

COURSE GUIDEBOOK



Shakespeare: The Word and the Action

Part I

- Lecture 1: Shakespeare's Wavelengths
- Lecture 2: The Multiple Actions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Lecture 3: The Form of Shakespeare's Sonnets
- Lecture 4: Love in Shakespeare's Sonnets
- Lecture 5: Love and Artifice in *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Much Ado About Nothing*
- Lecture 6: *As You Like It*
- Lecture 7: The Battles of *Henry VI*
- Lecture 8: *Richard III* and the Renaissance

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COURSE GUIDEBOOK



Shakespeare: The Word and the Action

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Part I



THE TEACHING COMPANY®

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Peter Saccio has taught at Dartmouth College since 1966. He chaired the English department from 1984 to 1988; in addition, he has won Dartmouth's J. Kenneth Huntington Memorial Award for Outstanding Teaching. He has served as visiting professor at Wesleyan University and at University College in London.

He received a B.A. from Yale University and a Ph.D. from Princeton. He is the author of *The Court Comedies of John Lyly* (1969) and *Shakespeare's English Kings* (1977), the latter a classic in its field. He edited Middleton's comedy *A Mad World, My Masters* for the *Oxford Complete Works of Thomas Middleton* (1996). He has published or delivered at conferences more than twenty papers on Shakespeare and other dramatists.

Professor Saccio has directed productions of *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*. He has devised and directed several programs of scenes from Shakespeare and from modern British drama, and he served as dramaturg for the productions of his Dartmouth colleagues. He has acted the Shakespearean roles of Casca, Angelo, Bassanio, and Henry IV as well as various parts in the ancient plays of Plautus and the modern plays of Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, and Peter Shaffer.

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Shakespeare: The Word and the Action

Scope:

In Part I of "Shakespeare: The Word and the Action," Professor Saccio examines what he has termed the "characteristic wavelengths," conventions of speech and action with which William Shakespeare constructed his plays and poetry. In Lecture One Saccio focuses on the words and action of *Richard III*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in Lecture Two he continues with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, examining its multiple plots. In Lectures Three and Four he discusses Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, concentrating in Lecture Three on their form and in Lecture Four on the conventions of love poetry. Saccio then goes on to explore comedies; Lecture Five focuses on love's conventions in *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, and Lecture Six does the same for *As You Like It*. Lectures Seven and Eight examine the plays devoted to the history of Henry VI and Richard of Gloucester. Lecture Seven looks at the three parts of *Henry VI*, and Lecture Eight explores *Richard III*.

In Part II Saccio continues to address the world of the histories, examining history and family in *Henry IV* in Lecture Nine. In Lecture Ten he begins to engage the tragedies with varieties of action in *Hamlet*. In Lecture Eleven Saccio examines *Coriolanus*, focusing on the title character as a hero alone. Lecture Twelve explores change in *Antony and Cleopatra*. In Lecture Thirteen Saccio returns to the world of Shakespeare's comedies to focus on plot in *Cymbeline*. In Lecture Fourteen he describes Shakespeare's uses of nature and art in *The Winter's Tale*. Lecture Fifteen addresses *The Tempest* and the varied ways in which it is interpreted. The final lecture, Lecture Sixteen, considers the real and the stage embodiments of the title character in *Henry VIII*.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of "Shakespeare: The Word and the Action," you should be able to:

1. Identify types of plots and sources used by Shakespeare and compare and contrast these in his work.
2. Describe ways that Shakespeare uses verse and prose to achieve varied effects in his plays and poetry.
3. Define types of verse Shakespeare uses and scan passages from the plays and the sonnets.
4. Discuss the multiple plot lines that Shakespeare develops in various plays.
5. Identify allusions to classical works and analyze the uses Shakespeare makes of such materials.

6. Describe sources Shakespeare uses for plays based on history and discuss how he adapts these for various effects.
7. Discuss the conventions of love poetry that Shakespeare uses and adapts in plays and sonnets.
8. Analyze Shakespeare's use of material such as fairy tales for dramatic plots and explore audience reactions.
9. Discuss the uses Shakespeare makes of English history and of the idea of kingship.
10. Analyze the patterns of action in a play, focusing on how Shakespeare renders action significant on stage.
11. Describe the pattern of imagery in a play and discuss how such patterns contribute to meaning in drama.
12. Compare and contrast the words and actions of an early play with a late one, judging their relative success.

Lecture One

Shakespeare's Wavelengths

Scope: "Shakespeare: The Word and the Action" acknowledges that understanding Shakespeare can be difficult because his plays were written four hundred years ago. Readers and students can overcome this difficulty by understanding Shakespeare's "wavelengths," those conventions of speech and action by which he constructed his plays and by which they communicate. The first lecture focuses upon speech: words and their arrangement. Examples of prose, blank verse, and rhymed verse are drawn from *Richard III*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the characteristics of these verbal forms are demonstrated. The lecture shows how poetic meter and its variations may relate to the subject matter of a given speech or scene or to the feelings expressed by a character.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Define blank verse and scan the meter in a given example from Shakespeare.
2. Explain why variations in meter occur at particular places.
3. Define prose and explain why Shakespeare uses prose in a given instance.
4. Identify various kinds of rhymed verse and explain how they are used.
5. Discuss the general effect of verse and explain why Shakespeare uses it.

Outline

- I. Some people fear reading Shakespeare.
 - A. The fact that he wrote four hundred years ago is part of the problem.
 1. His words are now archaic.
 2. His grammar seems strange to modern readers.
 3. He often used complex plots.
 - B. Long and boring speeches are also part of the problem.
 1. Interminable speeches by minor characters can be boring.
 2. Boredom is exacerbated by excessive footnotes.
 - C. Teachers who try to do too much can alienate students, especially in high school.
 1. Excessive explanation is one of the villains.
 2. Most teenagers do not have attention spans sufficient to devote months to one play.
 3. Teachers can make plays come alive by limiting the time spent on each and by allowing students to act out scenes.

- II.** The plays are alive if you get onto their wavelengths.
- A.** We need to understand the conventions of playwriting in Shakespeare's time.
 1. We need to learn how lines and verse work.
 2. We need to understand how scenes build, how characters are poised against others, and how plot lines echo.
 - B.** The goal is, as Hamlet tells the Players, to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action."
 1. The coordination of word and action, speech and event, helps us understand the plays.
 2. Shakespeare used a vocabulary of 27,000 words; the King James version of the Bible uses only 7,000.
 3. Readers do not focus enough on the material quality of the words—that is, how the words fit together.
- III.** We will focus on how Shakespeare fit the words together.
- A.** Words often appear in verse, such as in Clarence's dream-speech in *Richard III* (1.4).
 1. The speech is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter (blank verse).
 2. Blank verse is made up of ten-syllable lines in which even-numbered syllables are stressed.
 3. Each line is both an aesthetic unit (a metrical pattern) and a mental unit (a unit of thought).
 - B.** Words can also appear as prose, as in the speeches of Clarence's murderers in the same scene.
 1. Their prose is organized only by units of thought (sentence and paragraph).
 2. Prose, unlike poetry, does not employ regular patterns of stressed or unstressed syllables.
 3. Social class may determine whether a character speaks verse or prose, but there are exceptions.
- IV.** Shakespeare uses verse or prose depending on the theatrical or emotional effects he seeks.
- A.** Verse is heightened speech that commands attention on a stage with few modern effects or props.
 1. Rationalists hold that verse appeals to our sense of order.
 2. Romantics believe that verse relates to our physiological rhythms and creates excitement.
 - B.** Prose can reflect social station, subject matter, or great emotion.
 1. The murderers' prose marks their low social station.
 2. The murderers' prose reveals them as incapable of Clarence's imaginative vision.
 3. The murderers' prose orchestrates an emotional transition to Clarence's absurd end.
- C.** Scenes such as Clarence's dream are described in ways that demonstrate verse patterns and content.
1. Parallel structures provide balance expected in iambic pentameter.
 2. The iambic pentameter pattern breaks with an irregular line that reflects the disorder of the scene.
 3. Clarence's dream is an imaginative expression of Clarence's guilty conscience.
 4. The murderers also feel guilt but are not as imaginative as Clarence; this lack of imagination is indicative of how different they are from Clarence.
- V.** Blank verse is used differently in other places.
- A.** Queen Margaret's speech in *Richard III* (4.4) shows the effect of balance and of end-stopped blank verse.
 1. Her speech describes her displacement by another.
 2. The parallel elements of the verse illustrate her hope that Elizabeth will suffer the fall she herself has.
 - B.** Her speech also reflects her notion of exact justice.
 1. She believes in a quid pro quo justice that redresses every wrong.
 2. This concept is reflected in the verse's alliteration, balance, and antithesis.
 - C.** Portia's speech in *The Merchant of Venice* (4.1) reflects her notion of freely granted mercy.
 1. Margaret's lines are end stopped; Portia's are run on.
 2. Portia's sentences often begin and end midline, creating strong midline pauses (caesuras).
 3. Portia's sentences vary greatly in length, reflecting the quality of mercy.
- VI.** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* exhibits different modes of speech through five different groups of characters.
- A.** Theseus and Hippolyta have the highest form of speech in the play.
 1. They are nobility about to be married.
 2. They speak in blank verse.
 - B.** The young Athenian lovers' speech varies.
 1. They start speaking in blank verse because they are upper class.
 2. They shift to rhymed couplets to show that they are being controlled by their passions.
 - C.** The working-class artisans' speech differs from that of the noble characters.
 1. Their social station is reflected by their use of prose.

2. They are preparing to present a play at Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding.
- D. The characters in the artisans' play speak very artificially.
1. They speak in rhymed quatrains.
 2. Their speeches are very bad rhymed verse.
- E. The fairies speak in a variety of unusual meters and rhymed patterns (2.1).
1. The fairies use rhymed cretic dimeter, trochaic tetrameter, and iambic tetrameter and pentameter.
 2. Whenever the moon is mentioned the meter becomes irregular.

Readings:

Essential: Scragg, *Discovering Shakespeare's Meaning* (Barnes and Noble, 1988), chapter 1; Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (Random House, 1979), chapters 1-3.

Recommended: Examples given in the lecture: Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.4 and 4.4.82-115; *The Merchant of Venice*, 4.1.182-203; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Analyze a twenty-line Shakespearean passage: Discuss what is said, how it is said, why it is said in this way.
2. Describe how poetic or verse passages and prose sections engage reader interest in differing ways.

Lecture Two

The Multiple Actions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Scope: The lecture discusses *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with an emphasis on plot construction. It shows the range of Shakespeare's sources and the way in which Shakespeare, although drawing his materials from diverse places, unified them with analogy. Analogous actions (similar situations in different stories) constitute a primary wavelength in Shakespearean drama. Each of the plot lines in *Dream* concerns love; each displays (with differing detail and emphasis) aspects of love, which is both a personal emotion and a powerful force in society and the universe. The lecture concludes by showing the diversity of *Dream* as organized into pervasive binaries: binaries of place such as court/forest and sunlight/moonlight, binaries of emotion such as duty/desire and reason/madness, and binaries of existence such as illusion/constancy.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Analyze the multiple-plot structure, identifying analogies that keep the stories parallel.
2. Identify the sources of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
3. Discuss the primary aspects of love as presented in Shakespearean comedy.
4. Discuss the barriers to love's fulfillment.
5. Explain your interpretation of the final emphases in this play.

Outline

- I. Shakespeare uses materials disparate in both style and plot much as he uses metrical variety.
 - A. He avoids the single focus characteristic of Greek tragedy and modern realism.
 1. A single day is the focus of plays like the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* or the modern realistic play *Ghosts*.
 2. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has four sets of characters and five plot lines.
 - B. Analogy is a characteristic Shakespearean wavelength.
 1. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a single play with multiple plots.
 2. All the stories concern love and the obstacles in love's way.

- II.** The multiple sources of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* illustrate Shakespeare's eclecticism.
- A.** The largest part of the play concerns the young lovers, Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena.
 - 1. Confused lovers and rivals for one woman are very old plot elements.
 - 2. Hermia's father has chosen for her husband Demetrius rather than Lysander, the man she loves.
 - 3. Paternal authority is ancient Athenian law; the daughter must obey her father, die, or live a chaste life.
 - 4. The lovers escape the authorities by fleeing to the woods.
 - B.** Bottom and his friends are comic versions of Elizabethan workmen.
 - 1. Their names seem pure stereotypes but are common English names.
 - 2. The practice of artisans putting on plays existed from medieval to Elizabethan times.
 - C.** The names of Theseus and Hippolyta come from classical mythology by way of Chaucer's "Knight's Tale."
 - 1. Theseus was one of the founding heroes of Athens, a warrior. Here he appears a kind of medieval duke.
 - 2. Hippolyta was the Amazon queen Theseus had conquered and then married.
 - 3. Medieval references include mention of St. Valentine's Day and the notion of a medieval convent.
 - D.** The fairy world is itself an amalgam of materials from disparate sources.
 - 1. Titania, a name used in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for both Diana and Circe, comes from classical mythology.
 - 2. Oberon, king of the fairies, derives from medieval romantic narrative.
 - 3. Puck, a kind of hobgoblin, comes from English folklore.
 - 4. The notion of tiny fairies, named after small natural objects, is an Elizabethan invention.
 - 5. Bottom as a donkey also draws on classical mythology, where mortal men are transformed into part-animals.
- III.** All the plots concern obstacles in the path of love.
- A.** Hermia and Lysander (1.1) reflect on love, which can itself be an obstacle to love.
 - 1. The speech illustrates love as both wonderful and absurd.
 - 2. Love's choices are irrational; all the lovers are equally attractive.
 - 3. Lovers defend their choices as highly rational; they try to justify their choices.
 - 4. Left to itself, love or law can each wreck society.
 - B.** Another obstacle in the path of love is antagonism between the sexes.
 - 1. Theseus and Hippolyta hint at antagonism between the sexes by suggesting gender differences.
 - 2. Oberon and Titania develop this antagonism in a scene about female fertility and a male need to control.
- IV.** The world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* portrays dual faces of love.
- A.** Forces show opposition: sunlight opposes moonlight, law magic, duty desire, reason madness.
 - 1. The quarrel between Titania and Oberon, two supernatural powers, has affected the natural world.
 - 2. The conflict between Titania and Oberon is gender-specific in its details.
 - B.** In setting and sequence, court opposes forest.
 - 1. The young lovers leave the court and city for the freedom of the woods.
 - 2. In the woods, natural behavior points up gender differences.
 - C.** Oberon and Titania respond differently according to gender.
 - 1. Titania wants to protect the child of her friend.
 - 2. Oberon wants to train the boy as a page for his court.
 - D.** When the young lovers return to Athens, gender conflicts are resolved.
 - 1. Civilized Athenian social rituals join lovers and restore order.
 - 2. The artisans' play is so terrible that its tragedy of young love does not speak to the lovers.
 - E.** Speeches by Theseus and Hippolyta point up their gender differences.
 - 1. Theseus maintains that lovers, lunatics, and poets see things that do not exist.
 - 2. Hippolyta replies that the lovers' dream suggests "something of great constancy."
 - F.** After the court sanctions the established order, the fairies enter and bless the marriages.
 - 1. The world of dreams and imagination and love must coexist with the world of reason.
 - 2. The play's structure confirms the coexistence of these two worlds, and the audience is invited to accept both points of view.

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Recommended: see *Dream* video (BBC-TV, Peter Hall, or Max Reinhardt); Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton University Press, 1959); Montrose, "Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture." In *Representing the English Renaissance*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt. 31-64. (University of California Press, 1988).

Questions to Consider:

1. Discuss the nature of love in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
2. Describe how Shakespeare depicts the fairy world and why he allows the fairies the last word in the play.

Lecture Three

The Form of Shakespeare's Sonnets

Scope: This lecture introduces Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as a volume of 154 poems whose circumstances are largely unknown: we do not know to whom they are addressed, whether they are autobiographical, whether they are in the order Shakespeare wished them to be. They do not tell a coherent story. Since we cannot attach them to biography or narrative, we may read them as a series of lyric meditations on love. They represent Shakespeare's most disciplined writing. With only three exceptions, he rigidly maintains the standard English (or "Shakespearean") sonnet form: fourteen lines of iambic pentameter verse arranged in three quatrains and a closing couplet. The lecture goes on to explore what Shakespeare was able to do within that limited form. Sonnet 12 is examined as an example of verbal solidity. Sonnet 55 is examined as an artful balance of dynamic opposing forces. Sonnet 129, one of the few genuinely dramatic sonnets, is examined as a soliloquy in which the speaker pours out his self-disgust.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Analyze the technical elements of a Shakespearean sonnet (meter, rhyme, alliteration, pacing).
2. Describe the imaginative structure of a Shakespearean sonnet (patterns of images).
3. Compare and discuss the technical mechanisms in relation to the images and the implied statements about love.

Outline

- I. In 1609 Thomas Thorpe published 154 love sonnets by Shakespeare.
 - A. Although written in the first person, they do not provide a reliable account of Shakespeare's life.
 1. They are not autobiographical.
 2. They do not follow any clearly chronological pattern.
 3. The first 126 appear to address an aristocratic, fair young man.
 4. The next twenty-six refer to a dark-haired, somewhat promiscuous woman.
 5. The final two sonnets address Cupid.
 - B. We can come to only a few conclusions about the poems.
 1. The poems addressed to the young man and to the dark-haired lady may be literary inventions.

2. There is no ordering principle in the collection; the order apparently lacks Shakespeare's authority .
3. A great deal of attention has been given to trying to have the poems tell a story.
4. The sonnets do not tell a story; they do not present a narrative.
5. Few of the sonnets are dramatic; rather they are lyric meditations on love.
6. Almost all of the sonnets follow the standard English or Shakespearean sonnet form.
 - a. Fourteen lines of iambic pentameter verse.
 - b. Seven rhymes arranged as three quatrains and a closing couplet.

II. Sonnet 12 exemplifies the Shakespearean sonnet form.

- A. It reflects on the decay of mortal things.
 1. It describes time leading to death and decay.
 2. The decay refers specifically to the decline of youth and beauty, the decline of a young man.
- B. This sonnet follows the pattern faithfully.
 1. It has fourteen regular end-stopped lines.
 2. Each of the first eight lines is soldered together with alliteration.
 3. Line 14 returns to the same alliteration as line 8, answering death and decay with "breed."
- C. The poem has a secondary structure, that of the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet, which gives it great internal strength.
 1. Lines 1-8 (the octave) deal with decay in nature.
 2. Lines 9-14 (the sestet) deal with decay in the beloved.

III. Sonnet 55 makes its single bold statement—that words provide fame and outlast monuments—four times.

- A. The verbs generate the poem's energy.
 1. The spoils of time are depicted with vigorous verbs that form strong statements about fame and war.
 2. With measured and confident motion, the poet describes the beloved vigorously making a place for himself.
- B. Variation in meter from iambic pentameter heightens the activity of the sonnet.
 1. "Root out" (l. 6) is read as either trochaic or spondaic.
 2. "Quick fire" (l. 7) reads best as a spondee and is suggestive on multiple levels.
 3. "Pace forth" (l. 10) is read as trochaic or spondaic.

IV. Sonnet 129 is one of few genuinely dramatic sonnets.

- A. It is a soliloquy full of images of sexual self-loathing and self-hatred. The emotion is very vivid; feelings have not been distanced into a series of images.
- B. Rhetorical devices give the poem its power.
 1. The sonnet relies on *congeries*, the heaping up of words, as in the list of adjectives in lines 3 and 4.
 2. There are frequent echoes of consonant sounds (*alliteration*) and vowel sounds (*assonance*).
 3. There are repeated phrases as well as repeated forms of words, such as the verb "have."
 4. The sonnet also relies on *antimetabole*, a Greek term that denotes the rhetoric of reversal.
 - a. Antimetabole is a governing wavelength in Hamlet's speeches.
 - b. Words, phrases, grammatical structures, and ideas are reversed.
- C. The reference of the word "lust" grows and changes.
 1. Lust is passion, described as "perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame."
 2. Lust is the lustful person who will do anything to have the beloved person.
 3. Lust is the object of desire, "enjoyed no sooner but despised straight."

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*; Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (Random House, 1979), chapter 7.

Recommended: Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Yale University Press, 1977, the most detailed edition) , preface and commentary; Hecht, introduction in Blakemore Evans, *The Sonnets*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Choose any Shakespearean sonnet that appeals to you and analyze it thoroughly.
2. Describe patterns of imagery that recur—the nature of fame or of time, the desire for love or immortality.

Sonnet 12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;
Then of thy beauty do I question make
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
 And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defense
 Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

Sonnet 55

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this pow'ful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
 So, till the Judgment that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Sonnet 129

Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;

Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream.
 All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Lecture Four

Love in Shakespeare's Sonnets

Scope: This lecture explores five of Shakespeare's sonnets and asserts not that the poet has a particular philosophy of love but that he does not. Shakespeare was not a writer like Aeschylus or Milton who wrote to tell his readers what to believe. Rather he was absorbed in the immediate situation, inhabiting the idea or the emotion of a given moment. Sonnet 146 emphatically expresses Christian renunciation of the body, but we cannot take it as the conclusive or definitive view of the sonnet sequence. Sonnet 98 is a playful poem in praise of the beloved, outrageously inverting the Platonic hierarchy by asserting that the beloved is the form of beauty, while Sonnet 105 flirts with "idolatrous" forms of love. Sonnet 87 appears apologetic and self-negating, but it also subtly criticizes the beloved person. Sonnet 116 offers a resounding definition of love endorsed by many readers while making most of its assertions in negatives rather than in concrete positives.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Describe the assertions made about love by many sonnets.
2. Identify allusions to Christian, Platonic, and other doctrines that have addressed the subject of love.
3. Discuss these views of love in the context of their sources and their analogues in various philosophies.
4. Compare and contrast the views of love expressed in the sonnets.
5. Summarize the kinds of romantic and sexual experiences the sonnets describe.

Outline

- I. Shakespeare's sonnets do not express a single philosophy of love.
 - A. They express various and contradictory ideas about love.
 1. He is not an artist like Milton who wrote a poem explaining his conclusions about God.
 2. Nor is he a playwright like Aeschylus who wrote a play about his idea of justice.
 - B. The sonnets reflect on feelings and situations related to love.
 1. The poet is absorbed in the situation of each individual sonnet.
 2. The poet inhabits a mind, a feeling at a particular moment.
 3. The variety of the sonnets is analogous to the variety of characters in his plays.

- II. Sonnet 146 expresses the traditional Christian renunciation of the body.
 - A. One should, as St. Paul suggests, keep the body under control.
 1. The body is accused of "painting" its walls; it is a "fading mansion."
 2. Instead one should pay attention to the interior, the soul, suggested by images of food.
 - B. Sonnet 146 exemplifies the problem in viewing the sonnets as a sequence or a narrative.
 1. If this were the last of the sonnets, it could be taken as Shakespeare's final view on love or salvation.
 2. This sonnet is not, however, the final one; it appears to stand as one of many possible views.
 3. Rather than a coherent exposition, the sonnets are a series of meditations that explore different veins.
- III. Sonnet 98 is a playful poem praising the beloved.
 - A. The beloved is sweet in a distinctive sense.
 1. "Sweet" is used here to mean fresh and unspoiled.
 2. Sugar is more readily available today than it was in Shakespeare's time.
 - B. The image of Saturn is whimsical.
 1. Saturn was the grandfather of the gods, the figure of Father Time.
 2. In the old astronomy, Saturn was the most remote planet, cold, leaden, hardly likely to leap.
 - C. The poem adapts the Platonic ladder leading from particular things to abstract forms.
 1. The first three quatrains reverse the platonic order—from gods to earth, to the particular beautiful beloved.
 2. The human beloved is outrageously declared to be the embodiment of beauty.
- IV. Sonnet 105 praises the Beloved as "fair, kind, and true."
 - A. The poet exploits two senses of the word "idolatry."
 1. The speaker here pretends to refute the charge of idolatry by insisting he worships only one God.
 2. Worshipping the wrong God—the beloved, one who is not a god—is, of course, idolatrous.
 - B. The poem frequently echoes phrases used in praise of the Christian God.
 1. The beloved is substituted for God, described as a trinity: "fair, kind, and true."
 2. This poem, like other sonnets by Shakespeare, is akin to a prayer in praise of the beloved.

- V. In Sonnet 87, the speaker declares himself unworthy of the departing beloved.
- A. The poem achieves graceful pathos.
 - 1. The lines end in feminine, two-syllable rhymes.
 - 2. Heavy pauses lead to a dying away at the ends of the lines.
 - B. The effect of pathos is countered by implicit criticism of the beloved.
 - 1. Love can only be given and hazarded.
 - 2. The beloved calculates value in the language of law and finance.
 - 3. Apparently the beloved is incapable of giving love freely.
 - 4. Shakespeare usually depicts as wrong the hoarding or contracting of love.
 - a. Shakespeare often refers to the parable of the servants and how they use their talents.
 - b. Hoarding, holding, or failing to use talents is always a mistake in Shakespeare's world.
- VI. Sonnet 116 has been called the marriage poem.
- A. It states that true love lasts for all time.
 - 1. It is a grand generalization, rare for Shakespeare, about love.
 - 2. It can easily be applied to situations of love, marriage, and jealousy found in Shakespeare's plays.
 - B. Are the assertions made about love true?
 - 1. To the degree that love seeks to alter the beloved, it is not love.
 - 2. Love is an ever-fixed mark, a way to measure constancy.
 - 3. Love does not transfer its affections when time alters the look of the beloved.
 - C. The poem makes assertions about love which we accept as truth because we cherish these ideas.
 - 1. The language alludes to the marriage ceremony in the *Book of Common Prayer*.
 - 2. The language also alludes to St. Paul's comments about love in Corinthians.
 - 3. Most of the assertions are denials: the *via negativa*, what love is not.
 - 4. The sonnet expresses faith in an important Western value.

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*

Recommended: Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Yale University Press, 1977), preface and commentary; Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye* (University of California Press, 1986); Hecht, introduction in Blakemore Evans, *The Sonnets*; Hubler, *The Sense of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Princeton University Press, 1952); Leishman, *Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Harper and Row, 1961); Pequigney, *Such is My Love* (University of Chicago Press, 1985)

Questions to Consider:

1. Describe the presence of characteristic love situations in some sonnets.
2. An eighteenth-century reader commented on these poems, "What a heap of wretched infidel stuff!" Are the sonnets blasphemous, or impertinent about or dangerous to religious faith?

Sonnet 146

Pour soul, the center of my sinful earth,
Thrall to these rebel powers that thee array!
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross:
Within be fed, without be rich no more.
So shalt thou feed on Death that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

Sonnet 98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leapt with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odor and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

Sonnet 105

Let not my love be call'd idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love today, tomorrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confin'd,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
"Fair, kind, and true" is all my argument,
"Fair, kind, and true" varying to other words;

And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
"Fair, kind, and true" have often liv'd alone,
Which three till now never kept seat in one.

Sonnet 87

Farewell! Thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter—
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Lover alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Lecture Five

Love and Artifice in *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Much Ado About Nothing*

Scope: This lecture moves from the individual voice of love as expressed in the sonnets to the social words and actions of love in two comedies. It focuses on conventions devised for courtship and the expression of affection. These conventions enable lovers to reveal their feelings. They also restrict them to a vocabulary of words and a repertory of gestures that may look quite artificial and ridiculous if one is not a lover oneself. The male suitors of *Love's Labor's Lost* try unsuccessfully to break through the artificiality of verbal courtship to something more natural; eventually they are outstripped by the larger realities of time, death, and seasonal change. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare's characteristic use of multiple plot lines works out the conflict between artifice and nature in two contrasted actions. The contrast between the conventional couple, Hero and Claudio, and the more active couple, Beatrice and Benedick, reveals the latter as more natural and more genuinely in love.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Describe various conventions adopted by different generations for the expression of love.
2. Identify sources for the particular conventions used in Shakespeare's time.
3. Analyze the interaction between literal or natural statements and mythological ones in Shakespeare's love poetry.
4. Analyze the interaction between the two plot lines of a comedy such as *Much Ado About Nothing*.
5. Describe words, actions, or circumstances that make certain expressions of love on stage more convincing than others.

Outline

- I. Love, although a natural feeling, produces highly artificial and ritualized behavior.
 - A. Love's naturalness appears especially when lovers first meet.
 1. Desire is an instinctive response upon meeting an attractive person, as in "love at first sight."
 2. Love may feel natural, but lovers need to follow conventions for courtship behavior.
 - B. Love's artificiality appears in courtship conventions.

1. Courtship conventions in mid- and late-twentieth-century America derived from psychological perspectives.
 2. Elizabethan courtship conventions were taken from art, especially literature.
 - a. Lovers recited songs or speeches using Ovid's classical mythology.
 - b. Lovers also used Petrarchan sonnets with descriptions.
- II. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, men vow to stay away from women; when women arrive, the men are unnatural in courting.
- A. The cleverest of the young lords, Berowne, praises the natural power of love (4.3) but resorts to conventions.
 1. He describes how love heightens physical and mental powers.
 2. A speech about nature ends with a set of mythological references.
 3. "Love," at first a feeling, is transformed into "Cupid."
 - B. Berowne, courting Rosaline (5.2), renounces artificial language for honest homespun words.
 1. He uses the elaborate figures of speech common to courtship language.
 2. He holds out a white glove, a conventional token of love.
 3. Rosaline points out that he slips into French.
 4. The speech in which he renounces artifice is, in fact, a sonnet.
 - C. Rosaline and the other women mock the lords' efforts to avoid conventional behavior.
 1. They question every statement.
 2. Nothing can be resolved in such an atmosphere.
 - D. The play ends when news comes of the king's death.
 1. The women go into mourning, and the courtships must be postponed for a year.
 2. Conventions of love are replaced by the larger cycles of life, time, and the seasons.
- III. *Much Ado About Nothing* contrasts a conventional couple with an eccentric one.
- A. Hero and Claudio are so conventional that they rely on the proxy courtship typical of arranged marriages.
 1. They were attracted to each other before Claudio went off to war.
 2. Claudio speaks of his love for Hero indirectly, seeking Don Pedro's permission to marry.
 3. On Claudio's behalf, Don Pedro asks both Hero's father and Hero herself.
 4. A misunderstanding follows about whether Don Pedro is courting on his own behalf.
 5. Don Pedro's brother, Don John, is responsible for creating a misunderstanding between Hero and Claudio.

- B. Benedick and Beatrice had a prior friendship that had ended.
1. The quarrelsomeness of Benedick and Beatrice makes their eventual love seem more real.
 2. Benedick and Beatrice are obviously attracted to each other.
 3. Beatrice wittily pokes fun at love.
 4. Benedick is more satirical in his criticism of love's conventions.
- C. In the church scene (4.1), Claudio and Hero's disgrace leads Benedick and Beatrice to avow their love.
1. Their love is not isolated but mingled with concern for Hero and Claudio.
 2. Their love cannot exist in isolation but is intertwined with larger matters of human sympathy.
 3. Because she is not a man, Beatrice can only comfort Hero, so Benedick takes on the responsibility of defending Hero's honor.
 4. Benedick's choice becomes an affirmation of love for Beatrice; he thus avoids being a coded figure.

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *Love's Labor's Lost* (concentrate on Act 4, Scene 3 to the end of the play) and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Recommended: see Branagh's film of *Much Ado about Nothing*; Carroll, *The Great Feast of Language in Love's Labor's Lost* (Princeton University Press, 1976); Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (Methuen, 1974), chapters 4 and 7; Zitner, introduction to *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Upon what earlier writers did Elizabethan lovers and love poets draw for a language of love?
2. Discuss the attitudes of Benedick and Beatrice toward each other at various points in the play.

Lecture Six

As You Like It

Scope: Another wavelength to which students should become accustomed in Shakespeare is his fondness for fairy tale. Many plays, such as *As You Like It*, have elementary, naïve plots, stories familiar to us from our earliest days. This lecture explains the advantages of fairy tale as a base for dramatic plots. It explores four kinds of response we may have to such material and shows how Shakespeare deliberately prompts them all. It then explores the four love affairs developed in *As You Like It*; each has a different combination of direct natural sexuality and the artificial courtship behavior discussed in Lecture Five. The current lecture compares the courtship of Rosalind and Orlando with the cynicism of Jaques, and concludes by showing how Rosalind and Orlando modify or temporarily suspend the strict gender roles assigned by the Petrarchan conventions of courtship and the social organization of Shakespeare's time.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Define your own expectations about the sophistication and naïvete of dramatic plots, examining your assumptions about what makes a good story.
2. Analyze a complicated multiplotted play where four analogous actions run parallel for much of the time.
3. Describe the social construction of gender in the words and actions of lovers—the degree to which behavior is determined by gender codes and the degree to which they can be temporarily evaded.

Outline

- I. Shakespeare emphasizes and extends the fairy-tale elements of his source, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*.
 - A. Shakespeare's changes to the story make *As You Like It* more of a fairy tale.
 1. He turns Lodge's prose narrative into verse.
 2. He softens the violence of the original.
 3. He uses fairy-tale elements such as a metaphorical dragon, here represented by a wrestler.
 4. He has Orlando save his wicked brother's life, thereby transforming a villain (Orlando) into a good man.
 5. He has good news come at the end of the play by way of a prodigal son.

6. He has characters acknowledge the naïve qualities of their own story.
- B.** Shakespeare invites multiple responses to fairy-tale material.
1. We may delight in it like children, as when we exult in Orlando's wrestling victory.
 2. We may scorn it like adolescents, as when Celia scoffs at Le Beau.
 3. We may condescendingly play with it, as when Touchstone parodies Silvius's devotion to Phebe.
 4. We may be truly moved by it, as when, at the end of the play, old Sir Rowland tells of order restored.
- II.** *As You Like It* explores varieties of love in the Forest of Arden.
- A.** Fairy-tale situations provide a way to be true to the behavior of people in love.
1. Love is rooted in sexual desire, as demonstrated by songs in the play ("A lover and his lass").
 2. The lovers feel an urge to act now on their desire, to seize the day (*carpe diem*).
- B.** Touchstone and Audrey are the most direct and earthy lovers.
1. Touchstone is a deliberate parody of the Petrarchan lover.
 2. Audrey insists upon marriage as a way to cope with the desires of the flesh, asserting an animal-like control.
- C.** Celia and Oliver, though more witty and spiritual, exhibit a sexual urgency.
1. Celia is the daughter of the current reigning duke; she exhibits powerful physical desire.
 2. Oliver is in a state of grace after having been saved by his brother; he also has strong sexual energy.
- D.** Phebe and Silvius are the least physical, taking Petrarchan formalities to an emotional sadomasochism.
1. Phebe enjoys her power over Silvius, putting him off but not ending the relationship.
 2. Silvius is also reduced to a kind of parody of the Petrarchan lover, showing the risk of the conventions.
- III.** The most important pair, Rosalind and Orlando, display desire and intelligence but avoid Jaques's cynicism (3.2).
- A.** Rosalind knows the conventions of love and says that lovers are mad but that everyone shares the madness.
1. She knows the folly of love but is swept along by it anyway.
 2. Rosalind is witty, resourceful, and can deal with the chances and changes of life.
- B.** Jaques, the cynic, wants to operate outside the human community.

1. He says he wants to be "myself alone," potentially tragic and villainous like Richard III.
 2. Jaques accuses Orlando of behaving conventionally and invites him to rail at the whole world.
- C.** Orlando can top Jaques's insults but is more connected to others, even those who have wronged him.
1. Though sometimes the foolish Petrarchan lover, he is firmly physical; he also cares for others.
 2. He plays Rosalind's game but insists that he cannot live by conventions, and Rosalind drops the game.
- D.** Gender definitions temporarily dissolve between these lovers; Rosalind and Orlando can each act significantly as male *and* female.
1. Rosalind disguises herself as a young man and shows how she can exert control over her life.
 2. Orlando takes on the nurturing and forgiving characteristics usually associated with women.

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

Recommended: Brissenden, introduction to *As You Like It* (Oxford ed.); Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (University Press, 1959), chapter 9; Gardner, "As You Like It" In *Shakespeare's Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*. Edited by Laurence Lerner. (Penguin, 1967); Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (Routledge, 1994), chapter 2.

Questions to Consider:

1. Identify a variety of fairy-tale situations in Shakespeare's plays.
2. Discuss Shakespeare's understanding of gender as revealed in his characterization of Rosalind and Orlando.

Lecture Seven

The Battles of Henry VI

Scope: The three plays named after Henry VI introduce two fresh senses of the word "action": the large patterns of action by which Shakespeare organized a trilogy of plays, and the bodily actions that we see on stage when the plays are performed. *Henry VI* stages forty-nine years of medieval English history as almost continuous political conspiracy and military combat. Shakespeare must shape the overall story in powerful patterns in order to make such a long and complex narrative coherent. This lecture explores the thematic patterns: how the actions have been organized to make specific points about politics and warfare in each play. The lecture then turns to the physical fighting on stage. "*They fight*," "*He dies*," "*alarums*," and "*excursions*" are stage directions that the reader may pass over lightly, but they denote very different visual images presented to a theater audience—images that relate directly to the significance of the story. The lecture closes by contemplating the meaning of a single body, the deformed physique of Richard of Gloucester.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. State, at least in outline form, the political and military history of England from the last part of the Hundred Years' War through the Wars of the Roses.
2. Describe some of the means by which a dramatist can select and shape a body of material so as to elicit various significances from similar actions.
3. Discuss the obligations of kingship and the virtues and failures of various candidates for it in Shakespeare's works.
4. Analyze a portion of dramatic text with its stage directions in a way that reveals the visual and verbal contributions to its significance.

Outline

- I. Shakespeare started writing plays based on history with his trilogy on the reign of Henry VI.
 - A. Thomas Nashe attests to the stage success of the plays in the early 1590s.
 1. These plays were a major factor in Shakespeare's success in the theater.
 2. Nashe points out the strength of the action and its effect on the audience.
 - B. The plays dramatize a complex series of events from 1422 to 1471.

1. Part 1 is concerned with foreign war and concludes with the truce of 1444.
2. Part 2 dramatizes domestic conflict from 1444 to 1455, struggles involving the king's uncles and wife.
3. Part 3 traces the Wars of the Roses, the end of the Lancastrians, the first Yorkist king, and the rise of Richard of Gloucester.

II. Three intellectual patterns intertwine in the plays.

- A. Decline and fall is a dynastic and semireligious pattern.
 1. An example is the decline of the royal house of Plantagenet, whose members hated, deposed, or killed each other.
 2. This is an old pattern depicted in the Oedipus trilogy and in the Greek trilogy of plays on Agamemnon's fall.
 3. We do not know if Shakespeare drew from such materials; Senecan versions of the tragedies were available.
- B. War and peace form a social and secular pattern for a society oscillating between chaos and order.
 1. Moderns believe such oscillations are caused by impersonal forces, larger economic forces, or social changes.
 2. Elizabethans viewed society as being moved toward chaos by individuals, particularly by rulers and nobles.
- C. Crime and punishment form a moral and religious pattern.
 1. If a man deposes a king and takes his crown, the usurper may expect to be similarly threatened or punished.
 2. When a ruler is killed, relatives desire retribution.
- D. The plays show Shakespeare's organization of contradictory sources, sources unified by military and political action.
 1. *Part 1*: English chivalric honor is destroyed by French guile (especially that of women) and English quarrels.
 2. *Part 2*: Ambition destroys good government, as seen with Humphrey, and leads to peasant revolt and civil war.
 3. *Part 3*: Political life erodes; the only value left is family loyalty, especially the duty to avenge wrongs to relatives.
 4. In all three plays Shakespeare presents kingship and ceremonial order destroyed by passions.

III. Shakespeare resourcefully handles stage action in the plays' openings and battle scenes.

- A. *Part 1*: A weak king and spectacular battle sequences illustrate English quarrelsomeness and French guile.
 1. The king, Henry VI, is incapable of rule while a child; even as an adult, he is not politically adept.
 2. Henry is Shakespeare's first example of a king who cannot rule effectively.

3. The lords are quarreling conspicuously even from the ceremonial opening at the dead king's funeral.
 4. In the battle scenes, chivalric honor gives way to French guile as the English dwell on their own quarrels.
- B. Part 2:** Murderous schemes and mob violence finally give way to a fullscale battle at St. Albans.
1. The opening scene is an elaborate ritual welcoming Queen Margaret to England.
 2. The scene becomes chaotic when the marriage treaty's terms are revealed; a soliloquy on power follows.
 3. The duels and the openness of declared warfare identify the subsequent quarrels as the Wars of the Roses.
- C. Part 3:** Four battles are staged, and family vengeance predominates; combat becomes brutal.
1. This part begins with triumphant Yorkists displaying symbols of victory at St. Albans (1.1).
 2. Queen Margaret vows vengeance on the Yorkists at the end of this scene.
 3. Many violent images and examples of excursions reflect depraved actions by depraved people.
- D.** The most telling images in the trilogy are those of the distorted physical body of Richard of Gloucester (3.2).
1. Richard's physical form sums up the self-destructive body politic of late-medieval England.
 2. Richard is willing to destroy himself to destroy his enemies.
 3. His twisted ambition parallels his deformed body and reflects the self-destructiveness of England.

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Parts 1, 2, and 3*; Saccio, *Shakespeare's English Kings* (Oxford University Press, 1977), chapters 5 and 6.

Recommended: see BBC-TV videos of *Henry VI* trilogy; Hattaway, introductions to the New Cambridge editions of the plays; Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 1977), chapters 7, 8, and 9; Price, *Construction in Shakespeare* (University of Michigan Press, 1951).

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare and contrast the theatrical depiction of the English hero and that of the French hero.
2. Analyze a substantial battle sequence in one of the plays to show how Shakespeare's handling of physical combat suggests the underlying meaning of that combat.

Lecture Eight

Richard III and the Renaissance

Scope: This lecture explores Shakespeare's characterization of Richard III (Richard of Gloucester in *Henry VI, Part 3*) as culturally significant in marking important aspects of the early modern era. Shakespeare's greatest innovation in the received account of Richard was to make him a conscious actor or roleplayer who constantly refashions himself to accomplish his political goals. This lecture closely examines one soliloquy to show how Richard's ambitions meet frustration not only in political obstacles but in the very nature of the late-medieval universe. The lecture concludes by relating this discovery of the player-king to new political theories by Niccolo Machiavelli, to Renaissance ideas about human freedom, and to the breakdown of ideas about fixed order.

Objectives: Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. State the developments in the sixteenth-century view of Richard III.
2. Discuss Richard's view of himself as it develops in Shakespeare's plays.
3. Describe the dynamics of the late-medieval metaphysical world picture.
4. Compare the potential for good and evil in the notion that a person is free to reshape himself or herself.
5. Analyze any other soliloquy of Richard's in *Henry VI, Part 3*, or in *Richard III*, and explain the villainy of similar characters in Shakespeare: Iago in *Othello*, Edmund in *King Lear*, Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Outline

- I. Richard of Gloucester is Shakespeare's first star role.
 - A. Richard has "star quality." Like Hamlet, he consciously plays many roles and sees himself increasingly as an actor.
 - B. In Richard's soliloquy (3 *Henry VI*, 3.2), this "modern" conception of the character is born.
 1. Richard hates his relatives and their procreative capacity; their heirs will stand in his way to the throne.
 2. His potentially self-destructive ambitions are frustrated by people closer in line to the throne.
 3. He looks elsewhere for consolation but says that love, that of his mother and other women, has forsworn him.

4. He realizes that mere love could not satisfy his power drives, for he is incapable of loving others.
5. Nature reverts to chaos when love is withdrawn; thus the physical form of the loveless Richard is chaotic.
6. Alienated and frustrated, Richard wants to be alone, giving rise to the villainous, histrionic Richard.

II. This addition to the figure of Richard as self-conscious actor has other significances or implications.

- A. Although it followed the time of Richard, Machiavelli's *The Prince* supports Shakespeare's depiction.
 1. The prince or ruler must constantly play roles, manipulate situations, feign emotions, and remold his image.
 2. Elizabethan horror toward this figure is reflected in the stage figure of the Machiavel.
- B. In the Renaissance, acting came to mean breaking out of one's fixed place in the feudal order of the Middle Ages.
 1. Pico della Mirandola, in *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, depicted Adam as a self-fashioning creature.
 2. St. Augustine had told men not to try to fashion themselves.
 3. Shakespeare's *Richard III*, the dark side of our belief in human freedom, marks a Renaissance change.

Readings:

Essential: Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part 3*, and *Richard III* (at least Act 1); Saccio, *Shakespeare's English Kings* (Oxford University Press, 1977), chapter 7.

Recommended: see Laurence Olivier's film of *Richard III*; Clemen, *A Commentary on Richard III* (Methuen, 1968); Hammond, introduction to *Richard III* (New Arden ed.); Hunter, *Shakespeare and the Mystery of God's Judgments* (University of Georgia Press, 1976), chapter 4.

Questions to Consider:

1. Discuss Richard's strategy in seducing Lady Anne or in dealing with the court in Act 1 of *Richard III*. How does this strategy reflect the talents he boasts of in the soliloquy analyzed in this lecture?
2. Compare Richard's opening soliloquy in *Richard III* to his Act 5 soliloquy the night before the Battle of Bosworth. Discuss the integration of his personality or the lack thereof in these two speeches.

Glossary

Analogy: a comparison in which an unknown element is explained in terms of something likely to be known to the reader; the similarities of the elements may be striking, but they need not be similar in all respects.

Analysis: a type of expository writing developed in a logical way, applicable to anything that can be divided into parts for study; the relation of each part to a whole, a governing idea, is explained clearly for the reader.

Anapest: a metrical foot using three syllables, the first two unstressed and the third stressed.

Antimetabole: the rhetoric of reversal, in which words, actions, and grammatical structures may be reversed.

Blank verse: lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter (see below); often used in formal speeches of noble characters.

Caesura: a pause or stop in the middle of a line of poetry, often indicated by a period ending a statement; the effect is often a shift in sense.

Canon: a group of works ascribed to an author or considered central to the study of a period or culture; such works are usually selected by the academy.

Comparison and contrast: a type of expository writing in which a discussion of two or more subjects is developed by describing similar qualities (comparison) and different qualities (contrast).

Couplet: a pair of lines of poetry, marked by rhyming end words.

Cretic dimeter: a very rare metrical pattern in poetry; two feet of three syllables each, with the first and third syllables stressed and the middle syllable weak or unstressed. Shakespeare uses it for fairies' speech in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Dactyl: a metrical foot with one accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables.

End-stopped line: a line of poetry ending with a full stop, usually a period.

English sonnet: the sonnet form used most often by Shakespeare; 14 lines of iambic pentameter divided into three quatrains and a final couplet, with a rhyme scheme of abab, cdcd, efef, gg.

Enjambment: a line of poetry that carries a thought over to the next line.

Feminine rhyme: the rhyming of both syllables of two-syllable words, such as "knowing" and "growing."

Iambic pentameter: ten-syllable lines of poetry with five pairs of syllables, the first unstressed and the second stressed in each pair or "foot."

Italian sonnet: the sonnet form most associated with the Italian poet Petrarch; 14 lines falling into two divisions, the first eight lines forming the octave and the second set of six lines forming the sestet, with varying rhyme schemes.

Meter: a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables; each grouping of syllables is called a foot.

Quatrain: a four-line stanza in poetry.

Soliloquy: a monologue spoken by an actor, revealing to an audience the character's internal conflicts or thoughts.

Spondee: a foot in poetry consisting of two stressed syllables.

Subplot: a story within a play, using minor characters, often paralleling the main plot or story.

Trochee: a foot in poetry consisting of one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable.

Shakespeare's Timeline

1564	Born in Stratford-upon-Avon
1582	Married Anne Hathaway
1583	Daughter Susanna born
1585	Twins Hamnet and Judith born
1589 ?	Went to London
1590-91	<i>Henry VI</i> , Parts 1, 2, and 3
1592	First mention of Shakespeare as actor and dramatist
1592-93	<i>Richard III</i> "Venus and Adonis"
1592-94	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> "The Rape of Lucrece" <i>Titus Andronicus</i> <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
1593-99	Sonnets
1594-95	<i>Love's Labor's Lost</i> <i>King John</i> <i>Richard II</i>
1595-96	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
1596-98	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> <i>Henry IV</i> , Parts 1 and 2
1598-99	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> <i>Henry V</i>
1599	<i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>As You Like It</i>
1600-1601	<i>Hamlet</i> "The Phoenix and the Turtle"
1601-1602	<i>Twelfth Night</i> <i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
1602-1603	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
1604	<i>Measure for Measure</i> <i>Othello</i>
1605	<i>King Lear</i>
1606	<i>Macbeth</i>
1606-1607	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
1607-1608	<i>Coriolanus</i> <i>Timon of Athens</i> <i>Pericles</i>
1609-10	<i>Cymbeline</i>

1610-11	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> <i>The Tempest</i>
1613	<i>Henry VIII</i> <i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i> (?)
1616	Died in Stratford-upon-Avon

English Rulers to the Time of William Shakespeare

1066-87	William the Conqueror
1087-1100	William I
1100-35	Henry I
1135-54	Stephen
1154-89	Henry II
1189-99	Richard I (Coeur de Lion)
1199-1216	John I
1216-72	Henry III
1272-1307	Edward I
1307-27	Edward II
1327-77	Edward III
1337-1453	The Hundred Years' War
1377-99	Richard II
1399-1413	Henry IV
1413-22	Henry V
1422-61	Henry VI
1455-71	Wars of the Roses
1461-83	Edward IV
1483	Edward V
1483-85	Richard III
1485-1509	Henry VII
1509-47	Henry VIII
1547-53	Edward VI
1553-58	Mary I
1558-1603	Elizabeth I
1603-25	James I

Biography of William Shakespeare

Biographical information about William Shakespeare is sketchy: we know that he was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in England and was baptized on April 26, 1564. Although we celebrate April 23 as his birthday, the exact date is not known. His parents, John and Mary Arden Shakespeare, were solid citizens of Stratford, his father a tanner and glover and a dealer in farm produce, as well as a holder of various local offices. Nicholas Rowe, in his 1709 biography of Shakespeare, reported that William attended a grammar school, the King's New School at Stratford-upon-Avon, where Latin works would have formed the basis of the curriculum. In November 1582, at age eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than he was. Their first child, Susanna, was born in May of the following year, and three years later the couple had twins, Hamnet and Judith, in February 1585.

The first reference to Shakespeare as an actor and dramatist in London came in 1592, in a critical mention in a work by another playwright, Robert Greene, who called Shakespeare "an upstart crow." Between 1592 and 1594, plague forced theatres to suspend performances. By late 1594, when Shakespeare was listed as a member of Lord Chamberlain's company, there were several plays to his credit (see timeline). From 1594 to 1601, Shakespeare was successful as a dramatist and actor in Lord's Chamberlain's Men, and, in 1599, his family was granted rank as gentlemen and was granted its own heraldic coat of arms. William Shakespeare was a part-owner of the best-known Elizabethan theatre, the Globe, which was built in 1599. After Elizabeth I died and King James I ascended the throne in 1603, Shakespeare's company became the King's Men and enjoyed the king's patronage. In 1608, Shakespeare and his company signed a twenty-one-year lease for the Blackfriars Theatre.

Surviving records attest to Shakespeare as a substantial property owner in Stratford and in London. He suffered the deaths of his son Hamnet in 1596, his father in 1601, his brother Edmund in 1607, and his mother in 1608. He returned to Stratford to live in 1611 or 1612 and died there on April 23, 1616. The largest share of his estate went to his married daughter Susanna, and a dowry went to his recently wed daughter Judith; by law, a third of the estate went to his wife Anne, although there was little mention of her in his will.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, some of his plays and poems were published without his permission. The sonnets were published in 1609, apparently without Shakespeare's involvement. The first complete edition of the plays, the First Folio of 1623, was based on manuscript copies and on prompt-books used by actors in the plays, materials that were collected by Shakespeare's fellow actors John Heminges and Henry Condell. There are no known surviving manuscript copies of any Shakespearean plays.

Bibliography

Essential:

There are several editions of William Shakespeare's works, with excellent one-volume editions such as the revised edition of Bevington, as well as individual plays and sonnets published in series by Bantam, New Penguin, and Signet. Individual play introductions in the multiple-volume series are valuable: New Arden Shakespeare (Methuen); New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press); Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford University Press). Individual plays as well as video productions are listed with the lecture outlines.

Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*. Revised edition. New York: Random House, 1979. ISBN 0-394-32120-0.

Fussell discusses the nature and techniques of metrical poetry and gives examples of metrical analysis as well as an historical treatment of the subject. His discussion of the English sonnet and its structural patterns and conventions is valuable.

Saccio, Peter. *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle and Drama*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. ISBN 0-19-502156-8.

Saccio discusses the reigns of eight of the Plantagenet kings and one Tudor ruler, giving the background of materials that Shakespeare used in ten history plays. A detailed index and appendices help the reader sort out chronology, genealogy, and names and titles.

Scragg, Leah. *Discovering Shakespeare's Meaning: An Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare's Dramatic Structures*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1988. Now available from Longman: ISBN 0-582-22930-8.

The topics discussed in Scragg's study are intended to help the student of Shakespeare with various aspects of dramatic composition, such as verse and prose, parallel structures, soliloquy, imagery, and other elements that generate meaning in a play.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Edited by David Bevington. 4th edition, updated. London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997. ISBN 0-321-01254-2.

The texts of the sonnets in Lectures Three and Four follow this edition.

Recommended:

Adelman, Janet. "Anger's My Meat: Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*." In *Shakespeare, Pattern of Excelling Nature: Shakespearean Criticism in Honor of America's Bicentennial*. Edited by David Bevington and Jay L. Halio. 108-124. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1978.

Adelman sets *Coriolanus* in its historical context during the time of its writing and explores imagery of hunger and aggressive behaviors in the play.

Adelman, Janet. *The Common Liar: An Essay on Antony and Cleopatra*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973.

Adelman focuses on meaning in this play in discussions of characters, sources, and audience reactions.

Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959.

Barber discusses ritual and festive customs revealed in Shakespeare's comedies, exploring sources, patterns, comic devices and conventions, and comic figures.

Booth, Stephen. "On the Value of *Hamlet*." In *Reinterpretations of Elizabethan Drama*. Edited by Norman Rabkin. 137-76. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Booth focuses on *Hamlet* as a set of actions affecting the audience, examining how specific actions frustrate or fulfill the audience's expectations.

Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.

This extensive commentary on the sonnets helps the reader understand the idiom of the poet as well as the structure and levels of language of the poems.

Carroll, William C. *The Great Feast of Language in Love's Labor's Lost*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Carroll asserts that this is a more sophisticated and complicated play than it is often thought to be and focuses on "rings" or levels of character development and structure.

Clemen, Wolfgang H. *A Commentary on Shakespeare's Richard III*. Translated by Jean Bonheim. London: Methuen, 1968.

This study examines the structure, language, imagery, allusions, and themes of *Richard III* very closely.

Daniell, David. *Coriolanus in Europe*. London: Athlone Press, 1980.

This work describes *Coriolanus* as performed and received throughout Europe.

Fineman, Joel. *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Fineman argues that Shakespeare invented a poetic subjectivity that was new for the Renaissance.

Frey, Charles. *Shakespeare's Vast Romance: A Study of The Winter's Tale*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1980.

Frey provides a history of responses to this play and explores sources to engage audiences in a reappraisal.

Gardner, Helen. "As You Like It." In *Shakespeare's Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*. Edited by Laurence Lerner. Baltimore: Penguin, 1967.

Gardner's discussion of this comedy focuses on the fairy-tale qualities of the plot and on its satisfying blend of romance and wit.

Gay, Penny. *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Gay's study challenges the traditional definition of comedy and asserts the importance of gender identity and change in this play.

Goldman, Michael. *Acting and Action in Shakespearean Tragedy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

This study of Shakespeare's major tragedies looks at how action and techniques of acting often contribute to significant meaning in addition to providing the stage business in a play.

Goldman, Michael. *Shakespeare and the Energies of Drama*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Goldman focuses on the meaning and elements of the dramatic experience itself in discussing selected comedies, histories, and tragedies.

Granville-Barker, Harley. *Prefaces to Shakespeare*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946.

Granville-Barker's prefaces to several major plays focus on such classic subjects as plot, character, and stage business. In the chapter on *Cymbeline*, he focuses on the play's structure, staging, and characters.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Greenblatt discusses the social interchanges and connections that result in literary works; he argues that the collective negotiations and exchanges in a culture are evident in and are affected by works of art.

Hawkins, Sherman H. "Virtue and Kingship in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*." *English Literary Renaissance* 5 (1975): 313-43.

Hawkins examines the origin and nature of kingship in *Henry IV* and argues that the education of Prince Hal in how to be a king educates the play's audience as well.

Hubler, Edward. *The Sense of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952.

Hubler's study examines the lyrical qualities of the sonnets, their form, and the recurring subjects of the beautiful young man and the dark lady.

Hunter, Robert Grams. *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.

Hunter's study of Shakespeare's comedies explores large structural elements of the plays as well as elements that satisfy the audience and restore harmony and order.

Hunter, Robert Grams. *Shakespeare and the Mystery of God's Judgments*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976.

Hunter examines plays that reflect and may have affected the Protestant views of God and judgment in Shakespeare's time.

Jones, Emrys. *The Origins of Shakespeare*. London: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Jones discusses sources and techniques upon which Shakespeare drew, especially mystery plays, classical tragedies, and English history, and describes ways Shakespeare reflected the life of Elizabethan England.

Kastan, David Scott, ed. *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Hamlet*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

This collection examines *Hamlet* from contemporary theoretical perspectives.

Kernan, Alvin. "The Henriad: Shakespeare's Major History Plays." In *Modern Shakespearean Criticism: Essays on Style, Dramaturgy, and the Major Plays*. Edited by Alvin Kernan. New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1970.

Kernan outlines the dramatic universe of Shakespeare's plays and focuses on the large-scale coherence and epic action of the Henry plays.

Leggatt, Alexander. "Henry VIII and the Ideal England." *Shakespeare Survey* 38 (1985): 131-43.

This study explores the pattern of rise and fall in *Henry VIII* and discusses the elaborate process of history in the reign of a king who was father to Elizabeth I, Shakespeare's queen.

Leggatt, Alexander. *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*. London: Methuen, 1974.

Leggatt focuses on internal variety in Shakespeare's comedies and argues that each comedy reacts against the play that preceded it; he explores the conventions of courtly love behavior in the comedies.

Leishman, J. B. *Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.

Leishman examines Shakespeare's classical and English predecessors; he traces themes through the sonnets.

Miola, Robert S. *Shakespeare's Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. ISBN 0-521-25307-1.

Miola examines the sources of Shakespeare's Roman plays and discusses them in the context of their views of the Roman world.

Montrose, Louis. "Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture." In *Representing the English Renaissance*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt. 31-64. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Montrose explores the relationship between the representations of gender and power in Elizabethan society; he focuses on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and other texts that reflect the role of Queen Elizabeth in a patriarchal culture.

Pequigney, Joseph. *Such is My Love: A Study of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

This study studies the relationship between the speaker and the male subject of many of the poems and finds homoerotic passion as well as heterosexual imagery in the sonnets.

Price, Hereward T. *Construction in Shakespeare*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951.

Price changed views of the *Henry VI* trilogy in arguing that Shakespeare used the structural principle of multiplicity.

Rabkin, Norman. "Coriolanus: The Tragedy of Politics." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 17 (1966): 195-212.

Rabkin argues that Shakespeare created in *Coriolanus* a complex, pessimistic, political statement about the effects of pride.

Scarisbrick, J. J. *Henry VIII*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

This is a biography of the historical king rather than the dramatic figure of Shakespeare's play, covering the personal, political, and ecclesiastical dimensions of Henry's life.

Tennenhouse, Leonard. "Strategies of State and Political Plays." In *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Edited by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield. 109-29. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

This study examines the politics of in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *Henry VIII* in light of modern views of historical context.