This course offers a grounding in the fundamentals of Shakespeare studies at graduate level. It also considers the place of Shakespeare in English studies as a whole, and as the iconic author of the Renaissance period. Shakespeare keeps playing his part as the actor of our cultural fantasies. Since the time of Jakob Burckhardt in the nineteenth century, it is not too much to say that Shakespeare has occupied a central role within the cultural history of the Renaissance: ‘all Europe produced but one Shakespeare’, Burckhardt says, ‘such a mind is the rarest of Heaven’s gifts’. Shakespeare has also been pivotal in the formation of English as a university discipline and field of research, whether in techniques of textual scholarship, literary interpretation, or the cultural history of selfhood, gender, nation, and ideology. This course is designed both to familiarize students with the practices of Shakespearean research, and to examine larger questions about the humanities as a practice, which the history of Shakespearean studies raises. There will be three introductory seminars on Shakespearean essentials: (a) life history (b) textual history (c) stage history. These will be followed by seminars on a range of particular genres and themes, covering a range of issues such as: comedy/gender; history/nation; Roman plays/moral philosophy; tragedy/providence; Shakespeare’s afterlives. A range of critical approaches, from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, from Edmond Malone to New Historicism and beyond, will be interrogated during the course, which will be taught by a range of tutors within the Department.

**First Aid:**

**Editions:**

The recommended text of the complete works is the online Arden Edition (see below). However, it is also useful to have a complete printed edition; any of the Arden, or *The Norton Shakespeare* (2nd ed., 2008), or *The Oxford Shakespeare* (2nd ed., 2005), will be suitable. Remember to look to see whether the introductions and, more importantly, explanatory notes, supply your needs. For individual plays, it is always worth consulting a single-play edition. The Arden Series, now in its 3rd version, has the most comprehensive annotation; The Oxford Shakespeare (which uses different texts from the complete edition) is also mostly very good; the Cambridge series also contains some successes. The best edition depends on the play in question; we will discuss this in class. In general, we do not recommend any of the more commercial editions (e.g. the Penguin or the RSC).

**Online Shakespeare: The Shakespeare Collection:**
This extraordinary database is available through the Library’s Online Resources. It contains the Arden texts and notes complete for every play; a host of information about the original editions of the plays; and a large source of online scholarly articles.

**Online Historical Texts**

Folger Library First Folio and Second Folio: [http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=930](http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=930)

Shakespeare Quartos Archive: [http://www.quartos.org/](http://www.quartos.org/)

Shakespeare in Quarto: [http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html](http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html)

Database of Early English Playbooks: [http://deep.sas.upenn.edu/](http://deep.sas.upenn.edu/)

The Arden Shakespeare Online: [http://gale.cengage.co.uk/the-shakespeare-collection.aspx](http://gale.cengage.co.uk/the-shakespeare-collection.aspx)

**Companions:**


**Other guides:**

David Crystal, *Shakespeare’s Words* (2002), is a glossary for quick reference

Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare* (2001), is maybe the least unreliable Life

Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives* (2nd ed., 1991), shows you why such lives are unreliable

G. Bullough, *Narrative & Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols. (1957-75), indispensable

Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare’s Modern Collaborators* (2008), is the best short guide to textual matters

Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage* (3rd ed., 1992), the standard work on the original theatres

Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare’s Books* (2005), is a useful guide to Shakespeare’s reading and learning

**More and more books on Shakespeare:**

Try not to be overwhelmed. Use the library with discretion; if you find a book useless or foolish there will be another better one on the same topic. Often it is better to use scholarly journals to locate the latest work: *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Shakespeare Survey* are the standard-bearers in scholarship in the field; the former contains an annual bibliography.
SEMINARS

Brian Cummings will teach the first three seminars (Weeks 2-4). To ease our work together, I suggest a small corpus of plays to be kept in mind through these weeks: Titus Andronicus; A Midsummer Night’s Dream; As You Like It; 1 and 2 Henry IV; Hamlet; King Lear; Macbeth.

WEEK 2. LIFE HISTORY

We will consider the posthumous construction of Shakespeare the person and the author. While we will concentrate on secondary evidence, we may take a look at various works which have been held to bear the trace of the poet in a special way (Hamlet, The Sonnets, The Tempest); and we will also look at the way that the first play to be printed, Titus Andronicus, has changed in status from genuine to spurious to genuine to collaborative work.

(a) Life Records

Nicholas Rowe, Some Account of the Life &c. of Mr. William Shakespeare (1709), from vol. 1 of his edition of Shakespeare published by Jacob Tonson

This is in the Shakespeare Collection; the life begins at p. 13 of vol. 1.

On Rowe’s edn., look at [http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/Editors/Rowe.htm](http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/Editors/Rowe.htm)

-----------, Shakespeare: A Documentary Life (1975)

(b) The Art of Biography

We will also discuss a selection of recent lives of the poet. Choose one, have a bedtime read, and think about what it is trying to do:

Katherine Duncan-Jones, Ungentle Shakespeare (2001)
James Shapiro, 1599: A year in the Life of William Shakespeare (2005)

(c) The Question of Authorship

Brian Vickers, Shakespeare, Co-Author (2002)
Edmund Malone, Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakespeare were written (1778)
Edward Dowden, Shakespeare, his Mind and Art (1875)

WEEK 3. TEXTUAL HISTORY
We will look at the establishment of the Shakespearean text, especially via first-hand examination of the three formative ‘complete works’ editions; and also by considering the textual fortunes of the play that is now the most contentiously divided between ‘Quarto’ and ‘Folio’: *King Lear*.

(a)

_Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. Published According to the True Originall Copies. The First Folio (1623); The Second Folio (1632) &c._

The four folio editions of Shakespeare are all available online in the library

_The plays and poems of William Shakspere, in ten volumes; collated verbatim with the most authentick copies, and revised: with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators; to which are added, an essay on the chronological order of his plays; ed. Edmond Malone_ (London, 1790) [in The Shakespeare Collection]

(b)

_M. William Shak-sppeare: his true chronicle historie of the life and death of King Lear (1608)_

_M. VVilliam Shake-sppeare, his true chronicle history of the life and death of King Lear_ (tp: 1608; 1619?)

The quarto text is available in a facsimile in the library, and also online; we will compare with the First Folio text of *The Tragedy of King Lear* (1623).

Look up “King Lear” on EEBO: you will find eight entries (not including complete works, of course), including Nahum Tate’s post-Restoration versions.

Try to look at some modern editions. Older texts (e.g. Muir (Arden 2)) are conflated, as is Foakes (Arden 3). Wells (OUP) prints Q1. The Oxford Shakespeare (Wells, Taylor and others) prints two separate texts; Weis prints in parallel texts; the Norton goes the whole hog and provides THREE (yes, three) versions.

R. B.McKerrow, _An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students_ (1994); orig. published 1928
W.W. Greg, _The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare_ (1951)

Laurie Maguire, _Shakespearean Suspect Texts: The ‘Bad’ Quartos and their Contexts_ (1996)

Lukas Erne, _Shakespeare’s Modern Collaborators_ (2007)
----------, ‘Shakespeare and the Publication of His Plays’, _Shakespeare Quarterly_, 53, (2002), 1-20

On the text of *King Lear*, see the various eds; also:
Peter Blayney, _The Texts of King Lear and their Origins_ (rev. ed. 2007)
Gary Taylor and Michael Warren, eds, _The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare’s Two Versions of "King Lear"_ (1986)
We will think about the presence of the stage, both historically in the attempts to reconstruct the conditions of the original theatres; and in terms of the problem of ‘memory’ the stage always invokes. Try if you can to visit the New Globe on Bankside.

For this seminar we will concentrate on comedy: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It*. We will consider (i) the Development of the Elizabethan Stage (ii) the Fool in History (iii) Clowns & Fools in Shakespeare’s Company

**Plays:**

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1595/6)

*As You Like It* (1599)

**On staging:**

J.R. Mulryne & Margaret Shewring (eds), *Shakespeare’s Globe Rebuilt* (1997)
E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (1923)
C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy* (1959), chs 3, 6, 9
Peter Holland, ed., *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance* (2006)

**On folly:**

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Eng. tr. 1968), chs 1-3
William Empson, 'Praise of Folly' and 'Fool in King Lear', *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951)
DR RICHARD ROWLAND

In this seminar we shall be exploring the relationship between the writing of chronicle history in the sixteenth century, and the emergence, at the end of the 1580s, of plays that use – and distort – those histories. We will also be thinking about the crisis in historical representation at the close of the century, and the demise of the chronicle plays.

Primary texts: 1 and 2 Henry IV, Henry V

The most important task for this seminar (and the next) is to read the plays themselves, preferably in a single-volume scholarly edition; we don’t specify which ones, but this usually means either the Oxford, Cambridge or Arden (third series), although I should perhaps warn that the Oxford Henry V has proved controversial.

If you wish to explore some secondary reading, I would suggest a dip into some of the following:

Phyllis Rackin, Stages of History: Shakespeare’s English Chronicles (1990)
D. R. Woolf, Reading History in Early Modern England (2005)
Shakespeare Survey, 63 (2010); a special issue on the history plays. Be warned, the Library catalogues and shelves this as a book, rather than as a journal: shelfmark is MA 102.79 SHA
Neema Parvini, Shakespeare’s History Plays: Rethinking Historicism (2010)

WEEK 6. READING WEEK

WEEK 7. SHAKESPEARE & TRAGICOMEDY

In this seminar we will be thinking about the recent invention, at the very end of the sixteenth century, of a new theatrical genre, with its own rules of engagement, and even a prototype play to illustrate the theories of its creator, Giovanni Battista Guarini. Shakespeare and his fellow players knew about the new genre from the moment that it arrived in England (via a translation of Guarini’s play, Il Pastor Fido, and via word of mouth from English dramatists who knew the Italian playwright), but to what extent and in what ways did Shakespeare’s own writing reflect its influence?

Primary texts: Measure for Measure, The Winter’s Tale; Guarini’s Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry.

As with the history plays, you would do well to read the Shakespeare in single-volume scholarly editions. I will distribute copies of the Guarini in the previous class.

Some secondary reading you might wish to investigate:
Roger Warren, *Staging Shakespeare’s Late Plays* (1990)
Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare’s Late Style* (2006)
Jason Lawrence, ‘Who the devil taught thee so much Italian?’: *Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England* (2006)

WEEK 8./shakespeare’s rome

Dr Freya Sierhuis

The point of departure of this seminar is the lasting hold of Roman antiquity, on the poetic and political imagination of the English Renaissance. What made Rome such a powerful cultural idea that seems at once to have fascinated and repelled poets and playwrights? The seminar focuses on Shakespeare’s Roman tragedies, *Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*, examining the way in which Shakespeare uses material from Roman history – primarily Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* and Livy’s *Ab Urbe condita* – to conjure up a radically different world that challenges many of the fundamental assumptions of Elizabethan social and political order. Rome’s alterity allows for the examination of a set of complex and interrelated questions concerning the nature of power, the relation between individual and political liberty, and on the relation between liberty and empire through which ‘Rome’ emerges as a domain of contradictory values and conflicting ideas which, above all, defies clichés about the binary oppositions between civilization and its Others: instead it shows liberty defined in relation to tyranny and mob rule, moral heroism linked to ambition and Realpolitik, and barbarism at the heart of civilization.

For this reading you should focus on reading the plays themselves, in a single-volume scholarly edition. For the secondary reading, the following titles offer a good way to start:

Armitage, David (ed), *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009)
WEEK 9. THE TEMPEST IN PERFORMANCE

PROF JUDITH BUCHANAN

This week we concentrate on The Tempest; its generic conventions, dynamic performance history and amenability to appropriation in a range of causes. Perhaps more than any other, this play has become a highly sensitive indicator of cultural change across its history of production. We take a couple of sample moments from that rich history – the Herbert Beerbohm Tree stage production of 1904/5 and a 1908 film production (only 10 minutes long) that tangentially drew on it – in order to examine how culturally and politically revealing even relatively simple pieces of stage business can be. Alongside this, we place Greenaway’s visually, intellectually and artistically overloaded film adaptation, Prospero’s Books, partly to prompt reflection on the possibilities and irresolutions of the play’s final act.

**Primary reading:**


Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s 1904 edition – an edition produced to accompany and record his own 1904/5 London stage production. Available online at:
http://www.archive.org/stream/comedytempestasa00shakuoft

(Dip throughout to see how Tree has edited the text, and read the final few pages in attentive detail.)

**Secondary reading:**


Andrew Gurr, The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642 (CUP, 2009), 4th edn, pp. 190-203. NB: you do not need to remember the exact reconstructed dimensions of each building (!), but you do need to log principal differences between the open-air playhouses and indoor halls and to be aware of what opportunities these differences afforded playwrights.

Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe, ‘Adaptation as a Cultural Process’ in New Wave Shakespeare on Screen (Polity, 2007), pp. 25-44.


**Required viewing:**
1. *The Tempest* (Clarendon Film Company: Percy Stow, 1908)

A 10-minute film. You will need to stop by the library and watch it from the BFI's *Silent Shakespeare* DVD in your own time. Please do not take the DVD out of the library so that it is there for each of you to watch. The surviving print is damaged so is missing the very beginning and the very end of the film as originally made. Because made in 1908 in long takes from a static, frontally placed camera position, it will almost certainly feel like an odd (and probably a primitive) viewing experience. How is the story told (ie in what sequence)? What from the play is omitted? What use is made of intertitles? Why might the film industry have wanted to make short, potted versions of Shakespeare of this sort? How does this Caliban differ from or anticipate any other Calibans you know of? The final surviving scene in this short film depicts a rather rushed embarking to set sail back to Milan, blocked on a shallow stage against a stagy backdrop. But what is Caliban doing throughout that scene and to what sort of interpretive priorities might this action testify?


Can you amongst yourselves arrange a convenient time for all in the group to view the library DVD copy together? NB: HRC rooms can be made available for this. Contact helen.jacobs@york.ac.uk

A bold bombardment of sensory overload, full of artistic and mythological reference. Performances are smothered in overblown costumes, largely silenced in an act of uncompromising vocal appropriation and outclassed by cinematic effects. And yet…and yet! Memorable moments that fix an idea or interpret a Shakespearean dramatic moment with a fierce intelligence? From the exhausting viewing experience that this highly stylised film offers, what emerges that is memorable, cinematically and/or interpretively?

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WEEK 10.  SHAKESPEARE & TRAGEDY

DR KEVIN KILLEEN

This session will look at *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, starting from the recurrent lapses of meaning, and the apparent failure of language in the plays, the ‘lies like truth’ that constitute not just the plot devices by which the tragedies are brought about, but rather a constituent failure of communication, in plays that abound with overloaded metaphor. The class with explore how this rhetorical collapse coexists with the plays’ political dynamics – the dark Jesuit underbelly of meaning in *Macbeth*, with its thick reference to the crisis over equivocation and the question of political unity and disunity in *King Lear*. You will be asked to prepare, in particular, by thinking about how you might characterise (and contrast) the rhetorical dynamics of the two plays.

*Primary Reading*
*Macbeth* and *King Lear* (preferably Arden Editions).

A Handout will be provided prior to class.

**Secondary Reading**


John Wain (ed.), *Shakespeare: Macbeth, a casebook* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994)


