

Professor Jenny Davidson
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Office hours: 408b Philosophy
Mon 1-2 and Tues 4-5:30

Fall 2008
Class meeting:
Tues 2:10-4
401 Hamilton

English W3950x
Studies in 18th-century Literature:
Shakespeare in the 18th Century

Five plays by Shakespeare, alongside their bizarre and often highly revealing reimaginings by eighteenth-century British theatrical adapters and a host of other evocative materials. We'll work in a number of different modes: at times, we'll be delving very deeply into Shakespeare's own language and dramatic choices, but we'll also explore questions of literature in relation to more broadly cultural trends, the nature and interpretive utility of popular theatrical adaptations and updatings, the cultural work performed by Shakespeare editions in eighteenth-century Britain and so forth.

Requirements: (1) Attendance (more than one missed class will bring down the final grade); (2) three 3- to 5-page written assignments; and (3) a 10- to 12-page final paper or creative project. Participation in discussion can give a modest boost to the grade, and if you are not an enthusiastic classroom discussor, I urge you to stop by office hours a few times for some conversation about the reading. The chief basis for the grade, though, will be the written work (the virtue of being an active participant in discussion is its own reward). I have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty. Do not plagiarize.

Texts: Any convenient edition of the Shakespeare plays will do; many of you will probably already have a copy of the collected works, and you are very welcome to use that rather than buying a new one. We will work in class by act, scene and line number in order to accommodate users of different editions. I recommend the Riverside or the Arden if you are thinking of purchasing one for the first time – I have asked the Columbia Bookstore to order some copies of the paperback Arden, which I believe is the most affordable of the standard editions.

All of the readings barring the original Shakespearean plays will be from a xeroxed course packet that includes eighteenth-century adaptations and commentaries (some of them in facsimile, some of them in modern editions) and critical discussions. A number of the adaptations and of the eighteenth-century Shakespeare criticism that we will read in their original editions are available through Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, on the library website, but I have included them all in the course packet because I prefer you to have hard copies in class and I have found that students with an eye to their print quotas are reluctant to print out pages with sufficient generosity. I will put one copy of the packet on reserve at Butler, but I strongly encourage you to purchase your own copy at Village Copier on Broadway (available later this week – I'll e-mail once it's there).

9/2 Introduction

9/9 Shakespeare, *King Lear*

9/16 Nahum Tate, *The History of King Lear* (1681)

Michael Dobson, from *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769*

Jean Marsden, from *The Re-Imagined Text: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory*

Catherine M. S. Alexander, "Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century: Criticism and Research" (optional)

9/23 Shakespeare, *Richard III*

9/30 Colley Cibber, *The Tragical History of King Richard III* (1700)

David Wheeler, "Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespeare and the Example of John Dennis"

Assignment #1 due Friday 10/4

10/7 Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and adaptations

Michael Dobson, "Shakespeare exposed: outdoor performance and ideology, 1880-1940"

- 10/14 Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* and adaptations
- 10/21 Samuel Johnson, "Preface" (1765)
Charlotte Lennox, *Shakespear Illustrated* (1753-54), excerpts

Susan Green, "A Cultural Reading of Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespear Illustrated*"

Assignment #2 due Friday 10/24
- 10/28 David Garrick, *The Jubilee*

Jack Lynch, "Worshipping Shakespeare," from *Becoming Shakespeare*
Michael Dobson, "Embodying the Author," from *The Making of the National Poet*
Jonathan Bate, "Shakespeare," from *Shakespearean Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism, 1730-1830*
- 11/4 Election holiday – no class
- 11/11 Marcus Walsh, "Eighteenth-Century Editing, 'Appropriation', and Interpretation"; "Making Sense of Shakespeare," from *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing: The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship*
Excerpts from Peter Martin, *Edmond Malone, Shakespearean Scholar: A Literary Biography*
Simon Jarvis, "Textual Criticism and Enlightenment," from *Scholars and Gentlemen*

Assignment #3 due Friday 11/15
- 11/18 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
- 11/25 *Hamlet* adaptations and eighteenth-century commentary, plus excerpts from Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet without Hamlet* and Alexander Welsh, *Strong Representations*

Maurice Morgann, *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (1777)
- 12/2 Peter Holland, "Hearing the Dead: The Sound of David Garrick"; "On the gravy train: Shakespeare, memory and forgetting"
Gary Taylor, "Singularity," from *Reinventing Shakespeare*
- Final assignment due Thursday, Dec. 11