, work of art, assignment, laboratory report) which in part or in whole is not entirely your own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. In other words, it is when you knowingly (or
unknowingly) submit someone else’s ideas or words as your own. If you commit an act of academic dishonesty in this course either by plagiarizing someone’s work or by allowing your own work to be misused by another, you will fail the assignment and may fail the entire course. Please note that if you submit work already completed for another course as original work for this course, I will not consider that assignment complete and you will likely fail it. If you ever have any questions or concerns about referencing materials, please let me know. I am happy to help!

**Course Schedule (Mondays):**

Sept 17: Introductions: Shakespeare’s English and Keywords in Literary Criticism

Sept 24:  
**No class today, Mid-Autumn Festival holiday**

**Saturday, Sept 29: Make-up class for Oct 1**  
*The Tempest*, Acts 1 and 2  
**In-class quiz**

Oct 1:  
**No class today, National Day holiday**

Oct 8:  
Frank Kermode, excerpt from *Shakespeare: The Final Plays*  
**Due in class:** Abstract 1

Oct 15:  
*The Tempest*, Act 3  
Ronald Takaki, “The ‘Tempest’ in the Wilderness: A Tale of Two Frontiers,” chap. 2 in *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*  
**In-class quiz**

Oct 22:  
*The Tempest*, Act 4  
“Literary Study, Politics, and Shakespeare: A Debate,” in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy* (George Will, “Literary Politics” and Stephen Greenblatt “The Best Way to Kill Our Literary Inheritance Is to Turn It into a Decorous Celebration of the New World Order”)  
**In-class quiz**
Oct 29:
*The Tempest*, Act 5
Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, “Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish: The discursive con-texts of *The Tempest*”
**Due in class:** Abstract 2

Nov 5:
Lauren Eriks, “Audiences Writing Race in Shakespeare Performance”
**Due in class:** Abstract 3

Nov 12:
Ania Loomba, “Seizing the Book”
**Due in class:** Abstract 4
**In-class presentations begin**

Nov 19:
*Othello*, Act 1
Mary Floyd-Wilson, “Othello’s Jealousy,” chap. 6 in *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*
**Due in class:** Abstract 5

Nov 26:
*Othello*, Act 2

Dec 3:
*Othello*, Act 3
Rustom Bharucha, “Foreign Asia / Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization”

Dec 10:
*Othello*, Acts 4 and 5

Dec 17:
Excerpt of an interview with Ma Yong’an, “Ma Yong’an: Excerpt from an Interview”
Faye Chunfang Fei and William Huizhu Sun, “*Othello* and Beijing Opera: Appropriation As a Two-Way Street”
**Due:** Draft of final paper for peer review group members and me, emailed before class.

Dec 24: **Workshop for Final Paper**
Your peers’ essays are your reading for today
Dec 31:
Alexa Huang, “Owning Chinese Shakespeares,” chap. 1 in *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*

Jan 2
Final Paper due, emailed to me by 11:59pm.