

**Illinois Wesleyan University, School of Theater Arts**  
**THEA 481 Acting Shakespeare**  
**Spring 2022**  
**Monday/Friday: 1:00-2:50**  
**Shaw 102**

Instructor: Tom Quinn  
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Office Hours: T 3-4:00 W 1-4:00, R 3-4:00  
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**Required Texts:**

Three plays from **The Arden Shakespeare** collection.  
(All are available online at the indicated links.)

- *As You Like It*
- <https://www.amazon.com/As-You-Like-Arden-Shakespeare/dp/1904271227>
- *Romeo and Juliet*  
<https://www.amazon.com/Romeo-Juliet-Third-Arden-Shakespeare/dp/1903436915>
- *Richard III* -  
<https://www.amazon.com/King-Richard-III-Third-Shakespeare/dp/1903436893>

Please note: You need to procure the individual Arden scripts in particular. There can be considerable variance from one publisher to another, and it is important that we all work from the same text.

Note further: Though purchasing more scripts is not necessary, each student will read three other plays by Shakespeare. That assignment is explained below.

**Recommended Texts:**

- **Any/All of the plays of William Shakespeare**  
(*Folio* available at: <http://etext.virginia.edu/shakespeare/folio>)
- *Speaking Shakespeare* by Patsy Rodenburg
- *The Actor and the Text* by Cicely Berry
- *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare* by Isaac Asimov

**Required Viewing:**

- *Playing Shakespeare* (Season 1: Episodes 1-9) hosted by John Barton.  
(All episodes are available on Youtube.)
- *OTHELLO*, directed by Oliver Parker (Available on Amazon Prime)

- *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*, directed by Kenneth Branagh (Available on Amazon Prime)

**Course Description:** This course is designed to deepen and broaden the actors' skills through the intensive study, rehearsal and performance of the drama of William Shakespeare. Of principle concern will be the development of insight and techniques necessary for the actor to achieve an organic connection to heightened language, and to create original, rich, human characters who are at home in Shakespeare's epic universe.

**Attendance Policy:** Since tailored for the BFA, this course is a study of *professionalism in acting*. *Attendance* and *punctuality* are fundamental. You are allowed two absences without consequence. With every absence beyond the two allowed your grade will be lowered by one full letter. With five absences the best possible grade is a "D." Six absences will result in a grade of "F" and you will be asked to withdraw from the course.

For an absence to be *excused*, the student must make arrangements with the instructor in advance. In the event of illness or emergency, the student must contact the instructor as soon as possible and provide any documentation requested by the instructor.

*Lateness* is unacceptable. Class begins promptly at 1:00pm. Students arriving after attendance has been taken are "late." Two late arrivals equal one absence. The professor reserves the right to close the door when class begins.

### **Course Requirements:**

**Monologues:** Each student will prepare one (or possibly three) two-minute monologue(s) of his/her/their choice. The first will be chosen from *Richard III*. The second/third may be taken from any of the six plays we read/study in the course.

**Acting Scenes:** Each student will prepare and participate in the in-class rehearsal and performance of two (or three) 5-8-minute acting scenes. Scenes will be taken from the six plays being studied. Scenes and partners will be chosen and assigned by the instructor. (*Except in the case of the Final Project, which will be discussed below.*)

Although purchasing more scripts is not required, each student will read three additional plays:

- *Twelfth Night*
- *Julius Caesar*
- *The Winter's Tale*

**Required Viewing:** All students must view nine selected episodes of *Playing Shakespeare*. Each must be completed before the scheduled discussion of the episode.

**Deadlines:** All assignments are to be completed on time. Reading assignments must be read by the due date listed in the course outline.

**Rescheduling:** Performance assignments cannot be rescheduled. Assignment dates may be exchanged, but only with the agreement of all parties involved, and only with the approval of the instructor.

**Appropriate Clothing:** Must be suitable for movement and floor work, or suitable for specific character work, when appropriate.

**Class Participation:** Everyone is expected to participate in discussion as well as performance, in periodic out-of-class rehearsals, and in the examination/ critique of in class exercises and performances. Everyone is further expected to fully engage, take risks, and consistently strive for compelling acting. This is most fully accomplished in a supportive environment and it is everyone's responsibility to build and maintain that environment.

**Grading Criteria:**

- A-Excellent. Always well prepared; extensive outside preparation. Actively pursues improvement and is highly self motivated. Student makes significant growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Active, positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.
- B-Good to Excellent. Always prepared; notable outside preparation. Pursues improvement and is self motivated. Notable growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.
- C-Acceptable to Good. Generally prepared; acceptable outside preparation. Interested in improvement and often self motivated. Shows some growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Often contributes to class. Punctual, always present.
- D-(Failing for BFA students) Unacceptable to acceptable. Often not prepared; shows little outside preparation. Shows little interest in improvement and is rarely self motivated. Very little skill and knowledge growth during semester. Seldom contributes to class and has negative attitude. Sometimes late; some absences.
- F-Largely Unacceptable. Rarely prepared and lacks adequate outside preparation. No apparent interest in self improvement and not self motivated. No apparent growth in skills and knowledge. Does not contribute to class; negative attitude. Not punctual; several absences.

**Outline of Presentations and Assignments:**

**Warning:** *Adjustments to this schedule may be necessary.*

**WEEK 1**

F 1/7

- Introduction to course. Go over syllabus.

- Discuss the “*First Folio*” and why it is important.
- Discuss blank verse.
- Discuss Voice and Speech demands for acting Shakespeare
- Assigned Viewing for Monday: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 1 - The Two Traditions*
- Assignment for Monday: Scansion monologues from *Richard III*

## WEEK 2

M 1/10

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 1 – The Two Traditions*
- Due: Scansion monologue from *Richard III*
- Scansion
- Articulation: Playing and linking consonants
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 2 – Using the Verse*

F 1/14

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 2 – Using the Verse*
- Continue Scanned monologues from *Richard III*
- Scansion
- Articulation: Playing and linking consonants
- Assigned Viewing: Film: *OTHELLO*, directed by Oliver Parker

## WEEK 3

M 1/17

- MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY – NO CLASSES

F 1/21

- Discuss: Film version of *OTHELLO*
- Discuss *Richard III*
- Read aloud and discuss *Richard III* monologues
- Assigned Reading: *Romeo and Juliet*
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 3 – Language and Character*

## WEEK 4

M 1/24

- NO CLASS TODAY – TOM IS TRAVELLING

F 1/28

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare - Episode 3 – Language and Character*
- Work *Richard III* monologues **OFF BOOK** (*Need to work some monologues outside of class.*)

- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 4 – Set Speeches and Soliloquies*

## WEEK 5

M 1/31

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 4 – Set Speeches and Soliloquies*
- Discuss *Romeo and Juliet*
- Work *Richard III* Monologues
- Assignment: Scenes and partners for Scene #1: From *Romeo and Juliet* or *Richard III*

F 2/4

- **Present *Richard III* monologues for Class**
- Read aloud and discuss Scene #1: A and B
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare - Episode 5 – Irony and Ambiguity*

## WEEK 6

M 2/7

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 5 – Irony and Ambiguity*
- Read aloud and discuss Scene #1: C, D, E, F and G
- Assigned Reading: *As You Like It*
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 6 – Passion and Coolness*

F 2/11

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 6 – Passion and Coolness*
- Work Scene #1: A and B (*Also, schedule an hour with Tom outside of class.*)
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 7 – Rehearsing a Text*

## WEEK 7

M 2/14

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 7 – Rehearsing a Text*
- Work Scene #1: C and D (*Also, schedule an hour with Tom outside of class.*)
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 8 – Exploring a Character*

F 2/18

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 8 – Exploring a Character*
- Work Scene #1: E, F, and G (*Also, schedule an hour with Tom outside of class.*)
- Assigned Reading: *Twelfth Night*
- Assigned Viewing: *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 9 – Poetry and Hidden Poetry*

## WEEK 8

M 2/21

- Discuss *Playing Shakespeare – Episode 9 – Poetry and Hidden Poetry*
- Work Scene #1 (*Whoever has not met outside of class with Tom*)
- Assignment: Scenes and partners for Scene #2: from *As You Like It -or- Twelfth Night*

F 2/25

- **ALL: PRESENT SCENE #1**
- Discuss *As You Like It*

## WEEK 9

M 2/28

- Discuss *Twelfth Night*
- Read aloud, Scene #2: A, B, C, D, E, F and G
- Assigned Reading: *The Winter's Tale*

F 3/4

- Discuss *The Winter's Tale*
- Work Scene #2: A and B (*Scene G must meet with Tom outside of class.*)
- Assigned Reading: *Julius Caesar*

## WEEK 10

M 3/7

- Work Scene #2: C and D

F 3/11

- Discuss *Julius Caesar*
- Work Scene #2: E and F
- Assigned Viewing: *Much Ado About Nothing*, Directed by Kenneth Branagh
- **ASSIGNMENT – FINAL PROJECT:** Select TWO CONTRASTING MONOLOGUES, or a SCENE AND PARTNER for your FINAL PROJECT. Cuttings may be taken from: *Richard III*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale*, or *Julius Caesar*.

## WEEK 11

\*\*\*\*SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES\*\*\*\*

## **WEEK 12**

M 3/21

- Discuss *Much Ado About Nothing*, Directed by Kenneth Branagh
- Work Scene #2: B and C (*Scene A needs to schedule time with Tom outside of class.*)

F 3/25

- Work Scene #2: D and E

## **WEEK 13**

M 3/28

- Work Scene #2: F and G

F 4/1

- **Present Scene #2 for Class**
- Notes and discussion

## **WEEK 14**

M 4/4

- FINAL PROJECT: Read aloud and discuss selected cuttings

F 4/8

- FINAL PROJECTS – TABLE WORK

## **WEEK 15**

M 4/11

- Work FINAL PROJECTS

F 4/15

- Work FINAL PROJECTS

## **WEEK 16**

M 4/18

- Work FINAL PROJECTS

## **Final Exam: Day, time and place TBD**

- Present FINAL PROJECTS