

COLORADO WOMEN'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

**GWST 2700 Reading Shakespeare's Women**

A Hybrid / Writing Intensive Course

*Class will meet in person on Wednesdays 6:00-9:30 p.m.,  
June 11, 25, July 16, August 6.*

*Class will attend 2 live performances at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival  
at the University of Colorado at Boulder on  
Sunday July 20 @ 6:30 p.m. (The Merry Wives of Windsor)  
and Sunday August 10 @ 6:30 p.m. (The Tempest)*

**Please note Materials Fee for Colorado Shakespeare Festival Performances:  
\$120 per student due in our first class meeting on June 11**

*In addition to time spent in the 4 Wednesday class meetings and the 2 Sunday performances,  
participation in weekly online discussions will also be required.*

*See class schedule at the end of this syllabus for additional information.*

**Instructor:** Susan J. Tyburski, M.A. (English Literature), J.D.

**Email:** [stybursk@du.edu](mailto:stybursk@du.edu) **Phone:** 720-317-9880

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** William Shakespeare created an enduring universe of fascinating characters and stories that have evolved into universal archetypes. This course will serve as an introduction to Shakespeare's magical world and the women inhabiting this world. We will focus on key female characters in 5 plays: *Romeo & Juliet*, *Anthony & Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Tempest*. Our reading and discussion of these plays will be supplemented with film adaptations and live performances of 2 plays at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Along the way, we will consider the following questions: How does Shakespeare portray women? How does his portrayal of women change over his lifetime? What can Shakespeare's women teach us about ourselves, our relationships and our roles in the world?

This course will require close critical reading of 5 Shakespeare plays, critical viewings of live plays and films, weekly online reading responses, participation in class discussions and exercises, and a final synthesis paper. We will also utilize a scaffolded writing process, with your short response papers serving as raw material for your final synthesis paper.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** As we explore Shakespeare's Women, you will:

- Read and understand complex literary texts
- Critically respond to dramatic works on the page, on the screen and on the stage
- Discuss Shakespeare's portrayal of women from a feminist perspective
- Communicate clearly and effectively about gender, drawing on multiple disciplines
- Engage in collaborative dialogue within a supportive classroom community

**Requirements for the First Class (Wed. 6/11):** Read William Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*, as well as the introductory essays in the assigned text. As you read this play, note how the central character of Juliet develops. What power or agency does Juliet have to make her own decisions? How does she negotiate the social landscape of the play? Make note of anything you find especially interesting, enjoyable, disturbing or confusing; jot down your questions in an informal reading journal. Bring your questions, and be prepared to discuss this play, in our first class. **If you have any questions before our class begins, please email me at [stybursk@du.edu](mailto:stybursk@du.edu)**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The Women's College fully endorses the University of Denver's Honor Code and the procedures put forth by the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of data and research—is in violation of the code and will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course. As student members of a community committed to academic integrity and honesty, it is your responsibility to become familiar with the DU Honor Code and its procedures ([www.du.edu/honorcode](http://www.du.edu/honorcode)).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** You will be graded on the following work:

•**Weekly Reflections / Responses (8 x 10 = 80 points total):** You should maintain an informal reading journal where you will record your reactions to, questions about, and ideas concerning the assigned readings and performances. From the raw material you accumulate in this journal, you will craft weekly reflections/responses discussing the portrayal of one or more female characters, using specific examples from both the text of the play and the performance. More specific expectations about these reflection/responses will be provided in our first class. Note: I will schedule 9 weekly reflections / responses due by the end of the day on Monday from June 16 – August 11. However, only the 8 highest scores will count towards your final grade.

•**Participation in Class Dialogue (5 points) (Ongoing):** Our exploration of Shakespeare's Women will be a community effort. You will have the opportunity to explore the assigned materials in depth, and contribute to ongoing discussions about these materials, as well as respond to your classmates' weekly reflections / responses.

•**Final Synthesis Paper (15 points):** Using the raw material from your reading journal and

your weekly reading reflections, this 7-8 page paper will synthesize your ideas, organized around one key thesis concerning the portrayal of women by Shakespeare and containing specific references to the texts of the plays. More detailed expectations about this final synthesis paper will be provided in our first class. This paper will be due to [stybursk@du.edu](mailto:stybursk@du.edu) by the end of the day on Sat. 8/16.

You are strongly encouraged to use the CWC writing tutor(s) as you work on your final paper. More information about this assignment will be provided in class.

**A grade of incomplete** will be granted only under special circumstances and will not be automatically granted for absenteeism.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Our exploration of the Shakespeare's women will be a collaborative endeavor. You are expected to keep up with the assigned readings, maintain an informal reading journal and come to class prepared to fully contribute to our discussions. Absences and failure to participate, both in class and on-line, will affect the quality of our class dialogue.

Attendance is mandatory in all class and on-line sessions. Active participation in class and online discussions is also required and will be a determiner in a student's final grade. An absence, for any reason, will result in forfeiting points for in-class student work, which may not be made up in another class session. If an emergency arises, it is the student's responsibility to contact her instructor.

Percentage	Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
0-59	F

**TECHNOLOGY USE IN THE CLASSROOM:** In order to create and maintain an optimal learning environment in the classroom, students should use technology

appropriately as directed by the instructor for the purposes of the course. Work done on laptops, cell phones, and other devices that is not relevant to the class can hinder the process of communication and shared discussion of ideas that require full engagement by all participants.

**ADA ACCOMMODATIONS:** Students who require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act must contact the instructor to discuss their needs. Failure to notify the instructor immediately may hinder the college's ability to accommodate accordingly. Students with learning disabilities should also contact the University Disability Services Program at <http://www.du.edu/studentlife/disability/> <http://www.du.edu/disability>. University Disability Services houses the Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP) and the Disability Services Program (DSP).

**OBSERVATION OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:** Students wishing to observe a religious holiday not celebrated on the academic calendar may do so provided advanced written notice is given the instructor during the first two weeks of the quarter. With advanced written notice, the absence will be considered an excused absence. For additional information, contact DU's Center for Religious Services (<http://www.du.edu/crs/>

### **Required Texts:**

- William Shakespeare, *Romeo & Juliet*. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library. New York: Simon & Schuster 2011. ISBN 978-0-7434-7711-6.
- William Shakespeare, *Anthony & Cleopatra*. Ania Loomba, editor. W.W. Norton & Co. 2011. ISBN-10: 039393077.
- William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford University Press 1990. ISBN 978-0-19-953682-5.
- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. The Annotated Shakespeare: Annotations and Introduction by Burton Raffel. Yale University Press 2006. ISBN 0-300-10816-8.

**Note:** While all of these plays are widely available for free online, it is essential that you have a hard copy you can bring to class, highlight and make notes on. I will also be asking you to read supplemental essays included in each of the listed editions.

You may find it helpful – and enjoyable! – to check out CD recordings of these plays to listen to as you read.

**Additional readings** will be made available via e-reservs and will be posted on Blackboard.