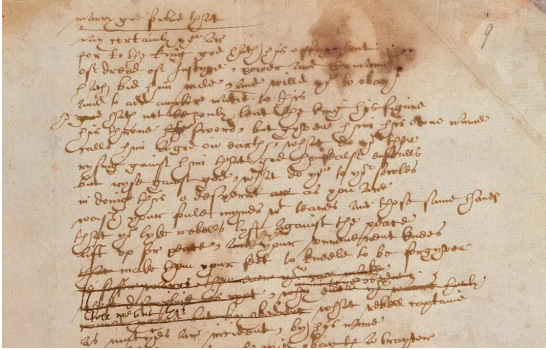


ENG 195-01 / HIS 195-01
Shakespeare Across the Mediterranean
Adaptation, Colonialism, and Difference
Spring Semester 2020
T/Th 1:00-2:20 p.m., Mears 115



COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we engage in an in-depth examination of the figure of Othello, studying not only his creation in drama and opera but also the cultural contexts that inform these depictions. We will concentrate upon two central case studies: his appearance in Shakespeare's play *Othello* (1604) and then his re-imagining as an operatic figure in Verdi's *Otello* (1887). Studying these works will allow us to bring into relief the theatrical conventions and performative dynamics that distinguish early modern theater and nineteenth-century opera from other art forms and from each other. Further, these works have much to tell us about the political, racial, and religious contexts of the cultures that produced them. Course-embedded travel will take us to Washington D.C., Italy, and finally that place where Ot(h)ello's story itself ends: the island of Cyprus.

COURSE INFORMATION

Dr. John Garrison, Department of English

Pronouns: he, him, his

garrison@grinnell.edu

(641) 269 4477

Office Hours: Friday 1:00-4:00 p.m. in Mears 318

Dr. Kelly J. Maynard, Department of History

Pronouns: she, her, hers

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(641) 269-4465

Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00-12:00, Wednesday 9:00-11:00 a.m. in Mears 215

COURSE OUTCOMES

In addition to the college-wide outcomes that guide every course, this class will help you:

- Articulate the differences in theatrical practice and audience experience between theatre (especially at the turn of the seventeenth century) and opera (especially in the late nineteenth century).
- Understand how different stagings of the *Othello/Otello* narrative reflect and shape the colonial, racial, political, and religious impulses of the cultures that produced and received them.
- Identify how the key locations associated with *Othello/Otello*, especially the spatial dynamics of its original performance sites, physically manifest the tensions of the narrative.
- Use the production histories of this narrative to describe how the performance of black characters and the inclusion of black performers in Shakespearean and Verdian productions has changed over time.
- Articulate the ways in which historical treatments of the figure of Othello influence adaptations in performance today and inform contemporary understandings of difference and the colonial past.

COURSE MATERIALS

William Shakespeare, *Othello: Texts and Contexts*. Ed. Kim F. Hall. Bedford/St. Martins (2007) ISBN: 978-0-312-39898-9

R.M. Christofides, *Othello's Secret: The Cyprus Problem*. The Arden Shakespeare (2016) ISBN: 978-1474212977

It is essential that you use these specific editions for our class. They are available at the Pioneer Bookstore in inexpensive editions. All other readings, indicated by a bullet [•] on the schedule below, will be 1) available on the course website, 2) accessible on the internet, or 3) handed out in class. Please note that the scheduling of all reading assignments is subject to change based on the ebb and flow of class discussions.

COURSE GRADING

In-Class Participation	40%
Performance/Lecture Reaction Papers	20%
Travel Reflections	30%
Cyprus Chapbook Contribution	10%

GRADING SCALE

100 – 94%	A	93 – 90%	A-
89 – 87%	B+	86 – 83%	B
82 – 80%	B-	79 – 77%	C+
76 – 70%	C	69 – 60%	D
59% and below	F		

Please note that all class grades – participation, reaction papers, travel reflections, and chapbooks contributions – will be assessed jointly by Professors Garrison and Maynard.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND DISCUSSION

This class is conducted as a seminar. Our meetings center upon discussion of assigned readings and viewings, and it is through the free and open exchange of ideas that we all benefit the most from the class. You are expected to attend class regularly – except in case of dire emergency – with the reading materials in hand. Please note that, by definition, every absence from class has a negative impact upon the overall quality of our conversations. Your grade will be impacted accordingly. After two uncommunicated absences, you will receive an F for the participation portion of the course grade. After three uncommunicated absences, you will fail the course entirely. So please be prepared to give the class session your full presence: taking detailed notes, striving to understand clearly and respond to what others have to say, and keeping your comments relevant to the flow of the conversation.

Active participation in the class will give you practice using course terms, concepts, and methods, as well as give you added opportunity to explore the works on the syllabus. While it can be difficult to speak in front of other students, we expect everyone to participate in class discussion. Your participation grade will be based both on the quality and the frequency of your contributions. A good, general goal to set for yourself is to attend every class and to speak more than once per class. Those who demonstrate careful reading of the text and who speak at least once every class, especially in response to others' ideas, will receive an A. Those who clearly read all the coursework and speak

during most classes will range in the B range. Those who speak once in a while yet clearly do all the reading will fall in the C range.

Please adhere to reasonable standards of punctuality and decorum in order to create a classroom environment conducive to everyone learning. In particular, do not speak when others are speaking and do not use any kind of electronic device (e.g., laptop, cell phone) unless you have specific permission to do so. Both of these behaviors can be distracting for other students and can interfere with your own learning.

ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due at 9:00PM on the date indicated on the syllabus. Detailed prompts for each assignment will be posted to the course website. These assignments will include:

- **Three performance/lecture reaction papers** will help you connect public talks (Ruben Espinosa) and performances (*Porgy and Bess* and *Red Velvet*) to the materials with which we engage in class. You will have an opportunity to think about how the theatrical and scholarly spheres today continue and depart from the long history of debates that we will be tracing since the sixteenth century.
- **Two travel reflection papers** will encourage you to think even more about how contemporary performance can be placed in dialogue with the works and traditions that we will study. These papers will explore the added dimensions of space and place. You'll have the opportunity to consider how various locales (Washington, D.C., Venice, Italy, various sites on Cyprus) tie to ideas from the course as well as how your personal experiences in a variety of circumstances within those locales when viewed through the theoretical lenses of our course.
- **The contribution to the chapbook** will give you an opportunity to think about how contemporary place connects to larger themes of the course. This contribution will involve both image and text, and it will be published in partnership with Phaneromenis70, a Cypriot non-profit organization.

To set you up to succeed with the course assignments, we will practice using necessary tools and strategies in class. Always remember that we are here to help you. Do not hesitate to consult with us well in advance of relevant due dates when planning essays, selecting evidence, and forming arguments.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Academic Integrity: Grinnell College's Academic Honesty policy is located in the catalog and in the student handbook. We expect every student to be aware of and to meet the expectations expressed in this policy.

Disabilities Statement: We want everyone in this classroom to succeed and we are deeply committed to creating an environment that helps make that possible. We welcome students to approach us about distinctive learning needs. Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations (or any student considering obtaining documentation) should make an appointment with John Hirschman (hirschma@grinnell.edu), Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, located on the 3rd floor of Goodnow Hall (x3089), to ensure that we have the proper information. Finally, we encourage students with documented disabilities to discuss them with either or both of us as you are comfortable.

Religious Holidays: We encourage students who plan to observe holy days that coincide with class meetings or assignment due to dates, to consult with us so that we can reach a mutual understanding of how you can meet the terms of your religious observance and also meet requirements for the course.

Workload: This course meets for roughly three hours each week. We expect readings to take about seven hours a week. This should be active, close reading as you take careful notes and mark up texts in detail in order to prepare for discussion and written work. Naturally this workload will have ebbs and flows, so be sure to think about time management. Start papers early and balance this class with others as best as you can.

Modifications to the Syllabus: The instructors and the college reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus as the curriculum and/or program require(s).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please complete the assigned readings before we meet. Read the introductions and all footnotes/marginal glosses that might be included with the text. You will be notified of any changes to this schedule both in class and via email.

Encountering the Moor

Week 1	1/21: Course Introduction
	1/23: Starting Points
	• Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> , Introduction (p. 1-31) & Acts 1-2
Week 2	1/28: Starting Points
	• <i>Othello</i> , Acts 3-4
	1/30: Starting Points
	• <i>Othello</i> , Act 5
	• Shakespeare, Sonnet 127

Saturday

2/1: *Porgy and Bess*

NY Met Live in HD Broadcast at Harris Cinema, 12:00

Reimagining the Moor

Week 3

2/4: Reading *Othello* Today

- Espinosa, "Stranger Shakespeare"
- Espinosa, "Shakespeare and Your Mountainish Humanity"

Response to *Porgy and Bess* due

2/6: Verdi and Boito, *Otello* (1887)

- Act I 0'-33'
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm_Usoo7LvY&t=5719s

Week 4

2/11: *Otello*

- Acts II + III 33:00-1:06', 1:06-1:43'
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm_Usoo7LvY&t=5719s

** Attend Talk by Ruben Espinosa **

2/13: *Otello*

- Act IV 1:43'-2:16'
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm_Usoo7LvY&t=5719s

Week 5

2/18: Creating *Otello*

- Verdi letters (excerpts), 1878-1887

Response to Espinosa talk due

2/20: Interpreting *Otello*

- David J. Richards, "Lovers: Male-Female Relationships"
- Catherine Clément, "Chapter 6: Madmen, Negroes, Jesters, or the Heroes of Deception"
- Naomi André, "From *Otello* to *Porgy*: Blackness, Masculinity, and Morality in Opera"

Contextualizing the Moor

Week 6

2/25: Situating *Othello*

- *Othello* (Bedford Texts and Contexts), 171-193, 203-216

2/27: Situating Othello

- *Othello* (Bedford Texts and Contexts), 228-238, 248-250

Week 7

3/3: Nineteenth-Century Liberalism: gender, class, and commerce

- Émile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise* (1883), Chapter 4

3/5: Nineteenth-Century Liberalism: race and empire

- A.W. von Schlegel, "Criticisms on Shakespeare's Tragedies" (1808)

w/e of

3/6-3/8

Red Velvet

Grinnell College Theater Department

Week 8

3/10: Debrief *Red Velvet*

****Response to *Red Velvet* due****

3/12: preparations for D.C.

SPRING BREAK

Course-Embedded Travel to Washington, D.C.

Friday 3/13 through Tuesday 3/17

Performing the Moor

Week 9

3/31: Debrief D.C. Travel

****Response to D.C. Travel Due****

4/2: Ira Aldridge & His Legacy

- "African Americans and Shakespeare" (Folger Podcast)

Week 10

4/7: Paul Robeson on/as Othello

- Robeson, *Othello*, Act V scene II (1944), audio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSBWCkEj3N0&t=101s>

- Robeson on *Othello* (1958)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IppiuQ0hD9g>

4/9: Paul Robeson & Political Speech

- Mark Andrew Thompson, "'Now you're making it up, brother': Paul Robeson, HUAC, and the challenge of institutional narrative authority"

Modernizing the Moor

- Week 11 4/14: Othello and Blackface
- Ayanna Thompson, “Original(ity): *Othello* and Blackface”
 - “Othello and Blackface” (Folger Podcast)
- 4/16: Othello’s Reach
- “Shakespeare and Opera” (Folger Podcast)
 - Kim Hall, “Othello was my Grandfather”
- Week 12 4/21: Otello's Limits
- Wallace McClain Cheatham, "Black Male Singers at the Metropolitan Opera"
 - Naomi André, "Engaged Opera" and "Engaged Musicology, Political Action and Social Justice"
- 4/23: Living on the Edge
- Carolyn Sebron, "A Brief History of Blacks in Opera"
 - Janelle Watkins, "Black Men Storm the Gates of Classical Opera"

Contemporary Crossroads

- Week 13 4/28: Othello in Venice
- Shaul Bassi, “Shylock and Othello in a Time of Xenophobia,” *New Yorker* (July 3, 2017)
 - Shaul Bassi, “Walking Shakespeare’s Venice” (all 6 blog posts)
 - John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53), excerpts
- 4/30: Othello on Cyprus
- R.M. Christofides, *Othello’s Secret: The Cyprus Problem*
- Week 14 5/5: Othello on Cyprus
- R.M. Christofides, *Othello’s Secret: The Cyprus Problem*
- 5/7: Course Wrap-up
- Course-Embedded Travel to Italy and Cyprus
Monday 5/18-Monday 6/1
Int’l Travel Reflection & Chapbook Contribution Due on 6/5/20