

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TEATRE ANGLÈS DEL RENAIXEMENT</b>
<b>Code:</b>	<b>28495</b>
<b>Credits:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Semester:</b>	<b>A</b>
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## CONTENT

The overall purpose of this course will be to explore aspects of Shakespeare's creativity. But such a project, if it is not to prove Promethean, must of course focus on some specific topics, in this case, comedy and tragedy. The course will not seek to produce a theoretical discussion of the notions of 'comedy' and 'tragedy'. Rather, it will attempt to describe and contextualize an evolving practice, and will include the possibility of a critique of Shakespearean art. The course will concentrate on two comedies—*The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*—one tragedy—*Macbeth*— and one tragicomedy—*The Tempest*. We shall examine the way these plays assimilate and transform the intellectual and dramaturgical achievements of Shakespeare's age.

## ASSESSMENT

The practical dimension of the course will require students to take an active part in class. Group discussion will be normal practice and students may be requested to enact a scene of their choice from one of the plays or offer a presentation on some relevant topic. All students will have to sit a mid-term and a final exam. Percentages will be as follows:

Class participation and group work: 20%

Mid-term exam: 30%

Final exam: 50%

Tutorials will be designed to enhance the students' knowledge of the Shakespearean critical heritage.

NB: The command of English will be taken into account when assessing hand-in work, exams, and in the final grade.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. Primary

It is absolutely indispensable to use an annotated scholarly edition, with full critical apparatus. Students should read the plays either in the New Penguin edition or in the Oxford Shakespeare edition. Arden or New Arden Shakespeare editions are also adequate. Oxford Shakespeare editions are specially recommended:

- Jay L. Halio (ed.), *The Merchant of Venice*, The Oxford Shakespeare, OUP.

- Roger Warren (ed.), *Twelfth Night*, The Oxford Shakespeare, OUP.
- Nicholas Brooke (ed.), *Macbeth*, The Oxford Shakespeare, OUP.
- Stephen Orgel (ed.), *The Tempest*, The Oxford Shakespeare, OUP.

## 2. Secondary

The overwhelming amount of secondary material on the plays attests the range and richness of Shakespeare's dramatic genius. For examination purposes, students will be expected to be familiar with a specific number of influential contributions to Shakespearean scholarship. A safe starting point is provided by Stanley Wells's *Shakespeare. A Bibliographical Guide* (Clarendon Press). Below is a list of helpful books on the contexts of the plays.

## 3. Contexts

Susan Brigden, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds. The Rule of the Tudors 1485-1603*, Penguin Books. (A survey of the Tudor age incorporating the latest findings of sixteenth-century scholarship.)

Julia Briggs, *The Stage-Play World: English Literature and its Background, 1580-1625*. (A very sound and user-friendly introduction, full of interesting ideas and suggestions.)

Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson. (A readable assessment of a major turning point in European history by a leading Reformation scholar.)

Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Palgrave Macmillan (A famously controversial study of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It approaches the plays from a cultural materialist perspective.)

Northrop Frye, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*, Yale UP. (It includes a brilliantly written chapter on *The Tempest*.)

Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, U of Chicago P. (A critical earthquake that shook Renaissance criticism to its foundations.)

Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, CUP. (An authoritative description of the theatrical conditions of Shakespearean drama.)

-----, *Studying Shakespeare. An Introduction*, Edward Arnold. (How to tackle the study of a Shakespearean play.)

Frank Kermode, *The Age of Shakespeare*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson. (An account of Shakespeare's career by one of England's most distinguished critics.)

Martin Wiggins, *Shakespeare and the Drama of his Time*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics, OUP. (A reliable conspectus of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramaturgical traditions.)