

Shakespeare Week – Portfolio Guidelines

Deadline and Submission

You are expected to hand in a portfolio containing three compulsory assignments by **October 2, 2017**. Please hand in your work to Michelle Dreiding (English Department, room PET-106, or put it into her pigeonhole at the department office). Make sure to also send her an electronic version of your work (michelle.dreiding@es.uzh.ch) and send a copy to Julia Utiger as well (julia.utiger@uzh.ch). Julia Utiger will evaluate your work before it is passed on to Michelle Dreiding and Prof. Heusser for final approval. If you are asked to revise your work, you will be given time enough so that you can do so before the Christmas break.

Selbstständigkeitserklärung

Please attach a *Selbstständigkeitserklärung* to your portfolio. You can find one online under the following link: <http://www.es.uzh.ch/teaching/Downloads.html>

Assignments

(1) An essay (1000–1500 words) that uses ONE particular scene from a play by Shakespeare in order to demonstrate how the *Shakespeare Week* has contributed to your understanding of Shakespearean drama.

This corresponds to the usual academic assignment you are expected to write at the end of a BA module.

Select ONE scene out of one of the Shakespearean plays we saw either at the Globe or at the RSC. You can refer to other scenes of the play to support your claim, but your main focus has to be on one scene only.

Approach the text in an analytical way, that is, formulate a thesis statement that will guide your argument and help you highlight key aspects of Shakespearean drama that ring true both within the socio-cultural and historical context of the play and on an interpretative level.

You are welcome to use secondary literature, but please draw specifically from what you have learnt in the lectures or seen on stage during the week. The emphasis should be on the text, but it will be interesting to see how the performance of the scene might have fed into your textual analysis.

Please illustrate your points on the basis of concrete examples from the text – avoid being too abstract, general or reliant on secondary sources. We are interested in your thought process, not that of established scholars. Argue with them by all means, but do not simply paraphrase.

Attention!

We expect a straightforward textual analysis of ONE specific scene, using elements of the production to highlight key aspects of your argument, NOT an analysis of a scene as seen in performance.

(2) Minutes of each of the meetings with specialists and theatre professionals that highlight the most important findings (one page).

Please write a summary of the lecture (bullet points will do as long as you are as comprehensive as possible and formulate full sentences), reiterating the most important

points that were made by the lecturer and the examples s/he used to illustrate them. We expect you to be comprehensive, accurate and clear in your minute taking.

One lecture will be assigned to you by the end of the week, so be sure you listen and take notes during all the lectures.

(3) A review (750–1250 words) of one of the performances. A review is not an essay and this is why this is the most challenging of the assignments. Although it does contain a measure of analysis, a review essentially consists in stating an informed opinion in a creative and thought-provoking way. You might feel intimidated at the thought of writing a review, but rejoice in the fact that you are much freer here than you are when writing academically. Write about what you really think, what you liked and did not like, what you thought was genius or ridiculous. Be bold, critical and inventive. Above all remember—we are not expecting *Guardian/Independent*-standard writing! If you like, you can write your review on the same play you wrote the essay on.

Please see below a list of what recurring features in reviews. Read reviews yourself to get a better idea. The RSC website features reviews of each play (only the good ones though, so look elsewhere to avoid being biased):

- ***Cliff-hanging, witty and concise openers are always a plus***, e.g. “Two households, both alike in dignity ... Or in refurbishment, at least” (Ian Shuttleworth on *Romeo and Juliet* in the *Financial Times*), or “Rupert Goold’s production is like a prolonged earthquake” (John Peter in “*Romeo and Juliet*” in the *Sunday Times*).
- ***Comment on the style or approach of the director: what is his or her visual trademark?*** Obviously most reviewers are very knowledgeable when it comes to directors of the moment like Rupert Goold. Again, don’t be intimidated. Never having seen any of the director’s work before does not make you less qualified to make judgments. You are the audience, you have the power!
- ***Describe and criticize the director’s interpretation of the play, that is, his/her creative or artistic choices:*** comment on setting (time and place), costume, design, casting, textual choices etc.
- ***Comment on the actors’ performances and what they brought to the table*** (you can focus on the leads as much as on the secondary characters). Ask yourself if the character developed throughout the play and how. If s/he did not, ask yourself why.
- ***Mention your likes and your dislikes, highlight the qualities and/or shortcomings of the production.*** You can but you do not have to justify them!
- ***Comment on the action.*** What was the pace of the play, how did the plot unravel? Were there shifts in interpretation, what moments stood out as decisive and why?
- ***What was thematized?***
- ***What did you find particularly outstanding?***
- ***Make good use of adjectives – be creative and daring.*** Whether bad or good, try and do the production justice. Keep in mind what the grand Oscar Wilde said: “The creator imitates, the critic invents.”