Shakespeare's Spectacular Bodies (EAS3127)

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<th>MODULE CODE</th>
<th>EAS3127</th>
<th>MODULE LEVEL</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODULE TITLE</td>
<td>Shakespeare's Spectacular Bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LECTURER(S)</td>
<td>Dr Pascale Aebischer (Convenor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CREDIT VALUE</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>ECTS VALUE</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRE-REQUISITES</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>CO-REQUISITES</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>DURATION OF MODULE</td>
<td>11 weeks</td>
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<td>TOTAL STUDENT STUDY TIME</td>
<td>300 hours (including film screenings and 1 x 2-hr plus 1 x 1hr seminar per week)</td>
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**AIMS**

This module aims to look at Shakespeare's narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, as well as at a number of Shakespearean and pre-Shakespearean plays of different genres. Students will be invited to think about Shakespeare's conception of the human body as both a metaphor (e.g. for the state as 'the body politic') and a literal presence on stage or screen. Besides contemporary images and texts, students will study more recent critical thinking about Renaissance conceptions of the body as well as present-day stage and screen representations of ‘Shakespearean’ bodies. In the process, students will achieve increased critical awareness of the often ideologically charged roles Shakespeare's bodies play in performance no less than in the playtexts.

Key questions that will be explored in this module include:

- What is the influence of genre on the representation of gender and the body?
- How do Shakespearean and pre-Shakespearean plays portray the racially and ethnically ‘other’ body?
- How can we characterise the relationship between gender, race and violence in Shakespearean portrayals of rape? (What is the significance of stage violence?)
- What use does Shakespeare make of the human body as a theatrical property?
- Which critical frameworks allow us to talk about ‘Shakespearean’ bodies in performance?

**INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs)**

*On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:*

1. **Module Specific Skills:**
   a. demonstrate the ability to make use of Renaissance contextual material and modern criticism
in their assessment of Shakespeare's representation of the body.

b. engage critically, and within an appropriate analytical framework, with the representation of bodies in modern stage and screen productions of Shakespeare's plays and write reviews of such productions.

c. distinguish between the representation of Shakespeare's dramatic characters in the playtexts and their roles in performance.

d. establish connections between a range of playtexts and performance texts and show an understanding of their cultural impact.

2. Discipline Specific Skills:

a. demonstrate an advanced ability to analyse the dramatic of the Renaissance and to relate its concerns and its modes of expression to its historical context.

b. demonstrate an advanced ability to interrelate texts and discourses specific to their own discipline with issues in the wider context of cultural and intellectual history.

c. demonstrate an advanced ability to understand and analyse relevant theoretical ideas, and to apply these ideas to literary and film texts.

d. demonstrate an advanced ability to understand and analyse relevant theoretical ideas, and to apply these ideas to films and performance texts.

3. Personal and Key Skills:

a. through seminar work and presentations, demonstrate advanced communication skills, and an ability to work both individually and in groups.

b. through essay-writing, demonstrate appropriate research and bibliographic skills, an advanced capacity to construct a coherent, substantiated argument, and a capacity to write clear and correct prose.

c. through research for seminars, essays, and presentations demonstrate advanced proficiency in information retrieval and analysis.

LEARNING/TEACHING METHODS

Details of Learning and Teaching Methods:

Teaching is by one two-hour seminar and one one-hour seminar per week and will be complemented by regular film screenings. Films will also be available in the library, for viewing outside of designated screenings. Seminars will involve discussion of texts, images and productions. They will also include group work, close reading of texts, films and artefacts, some practical work on individual scenes and performance challenges, and prepared team presentations (research reports and reviews of criticism). Outside the seminars, students will be expected to work in study groups and to take part in discussions and constructive peer reviews within the Exeter Learning Environment. Seminar attendance is compulsory and students are expected to participate in all aspects of the seminars and to watch productions and engage in group work in their own time. The reviews students will be writing as part of the assessment for the module and the oral presentations of criticism will allow them to practise the practical and analytical skills of reviewing and critical comment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative or % Contribution:</th>
<th>Form of Assessment:</th>
<th>Size of the assessment e.g. duration/length</th>
<th>ILO's assessed by this assessment:</th>
<th>Feedback method:</th>
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<tr>
<td>formative</td>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
<td>10-15 minutes</td>
<td>1a, c, d; 2a, b, c, d; 3a, c</td>
<td>Oral feedback in seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>formative</td>
<td>abstract</td>
<td>300-500 words</td>
<td>1a, c, d; 2a, b, c, d; 3b, c</td>
<td>Oral feedback in seminars, with opportunity for tutorial follow-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>1,500 words</td>
<td>1b, c, d; 2c, d; 3b, c</td>
<td>Written feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
<td>Essay</td>
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<td>1a, b, c, d; 2a, b, c, d; 3b, c</td>
<td>Written feedback</td>
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SYLLABUS PLAN

1. Introduction and Orientation: talking about bodies in playtexts and performance texts; introduction to the writing of performance reviews
2. Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* and Julie Taymor's *Titus*: the disabled and racially 'other' body
4. The *Othello* films of Orson Welles, Laurence Olivier/Dexter/Burge, Janet Suzman and Oliver Parker and film-related artefacts at the Bill Douglas Centre
5. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*: the Zeffirelli, Troma/Kaufman and Luhrmann films: high culture and the tromazone
7. Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece, Titus Andronicus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*: rape, suicide and murder in poetry, plays and visual arts. Involves looking at Mary Sidney Pembroke's *Antonius* and Samuel Daniel's *Cleopatra*.
8. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*: Rome and Egypt in popular culture (involving artefacts at the Bill Douglas Centre); turning death into a spectacle in Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*
9. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*: Roman masculinity in Shakespeare and Berkoff's *Coriolanus*
11. Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*: controlling the female body in Shakespeare's play and Zeffirelli's film

INDICATIVE LEARNING RESOURCES

*Indicative basic reading list:*

**Primary texts**

George Peele, *The Battle of Alcazar*
Countess of Pembroke, *Antonus*

Samuel Daniel, *The Tragedie of Cleopatra*


The non-Shakespearean texts will be made available on WebCT.

**Selected secondary texts**

Janet Adelman, *The Common Liar* (Yale UP, 1973) and *Suffocating Bodies* (Routledge, 1992)


Martin Esslin, *The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama Create meaning on Stage and Screen* (Methuen, 1987)


Carol Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (Routledge, 2001)

W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (CUP, 1997)

**Other resources:**

The module will be supported by an extensive Exeter Learning Environment site with reading lists, course materials and discussion forums.

**Reading for week 1**

Each student should bring to the first seminar three recent performance reviews of the same Shakespeare production of her/his choice (stage or screen). Reviews can be found in newspapers (and newspaper databases, e.g. *The Guardian*) and/or in scholarly journals such as *Shakespeare Bulletin, Shakespeare Survey, Shakespeare Quarterly*, etc. Students should have read these reviews carefully and be ready to comment on them.

**DATE OF LAST REVISION** 23 March 2010