

English 3306 Fall 2012 Shakespeare's Major Works/ Dr. Christensen achrist@uh.edu

Shakespeare/Gender/Nation/Empire

This course looks at Shakespeare's works by focusing on his representations of the Roman Empire; how ideas of national identity (Roman and English) are shaped by ideas of gender, race, and power; and how the theatre conveyed a sense of Elizabethan England as a modern nation. This focus, meant to lend some common ground to our collective study, reflects current critical interest in the field of Shakespeare and early modern cultural studies. My goal is to help you build and strengthen your confidence as readers/viewers/and critics of the Bard.

We will contextualize our readings of the plays and poem within historical and critical contexts; for example, primary sources like Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and recent literary studies in gender and empire studies.

The required text is Stephen Greenblatt, Ed. *The Norton Shakespeare*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008 (on order at the UC Bookstore, used and new copies). All the other material will be found on the course web site. I expect everyone to come to class, stay up on the reading, and view the BBC (or other) video production for each play.

It is a hybrid course; so fully half of its conduct transpires on line. If this mode does not appeal to you, then don't enroll in this section. That said, I have had great success with lively discussion boards, reading completion quizzes, and viewing of video productions-- all happening outside of class. Our class meetings, thus, concentrate on lecture and discussion at a high level.

The formal requirements include:

- Quizzes
- Discussion board posts
- Midterm exam
- Two papers
- Final reflective portfolio

Likely works on the syllabus:

- *Titus Andronicus*
- *The Rape of Lucrece*
- *Julius Caesar*
- *Antony and Cleopatra*
- *Henry V*
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

