FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit FSEM 100 topics courses for review or any other existing course that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE NUMBER:</th>
<th>FSEM 100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COURSE TITLE:</td>
<td>SHAKESPEARE AND POPULAR CULTURE</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBMITTED BY:</td>
<td>Maya Mathur</td>
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<td>DATE:</td>
<td>10/1/2012</td>
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</tbody>
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This course proposal has the department’s approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)

NOTE: Click on the link for “first year seminar” at [www.jtmorello.org/gened](http://www.jtmorello.org/gened) to see the criteria used to evaluate courses proposed to meet the first year seminar requirement. See the report entitled “General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty Senate” for additional details.

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one to two sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

This course examines a selection of plays by William Shakespeare in tandem with their representations in literature, film, and popular culture.

RATIONALE. Using only the space provided in the box below, briefly state why this course should be approved as a first year seminar course.

This class contributes to the FSEM’s goals of encouraging students to engage in discussion-based exploratory learning, to gain knowledge of appropriate research and information-retrieval techniques, and produce original arguments about literature and popular culture. In this course, students will examine a series of plays by William Shakespeare alongside twentieth and twenty-first century literary and film adaptations of his work. These texts will be at the center of class discussion and small-group workshops, which are designed to help students develop the critical-thinking and close-reading skills that are necessary to college-level learning. Likewise, the students’ speaking and writing skills will be enhanced by class projects that invite them to lead the day’s discussion, produce a series of informal and formal writing assignments, and generate a final research presentation and essay. Rather than replicate the broad nature of other General Education courses, then, this seminar draws from the fields of literature and film in order to investigate the cultural debates, and, at times, the controversies that surround Shakespeare’s sixteenth and seventeenth-century theatrical productions as well as their twentieth and twenty-first century counterparts.

SYLLABUS. Attach a course syllabus.

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus electronically as one document to John P. Broome (jbroome@umw.edu). All submissions must be in electronic form.
FSEM100: Shakespeare and Popular Culture
Dr. Maya Mathur

Course Description
William Shakespeare is undoubtedly one of the best-known dramatists of all time. Though he lived and wrote in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, his plays have been performed in multiple languages and adapted to fit a variety of social contexts. Indeed, contemporary readers of Shakespeare’s work are just as likely to encounter him in a YouTube video, a popular film, or a comic strip, as they are to study him in as part of a high-school or college curriculum. In this course, we will examine a selection of Shakespeare’s plays not only in their original language and setting, but also in terms of their adaptation by twentieth and twenty-first century writers and filmmakers. In doing so, we will consider some of the following questions: What are some of the ways in which Shakespeare has been reinvented over the centuries? Why is he such a rich source for adaptation? To what extent do popular representations of the playwright stay true to the original text? To what extent do they deviate from it? Why is Shakespeare held in such high regard and should he continue to be treated in such a manner? In this course, we will try to ask and answer these questions as we engage with the central themes of Shakespeare’s plays as well as examine the ways in which they have been reincarnated by and for modern viewers and readers.

Course Objectives
- Engage in active, discussion-based, participatory learning.
- Use writing as a tool for the exploration and expression of ideas and arguments.
- Gain knowledge of appropriate research and information retrieval techniques.
- Learn how to process and synthesize your ideas into original arguments.

Course Texts
- The films that will be screened during the semester have been placed on reserve at Simpson Library. You will be responsible for watching these films before we discuss them in class.
- Some secondary essays for this class have been posted on Canvas. You will need to print out these materials and bring them to class on the days designated by the syllabus.

Course Requirements
This is a reading- and discussion-oriented course in which class activities are essential to your development. My grading scale for the course is as follows: A 100-94, A- 93-90, B+ 89-87, B
86-84, B- 83-80, C+ 79-77, C 76-74, C- 73-70, D+ 69-65, D 64-60, F 59 and below. Midterm grades of U will be given to students who have missed five or more classes and/or whose average grade is C or below. Your final grade will be based on the following components: Attendance and Participation (15%), Response Papers (20%), Discussion Leader (10%), Mid-Term Essay (15%), Annotated Bibliography (10%), Research Presentations (10%), and Final Research Paper (20%). You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

Participation: 15%

- For this class, discussion involves coming up with multiple interpretations of a Shakespearean play, adaptation, or critical essay, and being able to debate its validity in class. It also involves building relevant interpersonal skills; that is, learning to listen carefully and engage respectfully with opinions that may be different from your own. Finally, good discussion involves taking risks, trying out new ideas, and challenging your preconceptions about a work. Discussion does not involve coming to a consensus about a text or arriving at an ultimate truth about what it says or does. At a minimum, you should have completed the reading, taken notes, and come to class with questions about a text, in order to fully participate in the discussion.

- At the beginning of the semester, all students are assigned an approximate grade of C for this segment of the course. Coming to class prepared and actively engaging in the conversation will enhance your grade; occasional participation will result in little or no change to your grade; while frequent silence or failure to engage with your peers will result in a reduction of your grade.

- Participation begins with attendance. Both absences and tardiness will affect your grade. You are allowed 3 excused absences. More than 3 absences will result in a reduction of this portion of your grade by one-third for each additional absence. For instance, if your participation grade for the semester is a B and you miss five classes, that grade will automatically drop to a C+. More than 5 absences will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third for each additional absence. Although the advice “better late than never” should be heeded (you will learn by being present), arrival in class more than 10 minutes after it begins will be considered an absence.

Response Papers: 20%

- You have been divided into specific response groups for this assignment. Please check Canvas for the designated groups and due dates. On these days, you will be expected to upload a 1-2 page essay on the day’s reading to Canvas. In your essays, you may respond to any one of the reading prompts posted by me or you may compose your own response to the reading. Even though you have been assigned to a group, each member of the group will be generating their own essay. You will write a total of 4 responses this semester. Each essay will comprise 5% of your total grade.

- Your responses are the equivalent of miniature papers rather than free-writing exercises. You will be expected to generate a thesis about the play you are investigating and support it with plenty of evidence from the text. All essays should be typewritten and double-spaced using Times New Roman 12 pt. font with 1-inch margins. You will be penalized for late responses.

- I will give you a letter grade of A for a sophisticated argument with substantial textual evidence; B for an adequate response with some textual support; and a C or D for a critically
unsophisticated argument or summary with little or no textual evidence. A sample response is available on Canvas.

Discussion Leader: 10%
- For the assignment, you and your partner will need to: 1. Offer a 10-minute summary of a critical essay and 2. Develop 8-12 questions on the reading, which you will use to lead class discussion for 30-40 minutes.
- Essay Summary: For this segment, you will pick an article or book chapter on the play we are reading in class as well as address why you chose it, discuss its central argument, and reflect on its strengths and weaknesses. Since an author will typically make several different claims in his/her work, you should focus only on the central points of their argument. The essay you select should be 10-20 pages in length and be chosen from a scholarly journal or book that you found through the UMW library or one of the library’s databases. Finally, on the day of your presentation, you will need to turn in a Summary/Analysis, which will consist of a 200-250 word overview of the article and a 200-250 word analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Discussion: The second half of your presentation will consist of facilitating class discussion for 30-40 minutes. In order to do so, you will need to develop a set of questions that will produce a fruitful dialogue among your peers. Ideally, these questions should evolve from the essay you have chosen. Your questions should also combine specific references to the text with broader queries about its historical or thematic significance. On the day of your assignment, you should make your questions available to the class, either in the form of a handout or a set of power-point slides.
- You and your partner will receive a cumulative grade for the assignment. Your grade will depend on the clarity of your summary as well as on the depth and sophistication of the questions you prepare. For the discussion segment, your grade also depends on your ability to listen carefully to your classmates and ask follow-up questions, when appropriate (remember that you are opening up a conversation rather than asking a series of questions with predefined answers). Finally, your ability to work with your partner is central to your final score for this project. A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Canvas.

Mid-Term Essay: 15%
- This assignment requires you to build on our discussion during the first half of the semester and write a 4-5 page paper that carefully investigates one aspect of the readings materials we have covered in the first half of the semester. In preparation for this assignment, you will submit two rough drafts for feedback by your classmates, during peer review sessions, and from me during our individual conferences. You will also be evaluated on the comments and criticism you provide your classmates in review workshops.

Annotated Bibliography: 10%
- Your annotated bibliography should consist of 6-8 secondary sources on the text or theme that you are exploring for your final project. Each entry should be accompanied by a 250-300 word paragraph in which you summarize the critic’s argument, discuss its strengths and weaknesses, and, whenever possible, its relevance to the other sources in your bibliography.
- For the purpose of this assignment, a secondary source consists of a 10-20 page scholarly article or book chapter on any aspect of Shakespeare and popular culture. Because literary
criticism has changed considerably in the past thirty years, it is recommended that you consult the most-recent scholarship on a topic when preparing your bibliography. Regardless of whether you use them in your essay or not, the sources you pick should focus on a specific text or theme (e.g. The Shakespeare Re-told Series, Macbeth and V for Vendetta, Shakespeare and British detective novels and so on) related to your project. Bibliographies will be evaluated on the following criteria: accuracy of the summary, depth of analysis, relevance of sources to your main topic, and to each other.

Research Presentation: 10%
- During the last week of classes, you will be asked to offer a 6-8 minute presentation on your final project. This assignment is designed to help you clarify your ideas about the paper and receive additional feedback on your work. For the assignment, you will need to illustrate the main points of your argument and use the literary and historical sources you have consulted to support your claims. You should also be prepared to take questions from the class on your ideas. Your grade for this project will depend on the clarity of your argument, the kinds of supporting materials you provide, and the facility with which you respond to your classmate’s questions.

Final Research Paper: 20%
- The final assignment for the class will be a 6-8 page research paper on one of the themes taken up in the course. While I will provide detailed guidelines along which you may wish to structure your essay, the final assignment is relatively open-ended and should reflect your own interests in the course material. You will be expected to turn in a 1-2 page proposal for your research project at our individual conferences, which will be held approximately six weeks before the end of the semester. You will also be evaluated on the feedback you provide your classmates during your in-class peer reviews workshop for the paper.

FSEM 100: Shakespeare and Popular Culture
Schedule of Readings

Week 1
- Course Introduction
- Film screening, Shakespeare in Love

Week 2
- Jim Shapiro, Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare
- Film screening, Anonymous

Week 3
- William Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew
- Film screening, Shakespeare Re-Told: The Taming of the Shrew

Week 4
- William Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew
- Film screening, 10 Things I Hate about You

Week 5
- William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Week 6
• William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream
• Neil Gaiman, The Sandman: Dream Country

Week 7
• Mid-Term Essay due in class
• Film screening, Shakespeare Retold: A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Week 8
• William Shakespeare, 1 Henry IV
• Film screening, Orson Welles, Chimes at Midnight

Week 9
• William Shakespeare, 1 Henry IV
• Film screening, Gus Van Sant, My Own Private Idaho

Week 10
• William Shakespeare, Macbeth
• Terry Pratchett, Wyrd Sisters

Week 11
• William Shakespeare, Macbeth
• Terry Pratchett, Wyrd Sisters

Week 12
• William Shakespeare, The Tempest
• Film Screening, Prospero’s Books

Week 13
• William Shakespeare, Shakespeare, The Tempest
• Film Screening, Prospero’s Books

Week 14
• Conor McReery and Anthony Del Col. Kill Shakespeare. Vols. 1 and 2

Week 15
• Research Presentations

Week 16
• Final Essay due