

English 3140: Shakespeare: The Jacobean Plays
The Ends of Theater

Dr. Steve Mentz

When Shakespeare turned from romantic comedy (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and providential history (*Henry V*) to tragedy after King James took the throne in 1603, the shift seems to have artistic and philosophical significance. Taking its focus from the title of what may have been Shakespeare's first Jacobean play, *All's Well that Ends Well*, this course focuses on theatrical endings and what they mean. Why do we enjoy watching fictional characters die on stage, and why do we think tragedy is a "higher" genre than comedy? During the first eight years of James's reign Shakespeare became not just a popular playwright but the King's personal dramatist and the leading figure in English national literature. We will begin with *All's Well*, continue with *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and conclude with *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *The Winter's Tale*. We will also attend a production of *All's Well* in early February.

Required Books: *All's Well that Ends Well* (New Cambridge)
 Othello (Arden 3)
 King Lear (Arden 3)
 Antony & Cleopatra (Arden 3)
 Two Noble Kinsmen (Arden 3)
 The Winter's Tale (Signet)

*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%)
 • Review of *All's Well* production (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 10:45 – 12:10, SJH 111B

Contact Information: • St John Hall, B40-9
 • Email: mentzs@stjohns.edu
 • Phone: x6690

Office Hours: M 10 – 11 am, TR 9 – 10 am, or by appointment

Class Policies and Assignments:

Attendance: All students must be in class with the assigned text having done the reading. More than 3 absences per semester will lower your final grade. More than 5 absences may result in a failing grade.

Plagiarism Policy: The content of all written work must be original or responsibly footnoted. All sources must be acknowledged, and quotation marks used for exact borrowings. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a failing grade for the paper, which must also be rewritten to pass the course. (The F will stand.) Any second offenses result in failing the course.

***All's Well* Performance:** Part of the class requirements will be seeing the new production of *All's Well* at SUNY Purchase's Pepsico Theatre in Westchester County, NY. The performance dates are February 11-19, with evening shows Th – Sat and matinees on Sundays. I'll organize tickets for Sunday 2/13, and invite you to a discussion panel at noon at which I'll be speaking. For information and directions, go to the Arts Center website at <http://www.artscenter.org/purchasecollege.html>

Performance Review: Your first graded work will be a short review of this performance. You should focus specifically on individual choices by actors and/or the director, and refer in detail to the inevitable modifications and elaborations on Shakespeare's text made in modern performances.

Paper Guidelines: The formal papers will focus on an **analytical reading** of one or more Shakespeare plays. The key to a good paper will be formulating an analytical **thesis**, presenting it clearly in the first paragraph, quoting the play in detail, and **reading closely** to support this thesis. More details will follow, including suggested topics, but these are the key elements: analyze, don't summarize; present a clear thesis in the first paragraph; quote fully, and read closely.

Rewriting Papers: Rewriting the first (short) paper is required. To rewrite you must rethink and recast the paper's thesis and argument, not simply correct diction or style.

Monologue or Performance: Each student will perform a monologue or short scene from one of these plays for the class during the final two weeks. Grades will be based on acting/directing choices, effort, and fidelity to the text.

Take-home Final: The final exam will be a short take-home essay on Shakespeare in modern American culture. Details to follow.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1	R	1/20	Introduction: Theater of Endings
Week 2	T	1/25	<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> , 1
	R	1/27	<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> , 2-3
Week 3	T	2/1	<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> , 4
	R	2/3	<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> , 5
Week 4	T	2/8	<i>Othello</i> , 1
	R	2/10	<i>Othello</i> , 2-3
	Su	2/13	Performance of <i>All's Well</i> at SUNY Purchase Panel discussion at noon; play at 2 pm
Week 5	T	2/15	<i>Othello</i> , 4
	R	2/17	<i>Othello</i> , 5
Week 6	T	2/22	<i>King Lear</i> , 1
	R	2/24	Performance review due in class <i>King Lear</i> , 2-3 Close Reading paper due in class
Spring Break 2/28 – 3/5			
Week 7	T	3/8	<i>King Lear</i> , 4
	R	3/10	<i>King Lear</i> , 5
Week 8	T	3/15	<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i> , 1
	R	3/17	Class Cancelled
Week 9	T	3/22	<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i> , 2-3
	R	3/24	Rewritten paper due in class Easter Recess
Week 10	T	3/29	<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i> , 4
	R	3/31	<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i> , 5
Week 11	T	4/5	<i>Two Noble Kinsmen</i> , 1
	R	4/7	<i>Two Noble Kinsmen</i> , 2-3
Week 12	T	4/12	<i>Two Noble Kinsmen</i> , 4
	R	4/14	<i>Two Noble Kinsmen</i> , 5

Week 13	T	4/19	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> , 1
	R	4/21	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> , 2-3
			Monologue or scene performances
Week 14	T	4/26	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> , 4
	R	4/28	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> , 5
			Monologue or scene performances
			Final Paper due in class
			Take home final assigned
Final Exam due		5/4-11, tba	