

Syllabus	
Course Title	Shakespeare and Political Philosophy
Instructor	Dr Sam Gilchrist Hall
Course Cross-Listing	<i>History, Political Science, Advanced Certificate in Political Thought, Early Modern Philosophy (MA in Philosophy)</i>
<p>Description</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>We all talk Shakespeare</i> — Jane Austen</p> <p>While Shakespeare’s plays have been cited by virtually every political theorist from Hobbes to Arendt, no explicit theories of government are offered by his dramas. Indeed, part of their enduring power as explorations of the state, sovereignty, nationalism, tyranny, revolution and justice lies in the manner in which they necessary present the responses of particular individuals to particular stimuli in the context of specific conditions, without moralization or generalization. Whether it be his vicious debunking of religious hypocrisy in <i>Measure for Measure</i> or his discrediting of sovereignty in <i>Henry V</i>, Shakespeare’s attitude to his society, its institutions, authorities and narratives appears to be ambivalent at best. Yet, this neither prevented his works being used in the British colonial enterprise, nor as a call to arms in the Revolutions that swept Europe in 1848.</p> <p>The course examines three key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of political philosophy do Shakespeare’s plays offer? • What is the appropriate methodology to consider politics in literature? • How and why have Shakespeare’s plays been used in various nationalistic and imperial agendas? <p>Goals</p> <p>The primary purpose of this course is to better understand Shakespeare’s political philosophy through the analysis of selected comedies, histories and tragedies, while also fathoming the way in which Shakespeare has been used in divergent political agendas and movements, from Marxism to the so-called “Anglo-Saxon” cult of Shakespeare. His works, it was believed, would serve a “civilizing” function in the empire where the sun never set. Since it places political questions center stage, a contemporary re-write of <i>King Lear</i>, set amidst the</p>	

corruption and gross inequality of modern India, Preti Taneja's *We Who are Young* (2018), is also considered as a key text.

Learning Outcomes

This course approaches what is perhaps *the* major question in literary studies: how does literature *think*? Or, in other words, what kind of knowledge is offered by a work of fiction that distinguishes it from one of philosophy, science or history? Aside from this, the course introduces students to certain key works of early modern and classical political philosophy (Plato; Hobbes; Machiavelli), deepens their knowledge of certain canonical plays and their political afterlife, including their perverse refunctioning in the ethno-nationalism of twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The methodological focus is on developing skills that are vital in the study of literature: close-reading, rhetorical analysis, and source/adaptation studies.

Course Requirements and Grading

Watching or reading all of the plays is essential (a list of film versions will be uploaded), as is accessing and reading the extracts before class. Students are, of course, expected to familiarize themselves with the eras in question and read around the topic. It is vital to read the following two texts in preparation for the course:

1. Armitage, David, Conal Condren, and Andrew Fitzmaurice, eds. *Shakespeare and early modern political thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
2. Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare's Language* (London: Penguin, 1999)

Attendance is mandatory and students auditing the class may miss a maximum of 3 classes.

1. Contribution as an individual or group to the end of term mini-conference on *Shakespeare's Political Philosophy* (25%);
2. Completion of a 2000-word essay (65%);
3. Class contribution (10%).

Full bibliographic details of the required reading, along with some suggested readings, are found in the bibliography.

Lesson No.:	Date	Theme
1.		<p>Scope and Expectations</p> <p><i>Politics and Poetry? A Discussion</i></p> <p>Definition of Terms</p> <p>Strauss. "What is political philosophy?"</p> <p>La Boétie. <i>Discourse on Voluntary Servitude</i></p>

		Bates. <i>Play in a Godless World</i> [Extract]
2.		Shakespeare's Republic <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> & Plato. <i>Republic</i> (Chapter 5) Hall. "Opening the Silenus" Rahe. <i>Republics Ancient and Modern</i>
3.		Shakespeare's Machiavelli <i>Richard III</i> & <i>Machiavelli, The Prince</i> — <i>The Discourses</i> [Extract] Grady. <i>Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne</i> [Extract]
4.		Shakespeare and Absolutism <i>Richard III</i> & Hobbes. <i>Leviathan</i> (Extract: Parts 1-4) Wilson. <i>Free Will</i> [extract]
5.		Shakespeare the Revolutionary <i>Hamlet</i> & Ryan. <i>Here's Fine Revolution</i> [Extract] Taureck* [Extract]
6.		Populism and Shakespearean Drama <i>Henry V</i> & Hall. "In Mendacio Veritas" Canetti. <i>Crowds and Power</i> [Extract]
7.		East-West Relations <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> Plutarch. <i>Antony (Narrative and Dramatic Sources)</i> & Brenk. "Antony-Osiris, Cleopatra-Isis: the End of Plutarch's Antony" Crane. "Roman World, Egyptian Earth: Cognitive Difference and Empire in Shakespeare's <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> ."
8.		Shakespeare's Political Theology <i>King Lear</i>

		<p>& Lupton. <i>Citizen-saints: Shakespeare and political Theology</i> [Extract]</p> <p>Schmitt. <i>Political Theology</i> [Extract]</p> <p>Brown. “Bonhoeffer, Schmitt, and the state of exception”</p> <p>Pye. “Against Schmitt”</p>
9.		<p>Shakespeare’s role in Romantic Nationalism <i>King Lear</i></p> <p>&</p> <p>Leerssen, van Baal, Rock, eds. <i>Encyclopaedia of Romantic nationalism</i> [Extract]</p> <p>Maley. <i>Nation, State and Empire in English Renaissance Literature</i> [Extract]</p> <p>Ruttkey, Gilchrist Hall, Péti eds. <i>Shakespeare and European Romanticism</i> [Extracts]</p>
10.		<p>Shakespeare, Nationalism, and the Colonial Legacy <i>King Lear</i></p> <p>&</p> <p>Taneja. <i>We Who are Young</i></p> <p>Prince. <i>Shakespeare and English Nationalism</i></p> <p>Trivedi and Bartholomeusz, eds. <i>India's Shakespeare</i></p> <p>Strobl. “The Bard of Eugenics”</p>
11.		<p>Mini-Conference: Shakespeare as a Political Philosopher</p>
12.		<p>Course Feedback Essay Feedback</p>

* This text is only available in German

Primary Texts

Bullough, Geoffrey, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. Vols. 1-7. London: Routledge, 1996.

de La Boétie Étienne. *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*. Translated by James B. Atkinson and David Sices. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012.

Hobbes, Thomas, and Edwin Curley. *Leviathan: with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*. Vol. 8348. London: Hackett Publishing, 1994.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Discourses on Livy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

—. *The Prince*. Hackett Publishing, 2008

Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Jean Howard, Katherine Eisaman Maus and Walter Cohen. New York: Norton, 1999

Taneja, Preti. *We Who are Young*. London: Galley Beggar Press, 2018.

Secondary Reading

Armitage, David, Conal Condren, and Andrew Fitzmaurice, eds. *Shakespeare and early modern political thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Baker, Anthony D. *Shakespeare, Theology, and the Unstaged God*. London: Routledge, 2020.

Bates, Catherine. *Play in a Godless World: The Theory and Practice of Play in Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Freud*. London: Open Gate, 1999.

Bates, Jennifer Ann, and Richard Wilson, eds. *Shakespeare and Continental Philosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Walter, Benjamin. "On the Concept of History." In Ed. Eiland Howard, *W. Benjamin, Selected Writings: 1938-1940*. Vol. 4. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003. 325-40.

Brenk, Frederick E. "Antony-Osiris, Cleopatra-Isis: the End of Plutarch's Antony." In *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition*, pp. 167-190. Basingstoke: Routledge, 2002.

Brown, Petra. "Bonhoeffer, Schmitt, and the state of exception." *Pacifica* 26, no. 3 (2013): 246-264.

Canetti, Elias. *Crowds and Power*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984.

Chedgzoy, Kate. *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Crane, Mary Thomas. "Roman World, Egyptian Earth: Cognitive Difference and Empire in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra." In *Knowing Shakespeare*, pp. 102-115. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2010.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Grady, Hugh. *Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

- Hall, Sam Gilchrist. *Shakespeare's Folly: Philosophy, Humanism, Critical Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- . "In Mendacio Veritas: Telling the Truth through Lies in *1&2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*." *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 91, no.1, 1-14
- Leerssen, Joseph Theodoor, Anne Hilde van Baal, and Jan Rock, eds. *Encyclopaedia of romantic nationalism in Europe*. Amsterdam University Press, 2018.
- Loewenstein, David, and Michael Witmore, eds. *Shakespeare and Early Modern Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Lupton, Julia Reinhard. *Citizen-saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology*. University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Marx, Steven. *Shakespeare and the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Maley, Willy. *Nation, State and Empire in English Renaissance Literature: Shakespeare to Milton*. Springer, 2002.
- Quash, Ben. *Theology and the Drama of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Pye, Christopher. "Against Schmitt: Law, Aesthetics, and Absolutism in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (2009): 197-217.
- Rahe, Paul A. *Republics Ancient and Modern, Volume II: New Modes and Orders in Early Modern Political Thought*. New York: UNC Press Books, 2017.
- Ruttkay, Veronika, Gilchrist Hall, Sam, Péti, Miklós, eds. *Shakespeare and European Romanticism: Studies on the Continental Bard*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020 [Forthcoming]
- Ryan, Kiernan. *Shakespeare's Universality: Here's Fine Revolution*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Schmitt, Carl. *Political theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty*. University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Strauss, Leo. "What is political philosophy?." *The Journal of Politics* 19, no. 3 (1957): 343-368.
- Strobl, Gerwin. "The Bard of Eugenics: Shakespeare and Racial Activism in the Third Reich." *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 3 (1999): 323-336.
- Taureck, Bernhard. *Hamlet: Widerstand Gegen Den Überwachungsstaat: Eine Intertextuelle Deutung*. Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2017.
- Trivedi, Poonam, and Dennis Bartholomeusz, eds. *India's Shakespeare: translation, interpretation, and performance*. University of Delaware Press, 2005.
- Wilson, Richard. *Free Will: Art and power on Shakespeare's stage*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.