

E. 3130: Shakespeare: Elizabethan Plays:
Shakespeare and English Nationalism

Dr. Steve Mentz

This course examines plays from the first half of Shakespeare's dramatic career that explore growing nationalist consciousness in sixteenth-century England. This period saw the emergence of national identity out of the tangled loyalties of guild, church, and locality. We'll read the two historical tetralogies that helped make Shakespeare's name during the last decade of Elizabeth's rule: a four-play cycle that begins with the abdication of an anointed king (*Richard II*) and continues with the education of an imperial monarch (*1-2 Henry IV, Henry V*), and then another four-play cycle that begins with civil war during the reign of Henry V's young son (*1-3 Henry VI*) and culminates with the reign of terror of the last Plantagenet, *Richard III*. We'll explore national, regional, and religious identity, the education of a monarch, the social function of the public theater, and the emerging cultural force of the Shakespearean stage.

Learning Goals:

1. **Writing:** Clear, analytical papers that advance a thesis with close textual evidence.
2. **Reading:** Shakespeare's history plays and how their language works in performance.
3. **Analysis:** The history and meanings of the modern concept of "nationhood."
4. **Context:** Exploring how Shakespeare's plays speak to our own political world.

Required Books:

Richard 2 (Arden)
Henry IV, Part 1 (Arden)
Henry IV, Part 2 (Arden)
Henry V (Arden)
Henry VI, Parts 1-3 (Signet)
Richard 3 (Arden)

*Books are available at Ed's Bookstore (17627 Union Turnpike; 718-969-7173; eds@compuserve.com) or at the campus bookstore.

Course Requirements:

- Regular attendance and participation in class (10%)
- Regular Web CT participation (10%)
- One short (3-5 page) close reading paper (15%)
- Rewritten paper (15%)
- Monologue or scene performance (10%)
- Final Paper (30%)
- Take-home final exam (10%)

Class meetings:

TR 9:10 – 10:35, Marillac 306C

Contact Information:

- St John Hall, B40-9
- Email: mentzs@stjohns.edu
- Phone: x6690
- Office Hours: TR 8– 9 am, 11 to noon, or by appointment

Week 13	T	11/21	<i>Richard III</i> , 1
	R	11/23	No Class – Thanksgiving
Week 14	T	11/28	<i>Richard III</i> , 2-3 In class performances
	R	11/30	<i>Richard III</i> , 4-5 In class performances
Week 15	T	12/5	Final Paper due in class In class performances