

Bergen Community College  
Division of Arts/Humanities  
Department of English

**Course Syllabus**

LIT 221: Shakespeare  
Credit hours: 3  
Semester and Year  
Meeting Time and Location

Instructor's Name:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

**Course Description:**

LIT 221 is an introductory course in the works of William Shakespeare. Students will read several plays and sonnets. The variety of Shakespeare's themes, such as the nature of love, betrayal, leadership, and the power of art, will be examined.

3 lectures, 3 credits. Prerequisite: WRT-101, General Education Course (pending approval).

**Student Learning Objectives:**

The students who successfully complete the requirements of this course will be able to:

1. Identify the major works of William Shakespeare.
2. Employ close textual analysis to interpret and evaluate Shakespeare's works.
3. Analyze a variety of Shakespeare's texts with an understanding of the themes and issues addressed in each.
4. Examine various techniques that Shakespeare used in constructing texts, and demonstrate, in both class discussion and in written assignments, an understanding of these techniques.
5. Apply appropriate critical theories/lenses to understand, evaluate, and analyze the work of William Shakespeare.
6. Produce a properly formatted written evaluation of selected works; and demonstrate competency in both research methodologies and literary analysis.

### **Assessment of Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will respond critically to the readings assigned, in discussion and writing. The specific criteria for grading each assignment will be explained during the course. Papers will be graded primarily on content, on their relevance to the questions assigned and development of the response. However, clarity of expression will also be taken into consideration.

### **Course Content:**

Beginning with the sonnets, this course will examine the incredible variety and depth of selected works of William Shakespeare. The traditions from which Shakespeare emerges, in both poetry and drama, will be discussed and selected sonnets examined as an introduction to Shakespeare's language. The plays will then be read, with selections taken from the comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances. Various aspects of the Renaissance world will be discussed, but the focus will be on the plays themselves. The wide variety of themes that the plays address will be discussed and students will be given some background in the rich history of critical approaches to the plays. Gaining an appreciation for the continuing relevance and importance of Shakespeare's work will be a goal of the course.

### **Special Features of the Course:**

To be designated by the individual instructor, these may include the use of instructional technologies such as Internet and PowerPoint presentations. Additionally, students can be expected to be exposed to various aspects of information literacy, such as using research techniques for assignments and correctly citing source material.

### **Sample Course Texts and Other Required Materials:**

Suggested anthologies: *The Riverside Shakespeare*, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*.

Suggested paperbacks: Signet editions, Bantams editions, Oxford World Classics

### **Writing and Examination Requirements and Grading Policy:**

The following requirements will be met:

1. 2 short papers of about 5 pages each. Papers will be written using MLA format. There will be assigned topics from which you may choose. Topics will be given 2 weeks in advance. 25% each
2. A midterm and a final exam. 15% each
3. Regular reading quizzes, and a few short writing assignments in class. 15%
4. Class participation. 5%

**Literature Discipline Statement:** Literature courses at Bergen Community College foster in students the ability to read, analyze, and write about literary texts.

**Attendance Policy:**

BCC Attendance Policy: “All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.”

Class Attendance Policy: Poor attendance will affect your grade. You are allowed two absences for any reason. After the second absence, you will be required to meet with the instructor. More than three absences may result in a failing grade for the course. Arriving late to class is disruptive: if you arrive to class late twice, it will count as one absence.

**BCC Statement on Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and may be a violation of U.S. Copyright laws. Plagiarism is defined as taking someone else’s words, opinions, or ideas and claiming them as one’s own.

Examples of plagiarism include instances in which a student:

- knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own
- represents previously completed academic work as current
- submits a paper or other academic work for credit which includes words, ideas, data or creative work of others without acknowledging the source
- uses another author’s exact words without enclosing them in quotation marks and citing them appropriately
- paraphrases or summarizes another author’s words without citing the source appropriately

Note: See page 43 of the BBC catalog for a description of Academic Regulations.

**Statement from BCC Writing Center**

The BCC Writing Center serves the writing needs of the College community. It is staffed with professional and peer tutors, as well as English Department faculty who guide students in all aspects of writing.

Writing Tutoring is available for all registered students, regardless of whether you are currently enrolled in a writing course. During busy periods (midterms and finals), students currently enrolled in English courses will be given priority in scheduling appointments with tutors, while all other students may take advantage of our weekly writing walk-in hours.

When you enter through the main doors of our Tutoring Center and pass the reception desk (where you'll make your appointments), you'll find the Writing Center at the far end of the room.

They have computers and a wide variety of handbooks and composition readers available for use in the Writing Center, as well as handouts designed to answer common writing questions, including, "How do I use MLA citation?" and "How do I paraphrase and when should I quote?"

Visit the Writing Center early for help with essays, research papers, and even creative writing! They can help you get started as well as help you revise. Writing Center tutors can:

- **Help identify strengths and weaknesses in your writing**
- **Teach strategies to help you get started**
- **Work with you on ways to organize research**
- **Help you clarify what you want to say and how best to say it**
- **Provide suggestions on how to improve your work**
- **Help identify and clarify key concepts in reading passages and work on reading comprehension of a variety of texts (including textbooks, poetry, and fiction)**
- **Work with you to overcome mechanical, grammatical, and word choice problems**

**Services for Students with Disabilities:**

A wide variety of services is available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Specialized Services (OSS). For further information, go to the OSS website: [www.bergen.edu/oss](http://www.bergen.edu/oss) or go to Room S131.

**Statement on BCC Library:**

The Sidney Silverman library at BCC is a superb resource for students in all disciplines, but particularly for students in Literature sections. Please visit the library and library website and take advantage of the collection and the many services the library offers. Whether or not your instructor requires you to use the resources in the library, you can gain invaluable background information on Shakespeare, his theater, his environment, and the rich history of criticism on his works.

## Sample Course Outline

### Week One

#### **Theme: Playing with Tradition**

Introduction of course, syllabus, requirements and outcomes.

The Elizabethan world; Shakespeare's language; poetic form.

### Week Two

The sonnet tradition (Petrarch, Sidney, Spenser) before Shakespeare and his innovations.

Selected sonnets

### Week Three

#### **Theme: When Comedy Is No Longer Funny**

Shakespeare's theater; background and traditions of Comedy

Much Ado About Nothing

### Week Four

Much Ado About Nothing

### Week Five

As You Like It

### Week Six

As You Like It

The Winter's Tale

**\*Paper 1 due\***

### Week Seven

The Winter's Tale

#### **Theme: Governing the Body Politic**

The Histories: form and content, sources and themes.

Richard III

### Week Eight

Richard III

**\*Midterm Exam\***

### Week Nine

Henry IV Part 1

**Week Ten**

Henry IV Part 1

**Week Eleven****Theme: The Crown is Too Heavy**

The Tragedies: Shakespeare's innovations

Hamlet

**Week Twelve**

Hamlet

King Lear

**\*Paper 2 due\***

**Week Thirteen**

King Lear

**Week Fourteen****Theme: When in Rome**

Leadership, social commentary

Julius Caesar

**Week Fifteen**

Julius Caesar

**Week Sixteen**

**\*Final Exam\***

Note: There will be a number of quizzes throughout the semester as well as several short writing assignments, both in class and as homework.