

ENGL 294: INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

Citrus College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2025
Credits:	3
Total Contact Hours:	54
Lecture Hours :	54
Lab Hours:	0
Hours Arranged:	0
Outside of Class Hours:	108
Total Student Learning Hours:	162
Strongly Recommended:	ENGL C1000.
District General Education:	C2. Humanities
Transferable to CSU:	Yes
Transferable to UC:	Yes - Approved
Grading Method:	Standard Letter

Catalog Course Description

An introduction to the works of William Shakespeare including representative tragedies, comedies and history plays. The course is designed to give students an understanding of the timelessness of Shakespeare's work. 54 lecture hours.

Course Objectives

- Discuss and interpret a minimum of seven representative plays drawn from the genres of comedy, tragedy, and history in order to understand their contribution to western culture as demonstrated by a final in-class written exam.
- Analyze the style, structure, language, and literal content of the texts in order to master all that the text offers to the contemporary reader as demonstrated by a formal research paper.
- Explore interpretations of the text from a variety of critical perspectives (including formalist, historical, sociological, biographical and psychological) in order to defend the richness, layers, depth, complexity, and universal appeal as demonstrated by a final in-class written exam.
- Evaluate the texts in order to appreciate the attributes that make them foundational to the development of Western literature.

Major Course Content

1. Historical Context
 - a. Shakespeare, Stratford and the Elizabethan theatre
 - b. The Elizabethan Court
 - c. Manners and mores of the English Renaissance
2. Textual Analysis
 - a. Elizabethan idiom
 - b. Prosody and prose
 - c. Character and meaning
3. Shakespeare's History Plays
 - a. Temporal perspectives and cultural anachronisms
 - b. The role of the monarch

- c. The history play as a reflection of Elizabethan values
 - d. The history play as melodrama
4. Shakespearean Tragedy
 - a. The nature of tragedy
 - i. Fate and circumstance
 - ii. The tragic flaw
 - iii. Amoral villains and immoral heroes
 - b. The tragic character, e.g. Othello, Macbeth
 5. Shakespearean Comedy
 - a. The nature of comedy
 - b. Elizabethan humor
 - c. Stock characters and situation humor

Suggested Reading Other Than Required Textbook

Independent study required to complete a series of worksheets on each play as well as a formal research paper on an assigned topic.

Examples of Required Writing Assignments

Using instructor approved resources from the library and the Internet, develop a 5-10 formal research paper, following MLA format guidelines, on the following topic: Select any three of the plays assigned for the semester and explain how Shakespeare uses time - both chronological and psychological - to convey one of the central themes of each play. Using instructor approved resources from the library and the Internet, develop a 5-10 page formal research paper, following MLA format guidelines, on the following topic: What biographical and cultural evidence can you find that might help us to understand how one man, Shakespeare, could know so much about the human heart?

Examples of Outside Assignments

Students will be required to complete the following types of assignments outside of the regular class time:

In preparation for class discussion, note the development of Hamlet's mind by examining carefully the content and style of each of his soliloquies.

In preparation for class discussion, consider the following question: What do we discover about Shakespeare as craftsman from his use of 17th century theatrical conventions in Romeo and Juliet, Othello, and King Lear?

Instruction Type(s)

Lecture, Online Education Lecture

IGETC Area 3: Arts and Humanities

3B. Humanities