

Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* at Thirty

SAA, Denver, 1-4 April 2026

Seminar convenors: Gemma Kate Allred (Université de Neuchâtel); Benjamin Broadribb (London, UK); Edel Semple (University College Cork)

Email: luhrmann30saa@gmail.com

Participants:

- 1) Victoria Bladen (University of Queensland)
- 2) Yoojung Chun (Harvard University)
- 3) Valerie M. Fazel (Arizona State University)
- 4) Jennifer Flaherty (Georgia College)
- 5) David W. Hartwig (Weber State University)
- 6) Jennifer R. Holl (Rhode Island College)
- 7) Kristine Johanson (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- 8) Melissa M. Johnson (Lyon College)
- 9) Mark Beatrice Kaethler (Medicine Hat College)
- 10) Courtney Lehmann (University of the Pacific)
- 11) Natalie J. Loper (University of Alabama)
- 12) Jennie M. Votava (Allegheny College)

Respondents:

- 13) Carla Della Gatta (University of Maryland)
- 14) Diana E. Henderson (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Abstracts (as of February 2026)

Victoria Bladen (University of Queensland, Australia): **Flow-on Effects: Aquatic Afterlives of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996)**

Among many striking elements of Baz Luhrmann's landmark adaptation *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), is the emphasis on the aesthetic and symbolic potential of aquatic imagery in the Shakespearean hypotext. In Luhrmann's film, water is foregrounded: the lovers meet through a mediating fish tank; the balcony scene is relocated to the pool; and in death their fluid union is re-visited. In the CUP volume, I argued that Luhrmann conflates aquatic and celestial space through his screen iconography, and that these metaphorical spaces intersecting love and death were further enhanced through the soundtrack paratexts. In this paper, I explore the flow-on effects of Luhrmann's water imagery and their implications in the epic tragedy *Titanic* (1997), dir. James Cameron, the zombie film *Warm Bodies* (2013), dir. Jonathan Levine, and the musical screen adaptation *Juliet & Romeo* (2025), dir. Timothy Scott Bogart. What happens when we extrapolate Romeo's sinking bark of a soul from Shakespeare and Luhrmann to the wreck of the *Titanic*? How can we rethink watery spaces of life and death if they give new life to a zombie in love? What happens to these threads in the watery imagery of a submerged Romeo in a musical film adaptation? Drawing from various critical threads including rhizomatic theory of adaptation, blue humanities work and third space theory, this work in progress considers how imagery of aquatic space, as a mediating third space between life and death, functions in these films and can be thought of as a key tributary of the *R + J* legacy. A blue lens also has the potential to provide a fluid framework for conceptualising dialogues between hypertexts as spaces of intertextual suspension, and of aquatic imagery as an apt medium for imagining the connective and conductive solution between adaptive nodes in the ongoing alchemy of Shakespeare's afterlives

Yoojung Chun (Harvard University): “Not by the Moon”: Romeo in contemporary K-Pop

This paper will examine the rich afterlife of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in K-Pop. I will trace the textual and visual iconography of the Romeo figure in Korean popular imagination, with a particular focus on K-Pop. I will be arguing that Korean entertainment industry has co-opted the figure of Romeo consistently to create an aesthetic of “soft masculinity” for K-Pop boys’ group, a branding choice theorized by scholars like Sun Jung and Seok Kyeong Hong.

By analyzing textual and audiovisual references to Romeo and Juliet made in the works of K-Pop boys’ group, such as ShiNEE’s mini-album *Romeo* (2009), INFINITE’s song “Last Romeo” (2014), album *DYE* by Got 7 (2020) and Jungguk’s single “Standing Next To You” (2023), this talk hopes to illuminate how specific motifs and textual details of the original text have been adapted into contemporary K-Pop. In particular, I hope to argue that the primary Shakespearan inspiration in K-Pop is not textual, but multimodal and visual – I argue that the visual aesthetic from film adaptations, such as Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) had lasting impact in shaping the visual language of K-pop boy bands. The film’s widespread reception in Korean media, as well as its contemporaneity with the rise of the K-pop industry, has caused Romeo’s aesthetic to be woven into the development of the male idol iconography. I suggest that the parasocial relationship between boy groups and their female fans find a resonant visual metaphor in Luhrmann’s film, and that key scenes have been integrated in costume, music video, and choreography designs.

Valerie M. Fazel (Arizona State University): The Evolution of the Star-Crossed Narrative: From Baz Luhrmann's Postmodernism to Sarah J. Maas's Metamodernity

For over four centuries, the Shakespearean "star-cross'd" archetype has been defined by the finality of the tomb, a narrative mandate asserting that defiance against social structures is validated only through tragic death. My seminar paper argues that while Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, represents the postmodern peak of coupling the star-crossed trope with cynical, media-saturated "missed communication" mechanics, contemporary romantasy literature enacts a metamodern intervention. By analyzing the evolution of these tropes across the works of Stephanie Meyer, Suzanne Collins, and Sarah J. Maas, my paper marks a shift towards metamodern's transformative agency. The paper first identifies Luhrmann's "neon deathbed" as a site of postmodern sensory overload, where technology and industrial chaos ensure the lovers' doom. It then traces a narrative correction through three stages of generic evolution, guided by Vermeulen and van den Akker's concept of metamodernism's "informed naivety." First, Meyer's *Twilight* addresses biological vulnerability by using vampiric immortality to rewrite the star-crossed ending. Second, Collins's *The Hunger Games* weaponizes the trope. Katniss Everdeen performs the star-crossed role as a strategic tool to coerce Panem's political oppressor. Finally, Maas's *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series provides a metamodern synthesis, where the star-crossed lover's transition from frail human to resilient Fae transforms mortal death into a site of immortal rebirth. The rise of romantasy signals a transition away from postmodern cynicism toward a metamodern style that unironically prioritizes deep emotional stakes and self-determination. By repurposing the tropes' mechanics of fate and failure, contemporary romantasy authors move historically beyond postmodern destruction, reconstructing the star-crossed lover as a sovereign architect of her own destiny rather than a sacrificial victim of the 'stars'.

**Jennifer Flaherty (Georgia College & State University): My So-Called Female Gaze:
Claire Danes as Juliet, Looking Back**

As the thirtieth anniversary of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) nears, my paper uses the lens of intertextual casting to consider the performance of Claire Danes as Juliet. Before taking her title role opposite Leonardo DiCaprio, Danes was best known for her starring role as Angela in the critically acclaimed (but short-lived) television series *My So-Called Life* (1994). Danes' Angela was presented as a desiring subject in the series rather than an object. Her introspective voice-over provided a relatable example for teenage girls at a time when pop psychologist Mary Pipher argued that girls were "losing themselves" in adolescence (*Reviving Ophelia*, 1994).

Danes' television experience portraying a contemporary teenage girl finding her own voice in a modern world informs both the direction and performance of her Juliet. Her delivery of Shakespeare's double entendres likewise calls attention to Juliet's role as one who loves in addition to being beloved. The jeans Juliet wears in her "gather apace" scene would not be out of place in Angela's wardrobe. Throughout *Romeo + Juliet*, Luhrmann adjusts film speeds to accelerate or slow the action of the film, particularly in frenzied fight or party scenes. While Romeo and several other prominent characters are frequently shown in fast or slow motion, Juliet's scenes are kept to traditional film speed, which establishes her as the still and calm center in a chaotic world, encouraging audiences to see her as a grounded subject and view the world through her eyes. The framing of the shots indicates Juliet's desire for Romeo—to echo Shakespeare's lines, the Juliet of Luhrmann's film "looks to like," and the camera shows us her perspective. My paper will examine the properties that connect Danes' Juliet with signifiers of contemporary girlhood in the 1990s, as well as the lasting impact of her performance.

David W. Hartwig (Weber State University): **Screens Yet Unknown: *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* and Adaptation Pedagogy**

As a high school senior studying *Romeo and Juliet* in 1996, I was shown Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film, and told not to watch Luhrmann's because it "isn't Shakespeare." Not only did I disobey my teacher and see Luhrmann's film, I remember feeling disconnected from Zeffirelli's because it felt so dated. Thirty years later, I teach both films in undergraduate courses on Shakespeare (English/Theatre students) and Adaptation (English/Film Studies students). I am astonished at the responses of my students, who seem to engage with Luhrmann's film not as a dated cultural artifact, but as something that is meant for them. This paper will seek to theorize why that is the case. Drawing from adaptation studies and pedagogical theories, I will present and evaluate some of the ways I utilize Luhrmann's film in my courses. Then I will turn to my students' responses to the film. Ultimately, I argue that Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* remains accessible to my students both as a historicized cultural artifact for study, and as a film that they can engage with for enjoyment. I will begin to theorize why it remains so after thirty years, when Zeffirelli's film felt so dated to me as a student when I first encountered both.

Jennifer Holl (Rhode Island College): **Romeo+**

In mathematics, the first quantity in an addition equation is called the *augend*: the unchanged value to be increased by the addend to the culmination of a sum. Thus, in Baz Luhrmann's subtle but significant modification of *Romeo and Juliet* to the mathematical *Romeo + Juliet*, Romeo becomes the augend, or, in its adjectival form, an *augmentable* entity, alone unalterable but infinitely increasable through the addition of another. This paper theorizes Luhrmann's Romeo as an augmentable Romeo+, not only within the film but in his enduring digital afterlife as meme, GIF, and video. Guided by Paul Ricoeur's concept of the "body among bodies" in which the desiring and desired body becomes defined only through negotiations with other bodies, this paper explores the ways that the film positions Romeo as an incomplete and insubstantial entity until increased through the addition of other bodies, first signaled through his hazy, solo, beach-meandering introduction in which he only comes into focus by addition of his father's gaze. As the film's Romeo embodies the "anything of nothing" he first writes in his journal then repeats aloud to Benvolio, he remains throughout an augmentable entity—"nothing" alone but potentially "anything" through the new and varied sums achievable through addition of Rosaline, his kinsmen, or Juliet.

As I will further explore, in the thirty years since the film's release, Luhrmann's Romeo+ continues to proliferate online through perpetual processes of addition and desire, where his incomplete image yet comes into new focus through the varied addends supplied by users. Re-imagined and re-mixed across a host of digital platforms, the image of Leonardo DiCaprio's Romeo functions much like memetic media as a whole, offering an open-ended, manipulable template that assumes diverse forms through user input.

Kristine Johanson (University of Amsterdam): **Dancing Juliet's Desire: Seattle Dance Collective's *Gallop Apace***

In April 2021, the Seattle Dance Collective (SDC) premiered its short film *Gallop Apace*, the first of several films produced by the group during the COVID-19 pandemic. The film offers a choreographed sequence for Juliet's Act Three Gallop Apace soliloquy, her second of *Romeo and Juliet*, and thus produces a rare cinematic and dance interpretation of this speech; rare in its combination of dance and cinema, and rare in the adaptation of this speech. As the SDC stated, Juliet's speech is one that "most dance and film interpretations leave by the wayside" (Seattle 2024).¹ In articulating her motivation for developing the project, prima ballerina Sara Mearns (Juliet) identified a crucial problem challenging the play's (male) film directors since *Romeo and Juliet*'s first Hollywood adaptation in 1936. What does a girl's desire for her husband look like? How do you produce that desire, so explicitly stated in the speech, on screen?

Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* is not an adaptation that leaves the Gallop Apace speech by the wayside. Indeed, by including an attenuated version of the speech in his film, Luhrmann broke with over 40 years of Hollywood tradition. However, as my paper argues, Luhrmann's version still transforms the speech from an unbridled declaration of erotic excitement for Juliet herself into a focus on Romeo and his pleasure. My paper considers how the SDC's *Gallop Apace* and its star Mearns intentionally intervene in a larger tradition of adapting Juliet's desire. Mearns produces a Juliet that has never been seen before in western film or dance, and the film uses time in particular as an essential element of this new interpretation of Juliet's desire and how we can imagine that desire.

¹ The best-known versions of the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet – e.g. those by John Crankò (1962), Kenneth Macmillan (1966), John Neumeier (1971), and Alexei Ratmansky (2011) – do not choreograph this speech in their productions.

Melissa Johnson (Lyon College, Arkansas): “O’er her fellows shows”: How Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* Remains the Cultural Standard of its Source Text

Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet* garnered buzz even before it hit movie theaters, and one of the most discussed aspects of the adaptation was its casting. While the film undoubtedly both helped and benefitted from the star power of its leads, Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio, it also solidified the performances of many other actors, namely Harold Perrineu, as the blueprint for many future interpretations of Shakespeare’s characters. Examining Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* through a fan studies lens reveals a conflation between the bard’s play and Luhrman’s film; recent fan creations such as fanfiction, fanart, and posts made to social media platforms such as Tumblr demonstrate the continued dominance of the movie over our cultural perception of the play, even thirty years on when people think of *Romeo and Juliet*, they think of Luhrmann’s adaptation. This connection in turn influences interpretations of the play, whether scholarly, theatrical, or in popular discourse. This paper argues that *Romeo + Juliet*’s ongoing significance lies in its accessibility and popularity, which allow it to bridge the gap between highbrow culture and pop culture and position it as the main, if not the only, version of the play the general populace will encounter. Subsequently, Luhrmann’s film and portrayals of the characters within it have become Shakespearean “canon,” or considered by fans to be the most accurate, authentic, or correct. Drawing on fan content from social media sites and platforms such as DeviantArt, Fanfiction.net, and A03, this research illuminates Luhrmann’s shaping of one of Shakespeare’s most famous tragedies for the masses.

Mark Beatrice Kaethler (Medicine Hat College): ‘Two Beautiful Fish’: Revisiting Gender in Baz Luhrmann’s *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* Through a Tacit Trans Lens

This paper returns to readings of gender in Luhrmann’s *R+J* to consider whether the film’s gender fluidity can offer a means to locate a trans reading, taking Colby Gordon’s recent suggestion that “everyone except the parents in *Romeo and Juliet*” is trans as its starting point (186, n.65). Through applying Alexa Alice Joubin’s tacit “trans lens,” the paper revisits earlier criticism of the film’s religious imagery, music, and thematic depictions of water and glass. By disentangling previous readings from sexuality or Luhrmann’s intentions, it is possible to perceive a tacit rather than overt transness—following Joubin—in the characters’ gender that speaks to elements of the original play-text and challenges the cis-normative ways that the film has been interpreted. The paper attends primarily to the figure of Mercutio and how, rather than being a foil to or distinct from Romeo and Juliet’s narrative, *R+J* presents a logical connection between Mercutio and *R+J* through various means. The paper nevertheless still attends to the ways in which Luhrmann’s film positions Black characters as mediators or framings to his white pair of star-crossed lovers. After exploring these interconnections, the paper looks to a later appropriation of *R+J* with the HBO television show *Euphoria*. Building upon Jennie Votava’s work, the paper thus concludes by looking to *Euphoria*’s adoption of *R+J* alongside other ’90s tropes to establish an overt trans Shakespearean performance, and it reflects upon how Luhrmann’s tacit trans lens in part informs *Euphoria*’s overt trans lens. In this manner, the paper does not argue that *R+J* is a trans adaptation but rather that its gender ambiguity and fluidity offer a tacit transness. The paper thus does not apply a trans lens with the assumption that this reading reflects Luhrmann’s intention; instead, it addresses how the film, however flawed, begins to draw out what was always there in Shakespeare’s play.

Courtney Lehmann (University of the Pacific): The *Romeo and Juliet* film that Baz Luhrmann didn't make: Roberta Torre's *Sud Side Stori*

This seminar begs the question: are all film adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* released after 1996 in some way derivatives of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*? As its title implies, Luhrmann's film is itself derivative, adapting not only Shakespeare's play but also key elements from the operatic tradition, Fellini films, Spaghetti Westerns, and Franco Zeffirelli's "flower child" *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)—not to mention an array of formal techniques drawn from the director's fascination with Hindi cinema. The tracing of legacies and genealogies is especially problematic when it comes to analyzing Shakespeare adaptations by women filmmakers, who have shockingly few origin stories to claim in a sea of legendary *auteurs*—from Welles, Olivier, Kurosawa, and Kozintsev to Zeffirelli, Branagh, Luhrmann, and Vishal Bhardwaj, among others. Italian director Roberta Torre's *Sud Side Stori* (2000), a dual adaptation of *West Side Story* and *Romeo and Juliet*, breaks new ground for a new millennium, standing alone not only as an early example of what Barbara Creed classifies as Feminist New Wave Cinema but also as the only *Romeo and Juliet* film directed by a woman. Although Maurizio Calbi persuasively argues that *Sud Side Stori* is Luhrmann-esque, noting multiple examples of Torre's stylistic indebtedness to *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, I would suggest that rather than assigning an inescapably patrilineal cinematic legacy to an unapologetically feminist filmmaker, the greater challenge lies in recognizing the originality of *Sud Side Stori* as a stand-alone film *and* as a Shakespeare adaptation that is Luhrmann-adjacent as opposed to Luhrmann-centric.

Set in Palermo in the heart of Italy's economically depressed South, *Sud Side Stori* features a love story between Toni Giulietto, an unemployed would-be pop star who dreams of "being Black" and moving to the United States, and Romea Wacoubou, a Nigerian immigrant forced into prostitution in order to repay the bond demanded by her smugglers. Whereas Luhrmann's film poses a compelling critique of late multinational, corporate capitalism, Torre's *fin de siècle* rejoinder focuses on the rise of its more sinister 21st century progeny: neocolonial, racializing, global capitalism—an economic system wherein capital begins to inhere in the very viscera of the human body, writ large in the global flesh trade.

Natalie Loper (The University of Alabama): **Baz Luhrman and the Influence of 1990s Teen Films**

This paper traces the evolution of teen films and teen film scholarship, from early studies that solidified “teenpics” as a genre to the film industry’s ubiquitous pursuit of young viewers today. Shakespearean teen films are a microcosm of this evolution, and Baz Luhrmann’s *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* (1996) serves as a linchpin in Shakespeare film studies. Initially decried as a travesty by critics, the film, along with other literary adaptations such as Amy Heckerling’s *Clueless* (1995), marked a turn in Hollywood. Teenagers were taken seriously as sophisticated consumers and creators of culture. Filmic styles, soundtracks, and storylines tapped into a young audience capable of understanding nuance and wit. Films such as the still-popular *10 Things I Hate About You* (a 1999 adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*), *O* (2001, *Othello*), *She’s the Man* (2006, *Twelfth Night*), and two recent adaptations of *Much Ado About Nothing*—*Much Ado* (2022) and *Anyone But You* (2023)—would likely not exist if not for Luhrmann’s *R+J*. I argue that Luhrmann’s film was important not only for the Shakespeare adaptations that it helped inspire but also for the teen film genre as a whole. Despite remarkable progress in adaptation studies, some critics still tend to talk down to their teenage subjects, which I would like to change. I intend this essay to be an introduction to a larger study of Shakespearean teen films, a project that began as my dissertation almost two decades ago and which I am beginning to return to.

Jennie M. Votava (Allegheny College): “Too like the lightning, which doth cease to breathe”: After Shakespeare?

As Baz Luhrmann’s *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* turns thirty, this paper considers how its iconic visual, affective, and racial vocabulary circulates—often obliquely—within contemporary screen culture. Drawing from the coda of my current book project-in-progress, I examine HBO’s *Euphoria*, a genre-hybrid teen drama whose fragmented aesthetic mirrors the instability of Shakespeare’s cultural authority in the digital age. My focus is Jules, a white transfeminine teenager (Hunter Schafer), whose Halloween costume in a Season 1 episode silently cites Claire Danes’s winged Juliet—and, in so doing, resurrects the oft-neglected racial imaginary of one of Shakespeare’s most oft-taught plays. In a party sequence that restages Luhrmann’s pool scene opposite Jules’s mixed-race girlfriend, Rue (Zendaya), *Euphoria* literalizes a generational disconnect: Jules performs Shakespeare without naming him, while Rue, not recognizing the reference, becomes a proxy for Gen Z viewers for whom Shakespeare often registers as nonsensical sound, for whom Luhrmann’s imagery may no longer carry cultural legibility, and who may not find either text’s unmarked whiteness persuasive.

The costume’s reappearance in a self-contained “special” episode, framed through Jules’s retelling during therapy, reconstitutes that fleeting earlier performance as a rare window into her too-often-occluded interior life. This later moment marks the limits of the series’ representation of transfemininity, gesturing toward Jules’s interiority while continuing to privilege white trans experience. By tracking how *Euphoria* both recalls and estranges Luhrmann’s film, the paper positions the series as a “post-Shakespearean” text—one that gauges the continuing power of adaptation to mediate identity, intimacy, race, and gender in a media landscape that has in many ways—but certainly not entirely—moved beyond the Bard.

Biographical notes

Dr Victoria Bladen is Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Queensland, Australia. Her publications include *The Tree of Life and Arboreal Aesthetics in Early Modern Literature* (Routledge, 2022); seven Shakespearean text guides in the Insight Publications (Melbourne) series; and nine co-edited volumes including *Shakespeare on Screen: Romeo and Juliet* (Cambridge UP, 2023), *Onscreen Allusions to Shakespeare* (Palgrave, 2022); *Shakespeare and the Supernatural* (Manchester UP 2020) and *Shakespeare on Screen: King Lear* (Cambridge UP 2019).

Yoojung Chun is a PhD Candidate in English at Harvard University. Her interests include Asian American literature, translation studies, East Asian media studies, and Shakespeare. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *Mechademia*, *ASAP/Review*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, *Public Books*, and *Harvard Review*, among others.

Valerie M. Fazel teaches at Arizona State University. With Louise Geddes, Valerie is the co-author of *The Shakespeare Multiverse: Fandom as Literary Praxis* (Routledge) and co-editor of *Variable Objects: Shakespeare and Speculative Appropriation* (EUP) and *The Shakespeare User* (Palgrave). Her academic publications on Shakespeare popular appropriation appear in critical volumes and journals such as *Borrowers and Lenders*, *The Sundial*, and *Shakespeare*.

Jennifer Flaherty is Professor of English at Georgia College & State University. In 2023, she co-edited the collection *Liberating Shakespeare: Adaptation and Empowerment for Young Adult Audiences* with Deborah Uman, a book project that connects thematically with their 2022 Institute with the National Endowment for the Humanities for high school teachers about adaptations of Shakespeare's tragedies. In 2021, she co-edited the volume *The Taming of the Shrew: The State of Play* with Heather C. Easterling. Her research emphasizes adaptation, global Shakespeare, and girlhood, and her publications include chapters in the volumes *Shakespeare and Millennial Fiction* (Cambridge), *Shakespeare and Geek Culture* (Bloomsbury Arden), and *Shakespeare and Global Appropriation* (Routledge). She has also published in journals such as *Borrowers and Lenders*, *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, *Comparative Drama*, and *Shakespeare Bulletin*.

David W. Hartwig (he/him/his): I am Associate Professor of Medieval and Renaissance British Literature at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, where I also direct the M.A. in English program. I regularly teach courses in Shakespeare (and performance, on film), early modern drama, and adaptation. My recent publications have appeared in *Shakespeare Bulletin*

and *The Journal of the Wooden O*, as well as contributions to *Teaching the Works of James Fenimore Cooper* and the forthcoming *Shakespeare and Ecological Crisis*. When not working, I prefer to be in the mountains, skiing, hiking, or cycling.

Jennifer Holl is Professor of English at Rhode Island College, where she teaches courses in Shakespeare, film and adaptation, and theory. She is the author of *Shakespeare and Celebrity Cultures* and has published articles and book chapters on Shakespeare and performance, film, digital formats, video games, and merchandise.

Kristine Johanson teaches and researches at the University of Amsterdam, where she is *Universitair Hoofddocent*/Associate Professor. Her published work includes the monograph *Shakespeare's Golden Ages: Resisting Nostalgia in Elizabethan Drama* (Edinburgh UP, 2022, 2024). At present she is the Humanities Project Lead on the interdisciplinary grant *TimingStress: Understanding and Preventing Time-Related Stress in Families*. Her creative work includes the one-act play *Juliet Speaks*, which reworks the 'Gallop Apace' speech into 12 monologues for a range of women; it was produced in Amsterdam in 2015 and 2024.

Dr. Melissa Johnson is an assistant professor of English at Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas. Her work focuses on identity politics and diverse representation in Shakespearean adaptations targeted at young adult readers. Besides Shakespeare, early modern drama, and children's literature, she is interested in pop culture and fan studies. She also periodically performs Shakespeare. She is currently conducting research on the continuing cultural perception of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* through a pop culture and fan studies lens.

Mark Beatrice Kaethler teaches at Medicine Hat College; serves as the Vice President of the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies/*Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance*; and is Book Review Editor for *Early Theatre*. They are the author of *Thomas Middleton and the Plural Politics of Jacobean Drama* as well as a co-editor of *Shakespeare's Language in Digital Media: Old Words, New Tools* and *Historicizing the Embodied Imagination in Early Modern English Literature*. Their most recent work is an article in *Borrowers and Lenders* on queer play with and adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*.

Courtney Lehmann is an award-winning teacher and the Tully Knoles Professor of the Humanities at the University of the Pacific. She specializes in film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays by women directors, focusing on the political use of cinema as a vehicle for building intersectional feminist futures. She has served on the Editorial Board of

Shakespeare Quarterly and *Shakespeare Bulletin*, and her most recent work is the commissioned essay for the 3rd edition of *The Norton Critical Edition of Macbeth*. In addition to publishing more than forty essays and articles on Shakespeare and cinema, she is the author of *Shakespeare Remains: Theater to Film, Early Modern to Postmodern* (Cornell, 2002) and *Screen Adaptations: Romeo and Juliet* (Methuen Series in Drama, 2010), as well as co-author of *Great Shakespeareans, Volume XVII: Welles, Kozintsev, Kurosawa, and Zeffirelli* (Bloomsbury/Arden Shakespeare, 2013). Currently, she is completing a book that traces a feminist counter-history of women directors and their Shakespeare films.

Dr. Natalie Loper, a Senior Instructor, serves as Associate Director of First-Year Writing at the University of Alabama. She earned her MA and PhD from the Hudson Strode Program in Renaissance Studies at the University of Alabama. Her teaching and research interests include Shakespeare and film, teen films, adaptation and appropriation theory, and pedagogy. She is co-editor of *Shakespeare / Not Shakespeare* with Christy Desmet and Jim Casey and has published on adaptation, pedagogy, and Shakespearean teen films.

Jennie M. Votava: I am Associate Professor of English and, as of this past July, gratefully no longer English Department Chair at Allegheny College in northwest Pennsylvania, where I've taught since 2013. I recently completed my first book, *Shakespeare's Histories on Screen: Adaptation, Race and Intersectionality*; I'm now deep in the process of drafting a second, provisionally titled *Shakespeare after Prestige: Adaptation and Technologies of Race in Streaming-era Television*. The seminar paper I'm working on is an early draft of that book's coda, revisiting and substantially redeveloping an article I wrote several years ago (included in the reading list below).

Recommended reading list

- Balizet, Ariane M. "Teen Scenes: Recognizing Shakespeare in Teen Film" Keller, James R. and Leslie Stratyner. *Almost Shakespeare: Reinventing His Works for Cinema and Television*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004.
- Bickley, P. and Stevens, J. (2020). *Studying Shakespeare Adaptation: From Restoration Theatre to YouTube*. London: Arden Shakespeare.
- Blackwell, Anna. *Shakespearean Celebrity in the Digital Age: Fan Cultures and Remediation*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2018.
- Bladen, Victoria, Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, eds. *Shakespeare on Screen: Romeo and Juliet*. Cambridge University Press; 2023.
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Pop Cinema: Hollywood's Critical Engagement with America's Culture of Consumption." *Crossmappings: On Visual Culture*. I.B. Tauris, 2018, pp.86–111.
- Bührle, Iris Julia. "Juliet's Mute Soliloquies: Visualizing Thought Processes in Rudolf Nureyev's *Romeo and Juliet*." *Women: A Cultural Review*, 30:4 (2019), 440-464, DOI:10.1080/09574042.2019.1676056
- Burnett, Mark Thornton. *Shakespeare and World Cinema*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Burt, Richard. "Afterword: T(e)en Things I Hate about Girlene Shakesploitation Flicks in the Late 1990s, or, Not-So-Fast Times at Shakespeare High." *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema*. Ed. Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Starks. Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002: 205-32.
- Butler, Jan. "'More hits than you can possibly imagine': The Music of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*." In *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Music*, edited by Christopher R. Wilson and Mervyn Cooke, 1153-88. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.
- Cartelli, Thomas and Katerine Rowe. *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen*. Polity Press, 2007.
- Clandfield, Peter. "Teaching Adaptation, Adapting Teaching, and Ghosts of Fidelity." *The Pedagogy of Adaptation*. Eds. Dennis Cutchins, Laurence Raw, and James M. Welsh. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2010, pp. 139-155.
- Della Gatta, Carla. "Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* Turns 25." *Shakespeare & Beyond*. Folger Shakespeare Library, 2021. ([open access](#))

- Della Gatta, Carla. "Division: The *West Side Story* Effect." *Latinx Shakespeares: Staging US Intracultural Theater*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. 29-58 (especially 51-58). ([open access](#))
- Donaldson, Peter S. "'In Fair Verona': Media, Spectacle, and Performance in *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*." *Shakespeare after Mass Media*, edited by Richard Burt, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 59–82.
- Duncan, Sophie. *Searching for Juliet: The Lives and Deaths of Shakespeare's First Tragic Heroine*. Sceptre, 2023.
- Garber, M. (2008). 'Romeo and Juliet: The Untimeliness of Youth' in *Shakespeare and Modern Culture*, 33-61, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Hamilton, Lucy. "Baz vs. the Bardolaters, Or Why *William Shakespeare's Romeo Juliet* Deserves Another Look." *Literature Film Quarterly.*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2000, pp. 118–24, <https://doi.org/info:doi/>.
- Hodgdon Barbara. "William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*: Everything's Nice in America?" *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 52, 1999, pp. 88–98.
- Hulbert, Jennifer. "'Adolescence, Thy Name is Ophelia!': The Ophelia-ization of the Contemporary Teenage Girl." *Shakespeare and Youth Culture*. Ed: Jennifer Hulbert, Kevin J. Westmore, Jr., and Robert L. York. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Kahn, Coppélia. "Coming of Age in Verona." *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Ed: Gayle Greene, Carol Thomas Neely, and Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983
- Lanier, Douglas. "William Shakespeare, Filmmaker." In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Film*, edited by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Wheelan, 61-74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Lehmann, Courtney. "What is a Film Adaptation? Or, Shakespeare Du Jour." *Shakespeares after Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of the Bard in Mass Media and Popular Culture*. Vol. 1. Ed. Richard Burt. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007. 74-80.
- Lehmann, Courtney. "Strictly Shakespeare? Dead Letters, Ghostly Fathers, and the Cultural Pathology of Authorship in Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 52, 2001, pp. 189–221. <https://doi.org/10.1353/shq.2001.0028>. (Also in Lehmann's *Shakespeare Remains*.)
- Lehmann, Courtney. *Shakespeare Remains: Theater to Film, Early Modern to Postmodern*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2002.

- Lehmann, Courtney. *Screen Adaptations: Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: The Relationship Between Text and Film*. Bloomsbury, 2010.
- Leitch, Thomas. *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2007.
- Malone, Toby. "Behind the Red Curtain of Verona Beach: Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*." *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 65, 2012, pp. 398-412, <https://doi.org/10.1017/SSO9781139170000.029>.
- Martino, P. (2009). 'Hail to the Thief: Strategies of Resistance in Radiohead's Musical Discourse' in *Anglistica AION: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 13(1), pp. 61-72.
- Radel, Nicholas F.. "The Ethiop's Ear: Race, Sexuality, and Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*." *The Upstart Crow*, vol. 28, 2009, pp. 17–34.
- Şahin, Sevgi, and Laurence Raw. "Toward a Pedagogy for Adaptation Studies." *Redefining Adaptation Studies*. Eds. Dennis Cutchins, Laurence Raw, and James M. Welsh. Lanham, MD, Toronto, and Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2010, pp. 71-84. Print.
- Shary, Timothy. *Generation Multiplex: The Image of Youth in American Cinema Since 1980*. Revised edition. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014.
- Swanigan, Pamela. "Music as Facing-Page Translation in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*." *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.18274/VFZQ3916>.
- Szydky, Lissette Lopez. "Adaptations, Culture-Texts and the Literary Canon: on the making of nineteenth-century classics." *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation*, eds. Dennis Cutchins, Katja Krebs, and Eckart Voigts. London and New York: Routledge, 2018, pp. 128-142.
- Tuan, I.H. (2020). 'Shakespeare and Popular Culture: *Romeo and Juliet*' in *Film and Pop Music in Pop with Gods, Shakespeare, and AI*, 9-39, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Votava, Jennie M.. "The Ethiop's Jewel Meets Euphoria's Jules: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in an HBO Appropriation of Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Bulletin*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2020, pp. 593–614. <https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2020.0061>.
- Worthen, W. B. "Shakespearean Geographies." *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 117–168.