

Workshop Description / Objectives

Shakespeare's plays were written for the stage, and yet most students only ever grapple with them cerebrally on the page. Looking beyond merely assigning students to read aloud, or memorize monologues, this pedagogy workshop seeks to present and distribute pedagogical techniques and materials for teaching early modern literature (not just Shakespeare's plays) through performance. Specifically, we will focus on lesson plans, in-class activities, assignments, discussion questions, midterm exams, and group work. The workshop intends to bring junior scholars, contingent faculty, non-tenure track faculty, and faculty at teaching-focused institutions together to share experiences and resources.

Potential issues to be raised include incorporating performance techniques when teacher and/or students have no theatrical background, using performance as a method of teaching non-dramatic texts, and teaching in a post COVID-lockdown era, where many have forgotten that physical movement and the collective reception of movement has merit and meaning. I anticipate that the workshop, itself, beyond discussing these issues and sharing materials, will implement some of the performance techniques discussed, getting participants and auditors on their feet and out of their comfort zones.

Valerie Billing

I teach at a teaching-focused liberal arts school. My Shakespeare course enrolls primarily junior and senior English majors as well as a few theatre majors. My course is also designed to meet the “oral interpretation of literature” requirement for education majors. The course is organized around three literary analysis/performance assignments: a dialogue, a monologue, and a scene. For this workshop, I am submitting my Dialogue Paper and Performance assignment, along with short descriptions of some of the in-class activities we do leading up to this assignment.

Hannah Bredar

I am an assistant professor at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), a teaching-focused school that strives to hire faculty who are also committed to research. The English Department – home to the Writing Program – takes an apprenticeship-like approach to writing pedagogy: faculty are encouraged to teach academic research and writing via the texts and methods from our research fields. Performance has become a key pedagogical strategy in my writing classroom, for two reasons: first, it helps students claim ownership over Shakespeare's language and stories by adapting them to their own colloquialisms and contexts. Shakespeare becomes a less mysticized, more accessible figure when his work is available for their re-working. Second, performing Shakespeare demonstrates the myriad ways in which tone, formal structure, cadence, context, and other paratextual elements (costuming, set design, etc.) can shift or highlight a text's denoted significance. For this workshop, I am sharing two pedagogical materials:

1. An in-class activity that asks students to step into the roles of directors and actors, adapting a scene from *Ado* to communicate an interpretation of that scene for various audiences.
2. An assignment sheet for a two-part project:

Part A asks students to create and perform an adaptation of a scene, character, theme, or plot of *Ado*.

Part B asks students to write a “comparative analysis” essay, in which they examine the ways in which their adaptation communicates a particular interpretation of the play to their chosen audience(s).

Joseph Haughey

For this workshop, I am sharing some of my ideas and activities for integrating creative writing in teaching the first acts of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. With *Hamlet*, we start by diving into the play as a ghost story, reading the first act together, analyzing Shakespeare's storytelling elements (e.g. it's a cold night, a group of friends encounter a ghost, the ghost reveals a dark secret, etc.), and then students write their own short ghost story using Shakespeare as a model. With *Macbeth*, we analyze the first act as a supervillain origin story, and then draft our own again based on Shakespeare as our model. Such approaches ask students to engage with Shakespeare in a performative way, thinking about and playing with (in a parallel way that theatre professionals do) the original as they transform/adapt/interpret it in their own unique ways. These methods align to my ideas expressed in my recently published book, *Teaching Hamlet in the Twenty-First Century Classroom*, and ideas to be expressed in a forthcoming volume in the series centered upon *Macbeth*.

Kimberly Huth

My Shakespeare course is a 400-level English-major course, required of English Education students and taken by most English Literature students in our department. Most students are transfers from community college, and some may have had some exposure to Shakespeare in the classroom at the high school or community college level. Few will have had any exposure to theater or dramatic arts. The foundation of my course is the concept that every adaptation of a Shakespeare text is an interpretation of it, emphasizing in various activities that every engagement with the texts contributes to the cultural construction of a given play and to the figure of “Shakespeare.” To that end, performance activities in my classroom focus on the choices that can be made in performance and the interpretive effects of those choices. I directly engage with performance at multiple points in the semester, beginning with a workshop on Shakespeare's Theater (Workshop Material #1), a second staging activity in the second half, comparative analysis of film and stage productions, and a culminating final project (Workshop Material #2) where students form groups and choose a scene from one of the plays on the syllabus to stage for the class. In addition to the performance itself, groups also submit a “broadside” advertising their scene and a “prompt book” that records their effort in working through the scene in preparing it for performance.

Janelle Jenstad

Linked Early Modern Drama Online (LEMDO; lemdo.uvic.ca/lemdo) publishes anthologies of early modern plays. LEMDO's mission is to publish open-access digital critical editions of every early modern play, an ambitious objective that will take many editors working over decades. Most of these plays have not been performed since the early modern period, which means editors cannot draw on performance records or media in their annotations. I've been working with *Mucedorus* (1598 and 1610 texts) in the classroom. Student Sofia Spiteri and I have created a draft modern edition (https://lemdo.uvic.ca/classroom/emdMuced_edition.html) from which I've

taught the play three times. In a third-year English Renaissance Drama class, we experimented with blocking and performing excerpts in the classroom, with students writing reflections on the performance challenges of the excerpt and then working in groups to address those challenges. With some funding from UBC, a collaborator and I then passed those same excerpts to Creation Theatre in Oxford (<https://creationtheatre.co.uk/>), who performed and recorded the scenes. We are now in the process of embedding the videos into the edition, writing pedagogical notes to stimulate further performance exercises, and capturing the discoveries in our performance notes. For this workshop, I am sharing an original assignment from that drama class, a write up of what worked and what did not, and some sample pedagogical and performance notes for the edition.

Melissa Jones

Science of learning studies demonstrate the impact that stress has on students' ability to process and retain information (Vogel and Schwabe, 2016), and neuroscience of emotions scholarship underscores the connections between cognitive and emotional functions (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007). Recently, these studies have gone even further to suggest that some students regularly experience their work in colleges and universities as akin to trauma. Pointing to the work of Bessel Van der Kolk and Antonio Damasio, Mays Imad points out that "when we experience trauma, whether consciously or subconsciously, the limbic system (emotions) hijacks the cerebral cortex (reason)." When that happens, learning, "which requires the expenditure of energy, becomes physiologically less of a priority to our brain." To this end, I have begun using the precepts of Trauma-Sensitive Yoga to integrate occasional breathing and yoga exercises in my "Development of British Literature" class in order to circumvent occasional moments of cognitive impasse. In our workshop, I am sharing the practices that I've integrated as well as hoping to find new ways to adapt my teaching to help students to learn and to thrive under "normal" and challenging circumstances.

James Rizzi

For this workshop, I am sharing one in-class activity and one class assignment. The first day class activity is an adaptation of the Folger Library's "Choral Reading" activity, in which I lead my class through an exercise designed to get them to think about the multiplicity of interpretations of each word on the page. Rather than reading a passage together, we read the same single word, "O," multiple times with different emotional inflections. This activity introduces a physicality to the written words that will be the focus of the class. The assignment is a group assignment where students work together to block movements of a scene and then write a short paper reflecting on the individual student's contributions to the group performance.

Owen Kane

For this workshop, I am contributing an in-class activity that integrates devised theatre techniques with the textual variations of Romeo and Juliet to explore the fluidity of Shakespeare's texts and challenge the notion of a "universal Shakespeare." Participants will collaboratively engage with multiple versions of the text, improvising and performing scenes that highlight how textual instability invites reinterpretation and creative agency. This activity includes a handout containing excerpts from Romeo and Juliet, prologue and/or Balcony Scene from the First Quarto (Q1), Second Quarto (Q2), and First Folio (F1), emphasizing differences in phrasing, tone, and structure, and contextual notes on the printing and compilation of these editions, their historical and theatrical contexts, and the cultural implications of textual variation.

Nathaniel Leonard

My proposed materials are based around a series of in class activities intended to illustrate the impacts and variety inherent in metatheatrical tropes. My goal with my materials is to try to cover the same ground but to do so in a more hands on, performance focused format. The basic premise of my assignments is for students to attempt to put critical readings of theatrical text into practice to see the impact that those reading choices have in performance. In order to do this, students will form groups, and each group will be assigned a specific interpretation of a section of a play that we have discussed in class. All of the groups will do the same section, which will allow the class to compare the performances against one another to see how their critical praxis impacts other elements of the text and the audience's relationship to the plot and characters.

Cameron McNabb

For this workshop, I will be exploring place-based pedagogy and performance assignments in the context of my "Shakespeare and the Environment" course. The main project consists of students working in groups to produce a live performance of a scene from *The Tempest* in a campus setting of their choosing. Students document their performance choices in an annotated prompt book, and they provide an analysis essay that "explicitly analyzes the choice of setting on Eckerd's campus and how performance choices engage with several of the course's themes / ecocritical ideas." The assignment serves as students' "final exam," with documents due during finals week and performances taking place during their allotted final exam time. Performances are arranged to follow the chronological order within the text, and the class moves from one location to the next, watching and performing the scenes as a class. For the workshop, I am exploring and reflecting on how I can leverage the place-based interpretations of *The Tempest* to draw connections between Shakespeare's engagement with the environment and our own contemporary experiences, especially as our campus faces significant peril from the climate crisis, as well as how generate deeper attention to the treatment of place in *The Tempest* and in other Shakespearean plays.

Travis Knapp

My goal is to get students to think about Shakespeare's plays as performances, but from a director's or actor's perspective rather than analyzing some already-done performance. About 80% of my students are English Education majors (and many of my online students are already teaching), so one of my goals is to try to approach Shakespeare from as many angles as possible (text-alone; performance; adaptation; gender). Usually, I teach an online section and a F2F section during spring semesters (the courses are completely separate from each other, though I use the same major assignments: this combo of close reading + staging analysis; a research paper; an informal adaptation project (pitch an adaptation of X play in a format of the student's choosing); and a final reflection.

Megan Selinger

For this workshop, I've contributed an activity to allow students to peer review their stage choices and performance vision prior to submitting their associated assignment. I've also submitted my in-class Shakespeare RPG activity. These ideas have been used in my first year Shakespeare course – English 100 level. Students can be from any department or faculty across the university and, in fact, the course often attracts a fair number of students from Math and

Computer Science alongside those interested in English degrees. My goal for these in-class activities is to help students to recognize how well they know the play and the characters, but also the limitations of that knowledge, understanding that performance choices must extend the play beyond the text to create a strong production.

Emily Yates

I most often teach sophomore-level classes that fulfill general education requirements, so my materials are geared towards an audience that is unfamiliar with Shakespeare and often the humanities in general. For this workshop, I am sharing a PowerPoint / lesson plan on the opening scene of *Macbeth*, centered around both the concept of adaptation and the depiction of magic and witches. In this lesson, we work through a variety of activities, starting with basic understanding of the text and then a “staged reading”; after that, we look at historical context, do a close reading of the original text, and then analyze and discuss a variety of adaptations, including paintings and filmed performances. I am also sharing the assignment sheet for my “Adaptation Project” that students complete as their “final” or “signature” assignment. In this assignment, students are invited to either create their own adaptation of one of our texts (with an accompanying rationale) or write a comparative essay of one of our texts and one of the adaptations.