

Shakespeare and Performance

ENGL 145

Spring 2026 Section 01 Hybrid 4 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/26/2026

Contact Information

Classroom: Sweeney Hall 311

Class Days/Time: Tuesday, Thursday 12:00–1:15 p.m.

Instructor: Andreas P. Bassett

Email: andreas.bassett@sjsu.edu

Office Location: FOB 128

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:50–3:50 p.m.

Course Information

Format

Class will meet in person, twice a week. Additional materials will be available on Canvas. All assignments to be submitted to Canvas.

Description

Welcome to English 145, an introductory course on the dramatic works of William Shakespeare, one of the most revered authors in the English language and literary history. This course is intended for anyone who has a curiosity about Shakespeare and/or a keen interest in studying literature at the college level. No previous experience is required or assumed.

We will start with the basics and progress to broader topics and issues: Who was Shakespeare, and what factors contributed to the enduring popularity of his works? What did Shakespeare's audience expect, find entertaining, and desire in his plays, both on the stage and page? How was Shakespeare's legacy immortalized in the theatre and in print, and passed down to future generations, including our own? Over the semester, we will read and become acquainted with select Shakespeare plays. Our aim will be to develop deeper and well-informed understandings of their content and lasting impact on the world at large. Throughout this process, we will familiarize ourselves with some of the essential tools of literary analysis and humanities-based research.

Course Description and Requisites

Course examines in depth several of Shakespeare's plays, specifically addressing issues of performance. We will discuss each play in the context of its original performance during Shakespeare's time and its life on stage and screen in the ensuing centuries.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, and/or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively.
4. Develop and carry out research-based projects.
5. Analyze and evaluate contemporary productions and film adaptations of Shakespeare plays

Course Materials

Texts

1. Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare: Essential Plays / The Sonnets*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. Third edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2016. ISBN: 9780393938630. *Please ensure that you acquire the printed edition.
2. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* will be available on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Assignments

Essay #1—Groundling for a Day: For this essay, you will take a virtual field trip to the Globe Theatre in London and watch a full, live-recorded production of a play from the syllabus, reporting on the experience in a 4–6-page, double-spaced field memo. Emphasis will be on understanding theatrical performance as an expressive medium and the Shakespearean theatre in particular as a site of meaning-making.

Essay #2—Film Critique: In this 4–6-page, double-spaced essay, you will assume the role of a film critic and judge and evaluate a film adaptation of a Shakespeare play from the syllabus. Your primary task will be to interrogate some of the interpretive paths a film generates while also considering which original meanings it may alter or foreclose. Emphasis will be on understanding how cinematic adaptations reinterpret and reshape Shakespeare's plays.

Final Exam: A closed-book exam covering all lectures, discussions, and readings, to be given in finals week at the university-appointed time. The Final Exam will be a mix of identification, multiple choice, and short answer. It will be easy if you attended class and did the reading. We will have a review session in the last

class.

Late Work Policy: I will generally grant extension requests provided they are submitted in writing with a proposed new deadline *before* a paper's due date. If the original deadline is passed by a student who has not received an extension or an extended deadline has been passed, 10% of the total points possible will be taken off for lateness up to one week. After the first week, 10% will be taken off the top of the paper score for each day late (i.e. 8 days late = -20%, 9 days = -30%, 10 days = -40%, and so on). After 16 calendar days, no paper will be accepted. To ensure timely grading for the rest of the class, I am unable to provide written feedback on late submissions.

Paper Format

Please submit all papers in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and in MLA format. Make sure to add a centered assignment name or a creative title. Remember to include a Works Cited page, too. Papers are to be submitted on Canvas in the Assignments tab.

Participation

“Participating” is defined in this class as *doing the reading* and *being able and willing to respond* to the comments and questions of both the professor and your fellow students on a daily basis. As a large portion of this course involves discussion, active participation will be imperative. In addition, because the exchange of diverse ideas is so important to this class, it is necessary for everyone to be respectful of one another. In our class discussions, it is normal and even expected that we will disagree. Differences can and should be discussed, but these discussions should maintain the academic spirit of respect. Disrespectful language and behavior will not be tolerated in our classroom.

✓ Grading Information

Evaluation

Your final course grade will be weighted as follows:

Essay #1 25%

Essay #2 25%

Final Exam 25%

Presence and active participation in all class sessions 25%

☰ University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Course Calendar

This is an outline of the semester which contains some key dates to remember (holidays, readings, assignment due dates, etc.). This calendar is subject to change, but you should consider it to be accurate unless I inform you otherwise.

Week 1	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Thu 1/22	Hello, introductions, syllabus, course overview		
Week 2	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 1/27	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Acts 1-II	<i>Midsummer</i> Acts 1-II	
Thu 1/29	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Acts III-IV	<i>Midsummer</i> Acts 1II-IV	
Week 3	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 2/3	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Act V	<i>Midsummer</i> Act V	
Thu 2/5	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Acts I-II	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Acts I-II	
Week 4	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 2/10	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Acts II-III	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Acts II-III	
Thu 2/12	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Act V	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Act V	

Week 5	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 2/17	<i>1 Henry IV</i> Acts I-II	<i>1 Henry IV</i> Acts I-II	
Thu 2/19	<i>1 Henry IV</i> Acts III-IV	<i>1 Henry IV</i> Acts III-IV	
Week 6	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 2/24	<i>1 Henry IV</i> Act V	<i>1 Henry IV</i> Act V	
Thu 2/26	<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> Acts I-II	<i>Merry Wives</i> Acts I-II (Canvas)	
Week 7	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 3/3	<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> Acts III-IV	<i>Merry Wives</i> Acts III-IV (Canvas)	
Thu 3/5	<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> Act V	<i>Merry Wives</i> Act V (Canvas)	Essay #1 due on Canvas by 11:59pm Friday 3/6

Week 8	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 3/10	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> Acts I-II	<i>Merchant</i> Acts I-II	
Thu 3/12	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> Acts III-IV	<i>Merchant</i> Acts III-IV	
Week 9	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 3/17	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> Act V	<i>Merchant</i> Act V	

Thu 3/19	<i>Hamlet</i> Acts I-II	<i>Hamlet</i> Acts I-II	
Week 10	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 3/24	<i>Hamlet</i> Acts III-IV	<i>Hamlet</i> Acts III-IV	
Thu 3/26	<i>Hamlet</i> Act V	<i>Hamlet</i> Act V	
Week 11	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 3/31	Spring Recess (NO CLASS)		
Thu 4/2	Spring Recess (NO CLASS)		
Week 12	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 4/7	<i>Othello</i> Acts I-II	<i>Othello</i> Acts I-II	
Thu 4/9	<i>Othello</i> Acts III-IV	<i>Othello</i> Acts III-IV	
Week 13	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 4/14	<i>Othello</i> Act V	<i>Othello</i> Act V	
Thu 4/16	<i>Macbeth</i> Acts I-II	<i>Macbeth</i> Acts I-II	
Week 14	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due

Tue 4/21	<i>Macbeth</i> Acts III–IV	<i>Macbeth</i> Acts III–IV	
Thu 4/23	<i>Macbeth</i> Act V	<i>Macbeth</i> Act V	
Week 15	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 4/28	<i>The Tempest</i> Acts I–II	<i>The Tempest</i> Acts I–II	
Thu 4/30	<i>The Tempest</i> Acts III–IV	<i>The Tempest</i> Acts III–IV	Essay #2 due on Canvas by 11:59pm Friday 5/1
Week 16	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 5/5	<i>The Tempest</i> Act V	<i>The Tempest</i> Act V	
Thu 5/7	Evaluations, final exam review, farewells		
Week 17	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 5/12	Finals Week (NO CLASS)		
Thu 5/14	Finals Week (NO CLASS)		
Week 18	Class Topic	Reading Due	Homework Due
Tue 5/19	Final Exam, 10:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m.		