

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of English  
with effect from Semester A in 2016/17**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Shakespeare: Introduction to Genius**

**Course Title:**

EN2842

**Course Code:**

1 semester

**Course Duration:**

3

**Credit Units:**

B2

**Level:**

Arts and Humanities

Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Science and Technology

**Proposed Area:**

*(for GE courses only)*

English

**Medium of Instruction:**

English

**Medium of Assessment:**

None

**Prerequisites:**

*(Course Code and Title)*

None

**Precursors:**

*(Course Code and Title)*

None

**Equivalent Courses:**

*(Course Code and Title)*

GE2406 Shakespeare: Introduction to Genius

**Exclusive Courses:**

*(Course Code and Title)*

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

This course aims to help students gain insight into the genius of Shakespeare through a reading of some of his works, and learning about his life and times. The course will provide students with the tools to understand and analyze Shakespeare's language as well as to discuss larger themes in Shakespeare's plays and poems, regarding timeless issues like love, jealousy, greed and death and how they can inform contemporary life. The course also provides training in watching performances of Shakespeare and evaluating them, incorporating the showing of film excerpts with reading and analyzing the texts. Students will also perform scenes from Shakespeare's plays and create their own video of a scene.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

| No. | CILOs   | Weighting*<br>(if applicable) | Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate) |    |    |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|---|----|----|
|     |   |                               | A1  | A2 | A3 |
| 1.  | <b>List and describe</b> the major works of William Shakespeare and group them into genres: tragedies, comedies, histories, romances and poems.   |                               |   | X  |    |
| 2.  | <b>Explain</b> the social and historical conditions of Elizabethan England as well as the conditions of Shakespeare's life and how these helped to shape his work.  |                               | X   |    |    |
| 3.  | <b>Read</b> Shakespeare's work with a high degree of understanding using various reading strategies..   |                               | X   | X  |    |
| 4.  | <b>Discover and interpret</b> various figures of speech and poetic devices in Shakespeare's work and analyze their aesthetic effects.   |                               | X   | X  | X  |
| 5.  | <b>Discover and analyze</b> larger thematic issues in Shakespeare's work and discuss how they relate to contemporary life.  |                               | X   | X  | X  |
| 6.  | <b>Creatively interpret</b> a scene or speech from a Shakespeare play in the form of a performance and critically evaluate and debate the merits of other performances of a Shakespeare plays, considering such factors as staging, costumes, music and actors' interpretations of the lines. |                               | X   | X  | X  |
|     |   | 100%                          |   |    |    |

\* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

| TLA                | Brief Description   | CILO No. |   |   |   |   |   | Hours/week<br>(if applicable) |
|--------------------|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
|                    |   | 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |                               |
| <b>Lecture</b>     | The instructor delivers interactive <b>multimedia lectures</b> in which the history, biography and work of Shakespeare as well as the use of various literary techniques are explained and illustrated.   | X        | X |   | X | X |   |                               |
| <b>Readings</b>    | Students engage in <b>interactive dramatic readings</b> of Shakespeare's works which integrate dramatic interpretation with analysis.   |          |   | X | X | X |   |                               |
| <b>Film</b>        | Students <b>watch excerpts of films</b> of Shakespeare's plays as well as films about his life and times and discuss these renderings based on their knowledge of the text.   |          |   |   |   |   | X |                               |
| <b>Discussion</b>  | Students <b>discuss and debate</b> various interpretations of Shakespeare's work and the implications of these interpretations.   |          |   |   | X | X |   |                               |
| <b>Performance</b> | Students <b>present prepared dramatic renderings</b> of a scene from one of Shakespeare's plays and discuss their interpretation to the based on what they have learned about Shakespeare's life and works. Students evaluate their classmates' performances. | X        | X | X | X | X | X |                               |

### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

| Assessment Tasks/Activities  | CILO No. |   |   |   |   |   | Weighting* | Remarks  |
|------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|------------|--|
|                              | 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |            |  |
| Continuous Assessment: 100 % |          |   |   |   |   |   |            |  |
| Film Review                  | X        |   |   | X | X | X | 30%        | Students write a review of a film based on a Shakespeare play, with extensive reference to the text.                                   |
| Creative Writing Exercise    |          | X | X | X | X | X | 30%        | Students produce a piece of creative writing based on one or more Shakespeare plays, adopting the viewpoint of a particular character, |

|                   |  |   |   |   |   |   |      |  |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|------|--|
|                   |  |   |   |   |   |   |      | describing what happened before or will happen after the play, or otherwise bringing their creativity to bear on Shakespeare's work. |
| Video Performance |  | X | X | X | X | X | 40%  | Students produce a video of around 6 – 10 minutes of a scene or scenes from a Shakespeare play.                                      |
|                   |  |   |   |   |   |   | 100% |  |

\* The weightings should add up to 100%.

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

| Assessment Task     | Criteria  | Excellent<br>(A+, A, A-)   | Good<br>(B+, B, B-)  | Adequate<br>(C+, C, C-)  | Marginal<br>(D)  | Failure<br>(F)   |
|---------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Film Review      | Analysis and understanding of the film and the text on which it is based.                         | Able to analyze the film by describing and analyzing the director and actors' interpretation of the characters and dramatic action, using appropriate principles, providing ample arguments and evidence, in clear and accurate English. | Able to analyze the film by describing and analyzing the director and actors' interpretation of the characters and dramatic action, using principles, providing arguments and evidence, in clear and accurate English. | Able to analyze the film by describing and analyzing the director and actors' interpretation of the characters and dramatic action in clear and moderately accurate English. | Able to analyze the film by describing and analyzing some aspects of the director and actor' interpretation of the characters and dramatic action. | Unable to analyze the film and/or to express ideas in accurate English.                    |
| 2. Creative Writing | Understanding of the source text.<br><br>Imaginative, thoughtful and eloquent creative response.  | The student has a clear and nuanced understanding of the text and responds to it creatively and originally in clear and accurate English.  | The student has a clear understanding of the text and gives an original response which shows points of interest, in clear and accurate English.  | The student understands the text and gives an original response in clear, moderately accurate English.   | The student shows limited understanding of the text and makes some attempt to respond originally.  | The student does not understand the text and/or is unable to produce an original response. |
| 3.Video Performance | Creative use of the medium.<br><br>Diction and understanding.<br><br>Skilful acting and direction | The students clearly understand the text and display sensitivity and creativity in their interpretation. All the lines are clear and the piece is well acted.  | The students show evidence of understanding and produce a creative interpretation of the piece. The lines can be heard and understood clearly.   | The students show evidence of understanding and produce a valid interpretation. Most lines can be heard and understood.  | The students show little evidence of understanding the lines and/or their diction is poor and unclear.   | The performance shows little or no effort or understanding.                                |

**Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

**1. Keyword Syllabus**

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

**Shakespeare, Elizabethan Literature, Jacobean Literature, Drama, Performance, Plays, Tragedy, Comedy, History, Poems, Sonnets**

**2. Reading List**

**2.1 Compulsory Readings**

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | The four plays selected for study by the instructor (generally <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>Macbeth</i> , and two others) |
| 2. | Shakespeare's sonnets   |
| 3. | Additional readings provided by the instructor  |
|    | No edition is specified for these readings.   |

**2.2 Additional Readings**

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | Complete Works of William Shakespeare (any edition)  |
| 2. | Asimov, I. (2003 ) <i>A guide to understanding and enjoying the works of Shakespeare</i> . Gramercy.   |
| 3. | Bryson, B. (2007) <i>Shakespeare: The world as stage</i> . Eminent Lives.  |
| 4. | Various films, including:<br><br><i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , (1968), starring Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting. Directed by Franco Zeffirelli<br><br><i>Hamlet</i> , (1996), starring Kenneth Branagh, Richard Attenborough, Judi Dench, Billy Crystal and Kate Winslet. Directed by Kenneth Branagh.<br><br><i>Twelfth Night</i> , (1996), starring Helena Bonham Carter, Nigel Hawthorne, Ben Kingsley, Imogen Stubbs and Mel Smith. Directed by Trevor Nunn.<br><br><i>A Midsummer's Night's Dream</i> , (1999), starring Calista Flockhart, Michelle Pfeiffer. Directed by Michael Hoffman. |