

ENGLIT 2131 (CRN 27711) Shakespeare, Gender, and Sexuality

Tuesday 2-5, 512 C of L

Marianne Novy, 517A C of L; mnovy@pitt.edu; office hours 1-2 Tues and by appt.

This course will read some of Shakespeare's plays and his sonnets emphasizing a range of criticism and theory dealing with gender and sexuality. We will also consider the early modern debate about women, 16th-17th century texts about same-sex desire and recent critical and historical arguments about the construction of gay identity, literary transformations of his plays and sonnets by later women (e.g. Paula Vogel, Djanet Sears) and gay artists (e.g. Oscar Wilde, Baz Luhrmann, Gus van Sant), and examples of how live productions, films, and other media have dealt with gender and sexuality in his writings.

Requirements: Regular and thoughtful reading and participation; a comment (of at least a paragraph) on some aspect of each week's reading to be sent to the class listserv by e-mail by 5 p.m. each Monday before class; leading part of a class discussion by October 8; midterm and final papers of at least 8 pages, or a substantial midterm 8-page or more early draft and a final paper of at least 16.

Books: Norton Shakespeare, 2nd edition. The editors of the Norton are leading contemporary critics and this edition has very thorough contextual, textual, and bibliographic information.

Wilde, Portrait of Mr. W. H.

Vogel, Desdemona

Sears, Harlem Duet

Syllabus

August 27 Gender, sex, marriage, love, friendship in the early modern period. Jane Anger and other excerpts from early modern gender polemics and marriage sermons; gender and sexuality background, Mario DiGangi, Alan Bray, Mary Beth Rose, Catherine Belsey

Aug. 31-Sept 1 Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks is performing Romeo and Juliet in Frick Park near the Blue Slide at 2 pm.

September 3 Much Ado: how does it relate to readings for previous class?
Pamela Brown, intro to Better a Shrew than a Sheep (1-14)

10 Shakespeare's sonnets, Richard Barnfield; Oscar Wilde, Portrait of Mr. W. H. (a novella showing how important S's sonnets were to a writer trying to locate his feelings in a literary tradition); Bruce Smith, chapter on sonnets, "The Secret Sharer"

Sept 17 Merchant of Venice; Alan Sinfield, "How to Read the Merchant of Venice Without Being Heterosexual," Jean Howard, "Power and Eros," about cross-dressing (will also be relevant for the next two weeks)

Sept 24 12:30 Visiting speaker Julie Crawford, "Shakespeare. Same sex. Marriage," in Humanities Center, 602 CL

Sept. 24 As You Like It; Crawford AYLI paper: Howard, Valerie Traub, "Homoerotics of Shakespearean Comedy" (also relevant next week); turn in proposals for midterm

Oct 1 Twelfth Night; Traub, Howard, Sinfield on Olivia

Oct 8 Measure for Measure: sexuality, religion and the law: early modern history and texts: " 'Court Cases Concerned with Sex,' 'Against the Flesh,' and 'Virginity,'" ; Victoria Hayne, "Performing Social Practice"

Oct. 11 midterm papers due, or draft of half final paper

October 15 Fall Break--go to your Monday classes, if any, instead

Oct 22 Romeo and Juliet: Peter Donaldson, "In Fair Verona," on Baz Luhrmann's film, half of which we will watch in class (read the play first, so you will appreciate changes in film, and if interested watch the whole film on your own).

Oct 29 Othello; Lynda Boose, "Pornographic Aesthetic of Shakespeare's Othello," Edward Pechter, "Too Much Violence"

Nov. 5 Paula Vogel, Desdemona; Djanet Sears, Harlem Duet

Nov 12 Antony and Cleopatra; Ania Loomba, "Imperial Romance," Juliet Dusinberre, "Squeaking Cleopatras," proposal for final paper due; make appointment to discuss

Nov 19 Two Noble Kinsmen; Laurie Shannon, "Professing Friendship," Jeff Masten, "Between Gentlemen"

Nov. 26 No class; work on your papers if you can!

Dec 3 Henry IV, part 1 (read first, so you will recognize how Van Sant is using and changing it); My Own Private Idaho; David Roman, "Shakespeare Out in Portland"

Dec 10 Present 10 minute version of your paper for questions, discussion, revision

Dec. 14 Final papers due

Leading a discussion: To lead a discussion you should prepare a few minutes of comments on the reading, and plan some questions. Your initial presentation should be less than five minutes. The discussion you plan for should be no more than ten minutes total, including your presentation/questions (often the class will stretch it out, but don't plan a set of questions or make an initial presentation that is structured to take longer).

You should consult with others leading discussions on the same day—to avoid overlap (at least) and either note the contrasts among the approaches of the works you discuss or co-operate in planning a discussion together, with two people focusing on the same critic or on different parts of the same essay. Each discussion leader should give me a few notes or questions to indicate the emphasis planned, no later than 10 am on the day of class--preferably earlier--by e-mail or in my mailbox. It's a good idea to prepare a handout for the class.

E-mail comments: By Monday at 5 pm every week, post a comment of at least a paragraph on some aspect of the readings for Tuesday to the class listserv. Print out your posting and bring it to class. Read one other's comments and feel free to engage with them in your own. These comments should show your engagement with the readings (Shakespeare and/or critics) in specific terms--quote important passages.

Papers: Discuss your topics with me in advance. As a general rule, the papers should deal with some aspect of one or two of the plays we will have read in the class. They could engage with some critics and/or with one or more recent rewritings, theatrical productions, or films, but should involve some close reading of Shakespeare and some issue related to gender and/or sexuality. If you have some special circumstance) and want to range further afield in your paper, talk to me. You should give credit to every source you use, including web-based sources and friends. Be aware that there are many unreliable websites; the best for our purposes are usually associated with a university, or with the Folger Shakespeare Library. Use quotation marks and footnotes when you are quoting exact words and footnotes when you are paraphrasing. Not giving credit when you are using other people's words or following their ideas while paraphrasing their words is plagiarism, a serious offense for which you may receive an F in the course.

Films: Clips from films will occasionally be shown in class. A number are available at the Media Center in Hillman; some can be borrowed from the Carnegie Library; some can be found on the web.

Current productions: For four weeks beginning August 31 and September 1, on Saturday and Sunday, at 2 pm, there will be a free performance of Romeo and Juliet in one of Pittsburgh's parks: first and last in Frick Park at Beechwood and Nicholson St. You can find more details on the web at www.pittsburghshakespeare.com.

Other: There are many aspects of Shakespeare studies today beyond those included on the syllabus. I will be happy to suggest other sources, or discuss further (including outside of class) issues about which you have wider-ranging questions. Also, please ask me, whether inside or out of class, if any terminology or approaches used in class discussion or in readings need further explanation.

Grading (approximate): Midterm and Final 30% each, or 60% for one paper
Discussion leading 20 %
Email comments 10%
Class participation 10%

Disability accommodations: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact me and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/(412) 383-7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term, so that DRS can determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Email

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

- Codes of Student Conduct and Faculty Conduct within the School of Arts and Sciences can be found at <http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>.
- The English Department website informational page about plagiarism and procedures for addressing a suspected case of plagiarism:
 - <http://www.english.pitt.edu/resources/plagiarism.html>
- The Literature Program's "Avoiding Plagiarism" site:
http://www.englishlit.pitt.edu/lit_plagiarism.html

OTHER RESOURCES

This English Department webpage lists a range of important Pitt resources including contact information for the Writing Center and the Counseling Center:
http://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/undergrad_resources.html

