

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

October 13, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 2018 SAA Seminar on “Shakespeare, Marx, Our Moment.” We hope it will be an exciting intellectual event.

To that end, we wanted to lay out our plans for the seminar. As you all know, certain deadlines are specified by the SAA, the most important of which is February 1. By that day all participants must have completed their written assignments for the seminar or they cannot be included in the printed program. Hugh and Jean have to certify that everyone has met the deadline.

To prime the pump, we suggest the following:

- By November 1, all members of the seminar except the respondents, in this case that would be Sharon O’Dair and Donald Hedrick, should distribute to all seminar members a topic for their paper.
- By December 1, all paper writers should distribute a 200 word abstract of their papers.
- By December 1, everyone in the seminar including respondents and seminar leaders, should send in four annotated items for a joint bibliography relevant to the topic “Shakespeare, Marx, Our Moment.” Annotations should be held to 150 words.
- By February 1, all paper writers will distribute a paper not to exceed ten double-spaced pages to all members of the seminar. They will also submit an updated abstract to be published, as required, on the SAA website and distributed to auditors.
- By one week before the SAA conference, the respondents and seminar leaders will distribute to each of three (in one case four) members of the seminar a one-page response to his or her paper. We will try to set up the groups according to shared themes or some other organizing principle.
- At the seminar, the respondents and seminar leaders will each have five minutes to raise general questions arising from the papers in their group. The paper writers addressed by each respondent will have the first chance to take up these questions before a more general discussion ensues.

We also hope that all of you will be able to get together for drinks on the evening before our seminar so that we can get to know each other before our official work begins. Because we don’t yet know when our session will be scheduled, exact information on this optional social gathering will come at a later date.

We look forward to working with all of you.

Best,

Jean E. Howard and Hugh Grady

Letter Two

Feb. 7, 2018

Dear Members of the Seminar:

We hope you've now had a chance to look over the papers that have come in over the last few days for our seminar "Shakespeare, Marx, Our Moment" (Thursday, March 29, 3:30-5:30). We have, unfortunately, lost a few members due to different issues. Anthony Farber, Gloria Olchowy, and Steve Mullaney have all had to withdraw, and we are sorry to lose their contributions. And we have, in addition to the two of us, two invited consultants who will join us to act as facilitators during the meeting: Profs. Susan O'Dair and Donald Hedrick.

We will be working with eleven papers in the seminar—a number which should provide us with plenty of material to discuss over the allotted time period. In order to make the best use of the time, we want to remind you of what to do *before* the seminar meets.

In the week before the seminar, each paper-writer will receive a one-page response to his or her paper from one of the co-chairs or consultants. This will allow everyone to get some response immediately and allow each member to consider points he or she wants to raise in response. And please also review all the papers in order to be ready to fully participate in the discussion.

At the seminar itself, we will give some attention, as the SAA mandates, to individual papers. To that end we have divided the eleven papers into four small groups, each "chaired" by one of the co-chairs or consultants. They will act as discussion facilitators, not formal "respondents." Each will have five minutes to raise general questions arising from the papers in their groups. The paper-writers addressed by each facilitator will then have the first chance to take up these questions before a more general discussion occurs.

We will organize the time for the discussion by allotting time for each group of papers in turn. Remember, however, that everyone should read *all* the eleven papers and be prepared to comment or raise questions about them regardless of what group you're in.

Because of the odd number and the broad range of papers submitted, it was possible for only one group (those papers involving ecocriticism) to be formed on a thematic basis. However, all the papers deal with the ideas of Karl Marx and the works of William Shakespeare, and so there are indeed many points of intersection among all of them.

The groups and their chairs are:

1. Walter Cohen, Charles Whitney, and Charles Morrow. Chair Sharon O'Dair.
2. Zorica Jelic and Rinku Chatterjee. Chair Jean Howard
3. Danielle Drees, Aaron Kitch, and Emelye Keyser. Chair Don Hedrick
4. Ali John Madani, Rachel Eisendrath, and Christian Smith. Chair Hugh Grady

We are indeed still holding a Wednesday night social get-together for all who can make it at 10 pm at the main bar of the Western Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, and it seems a strong majority of us will be there. We look forward to that and to the seminar itself.

Sincerely,

Hugh Grady
Jean Howard