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Office Hours: Thursdays 1pm-3pm on Zoom at this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/97057611038>

Expository Writing AS.060.113 (04)

Shakespeare's *Richard III* and Disability

Fall 2021

Krieger 170

MW 12p-1:15pm

"since I cannot prove a lover...

I am determinéd to prove a villain"

—*Richard of Gloucester, William Shakespeare's Richard III*

Why is disability so often associated with evil in the cultural imagination? When



Image description: Image features Benedict Cumberbatch, a white male with short hair, wearing a suit of armor. Cumberbatch is leaning back and shouting. Other medieval soldiers fight around him in the rainy and muddy setting.

Shakespeare's Richard, Duke of Gloucester explains that his "deformed, unfinished" body has "cheated" him from enjoying his family's recent victories, is he justified in deciding to "prove a villain / And hate the idle pleasures of these days?" Is a person still evil if their acts are a response to society's structures of hatred and exclusion? Such questions form the foundation of this writing class. For the first assignment, we will read Shakespeare's contribution to the dilemma of deformity and immorality, *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*. Students will write a brief essay in which they analyze how disability, class, and evil are constructed and

made to interact. We then consider how these issues are complicated when Benedict Cumberbatch, an able-bodied actor and direct descendent of Richard III's York line, takes on the role in the television film version of the play that concluded the 2016 season of *The Hollow Crown*. Students will consider a disability studies article about "disability drag" or "cripping up" by Tobin Siebers and offer their own interpretation of the film. For the third and final essay, students will analyze another adaptation of *Richard III*, Richard Loncraine's 1995 film starring Ian McKellen. In this unit, students will continue to explore the course's themes by considering the perspective of crip theory offered in Robert McRuer's writings.

REQUIRED TEXTS: For the most part, course readings will consist of handouts that I distribute in class or on Blackboard. There is only one required book for this class, *Richard III* by William Shakespeare (The Pelican Shakespeare, 2017 ISBN 978-0-14-313025-3). You are free to also use an online version of this text. I would also recommend that you purchase either the DVD or Blu-ray discs of the two films that we will be watching in this course: Richard

Loncraine's *Richard III* (1995) and *The Hollow Crown: Richard III* (2016), but both films are available for free streaming through the library website. Our most important text, however, will be the essays that you write yourselves.

These items are available on Amazon, but please consider making your purchases from a minority-owned bookstore. Here is a resource for finding one near you:

<https://ew.com/books/black-owned-bookstores-to-support/?amp=true&fbclid=IwAR1hBMjPeUxBGAvaU0f2phLm68x2gt4BMNOeyvJ9uF9LUcdj-1ryagNQZdc>

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The primary goal of Expository Writing is for you to learn how to analyze and evaluate sources, to develop your thinking with evidence, and to use analysis to write clear and persuasive arguments. For this course, you will write and revise three essays. Three sequences of instruction are designed to help you to reach this goal. Each essay sequence will build on each other as well. The assignments teach you to develop the skills you will need for writing your essays; they will encourage you to ask questions, to examine the assumptions and definitions which underlie an argument, to reason with evidence toward your own conclusions. In this course, we will use questions raised Shakespeare's *Richard III* and two film adaptations of the play.

CLASS: Class will consist of discussions, short lectures, and peer critique. Since much of what you learn in the course will occur to you in class discussions as you listen to each other's ideas and enrich each other's thoughts, I invite you to come to class ready to participate every day.

CONFERENCES: You will have at least three individual conferences with me throughout the semester. Conferences will be scheduled in class and are an important component of the course. In conferences, we will discuss your writing. Come to conferences prepared to take notes.

STATEMENT ON ACCESSIBILITY: I strive to provide an environment that is equitable and conducive to the learning of all students. To do so, I ask that class members be respectful of each other and the diverse backgrounds, abilities, and opinions that each of us brings to the classroom. If there are circumstances affecting your performance in or access to this class, please let me know at any time during the semester so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments or assessments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. At the beginning of the semester, I will circulate an accessibility questionnaire which I will ask you to complete. This anonymous form will serve as a place where you can indicate any access needs you would like me to meet, such as offering large print handouts or ensuring that the classroom is a scent-free space. Responses will be anonymous.

I am also happy to meet individual requests for specific accommodations and I welcome all documented disability letters from the Office of Student Disability Services now located at Shafer Hall suite 101. studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu

I encourage you to let me know how I can make this class as inclusive and accessible as possible.

NOTICE: I am a hard-of-hearing person with severe hearing loss. It is therefore essential that in class you speak loudly and clearly so that I (and your student colleagues) can hear you clearly. Please also be aware that I may need to control my hearing aids with an app on my phone from time to time. I may also use a captions app on my laptop.

TRIGGER WARNINGS AND CONTENT ADVISORIES: This class will use trigger warnings and content advisories as a matter of course. A trigger is a medical term for a graphic representation of a subject matter that could spur a mental health crisis for a reader or viewer. Common triggers are representations of rape, violence, or suicide. I understand trigger warnings as psychological stimuli comparable to warning people about peanuts or shell-fish in case of dangerous allergic reactions which can threaten life. Content warnings are social advisories, not medical warnings, which are a courtesy made in recognition of diverse (and valid) culture backgrounds and thematic familiarities, just like we see in all film and television programming. As in any humanities class, we will be discussing texts that contain material about the hard questions faced by any culture; this is what makes them worth discussing. Since triggers might revolve around topics that I have not anticipated, the anonymous accessibility questionnaire that I circulate at the beginning of the semester will have a space where you can indicate topics you'd like me to warn you for. Typically, I will end a class session with a note about what to expect in the readings for the next class session.

ANXIETY, STRESS, AND MENTAL HEALTH: Maintaining mental health is a challenge that almost all students will face at some point during their time as undergraduates, but attending university during a global pandemic makes these challenges even more likely. If you are struggling with anxiety, stress, or other mental health issues I encourage you to visit Hopkins's website on student wellness and click "Emotional & Mental" at this link: <https://wellness.jhu.edu/>. Here, also, is a link to JHU's Counseling Center: <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>.

While I am not a mental health professional, I may know about or be able to access other resources for you, so do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time during the semester if you feel comfortable doing so.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE: I am committed to creating a classroom environment that values the diversity of experiences and perspectives that all students bring. Everyone here has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. I believe fostering an inclusive climate is important because research and my experience show that students who interact with peers who are different from themselves learn new things and experience tangible educational outcomes. Please join me in creating a welcoming and vibrant classroom climate. Note that you should expect to be challenged intellectually by your peers and me, and at times this may feel uncomfortable. Indeed, it can be helpful to be pushed sometimes in order to learn and grow. But at no time in this learning process should someone be singled out or treated unequally on the basis of any seen or unseen part of their identity.

If you ever have concerns in this course about harassment, discrimination, or any unequal treatment, or if you seek accommodations or resources, I invite you to share directly with me. I promise that I will take your communication seriously and will seek mutually acceptable

resolutions and accommodations. Reporting will never impact your course grade. If for whatever reason you would rather not talk to me, you may also share concerns with the Director of Expository Writing, Dr. Matthew Pavesich (matthew.pavesich@georgetown.edu); the Chair of the English Department, Dr. Douglas Mao (dougmao@jhu.edu); the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Sharon Achinstein (sachins1@jhu.edu); the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Darlene Saporu (dsaporu@jhu.edu); or the Office of Institutional Equity (oi@jhu.edu). In handling reports, people will protect your privacy as much as possible, but faculty and staff are required to officially report information for some cases (e.g. sexual harassment).

You are free to use electronics in the classroom, including laptops. Please do not abuse this privilege.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Religious holidays are valid reasons to be excused from class. Please let me know, preferably as soon as possible, if there are dates you expect to miss class and/or if you expect difficulties in completing assignments.

For more information about religious and spiritual life at Hopkins see <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/religious-spiritual-life/religious-holy-days/>.

DETAILED GRADING POLICY: You will develop each of your essays through a guided process of pre-writing, drafting, and rewriting, and only then will they be graded. Your grades will measure what you have learned in the course, how well you have worked on your essays, and the thinking and writing ability your essays demonstrate.

Ideally, your essays should...

- present a compelling problem worthy of interpretation or present a persuasive flaw in an established interpretation of a problem
- develop a fresh, insightful thesis in a coherent and interesting way
- thoughtfully reason with evidence
- create an effective beginning, middle, and ending
- provide your audience of intelligent, public readers with explanations and background wherever they are necessary for your readers' understanding
- address your readers respectfully in a graceful style
- express your thought in clear, economical prose that uses the conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation
- document your sources correctly using MLA style

I will evaluate your work by these standards:

- A-work creates an impression of excellence in all of the listed criteria.
- B-work creates an impression of general superiority in the listed criteria.
- C-work is average; it has some weaknesses, but creates an impression of general competence in the listed criteria.
- D- or F-work is below average and is deficient in one or more of the listed criteria.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

- Essay 1: 25%
- Essay 2: 25%
- Essay 3: 30%
- Participation: 20%

NOTE ON PARTICIPATION: Your participation is very important because the success of this class is a group endeavor. I want you to be excited to contribute to our class. Because we all learn differently I recognize that we all participate differently. Therefore, I will be requiring that each of you email me every four weeks explaining in bullet points what you have done to participate in the course. Items that you might mention include attending class or responding to or asking questions during class. You are, however, free to be creative with this. If you are not comfortable speaking during class, perhaps you could take notes and post them to a Google doc to be shared with your colleagues. You are free to miss as many class sessions as you need to, but you are still responsible for completing classwork. Four unexcused absences will result in a lower grade in the course, and five absences will result in failure of the course. Your participation emails will need to be okayed by me to receive credit for this portion of the course requirements.

FORMATTING: All assignments and essays should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, 12-point, on one side of white paper. Use 1-inch margins. The heading will include your name, the course title, my name, and the due date. Number your pages, and make sure to center your title on the first page. Do not underline or place your title in quotation marks. Assignments due via email must be titled with your name and the assignment number (for example, "Sam Williams 1.1"). You are responsible for making sure your assignment arrives on time and in working order. I prefer Microsoft Word. No PDFs please.

GRADING SCALE:

- 100% - 93% A
- 92% - 90% A-
- 89% - 87% B+
- 86% - 83% B
- 82% - 80% B-
- 79% - 77% C+
- 76% - 73% C
- 72% - 70% C-
- 69% - 67% D+
- 66% - 63% D
- 62% - 60% D-
- 59% - 0% F

GENERAL NOTE ON GRADING: Although this is the general grading scale, I will consider your total course work when I determine your final grade.

I am not obligated to respond to late pre-draft writing assignments, or to reschedule missed conferences. **You can have one free extension of any deadline if you ask for it at least a day ahead of time.** An unexcused late essay will immediately lose one full letter grade and another full letter grade for each 24 hours it is late.

DEANS' STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC ETHICS

Cheating is wrong. Cheating hurts our community by undermining academic integrity, creating mistrust, and fostering unfair competition. The university will punish cheaters with failure on an assignment, failure in a course, permanent transcript notation, suspension and/or expulsion. Offenses may be reported to medical, law, or other professional or graduate schools when a cheater applies.

Violations can include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments without permission, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse.

MY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC ETHICS

Please, please do not plagiarize. It is almost always easier to spot than one might think, and it puts us both in an uncomfortable situation. If for whatever reason you find yourself struggling to meet a deadline or to complete an assignment to your liking, I strongly encourage you to talk to me about it rather than resorting to dishonest measures. Above all I am interested in making it possible for you to produce work about which you can feel proud.

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Academic help:**

The Writing Center (www.krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter)

Student Consulting Program (one-on-one meeting)

(<https://academicsupport.jhu.edu/study-consulting/>)

Learning Den (free group tutoring sessions)

(<https://academicsupport.jhu.edu/learning-den/>)

- **Disability Services:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documentable disability or if you have emergency information to share contact JHU's disability services either online (web.jhu.edu/disabilities) or at their office in Shaffer 101.

- **Some phone numbers:**

Hopkins Campus Security (410-516-7777)

Sexual Assault Helpline (410-516-7777)

Blue Jay Shuttle Night Ride (410-516-8700)

DISCLAIMER: I reserve the right to modify this syllabus as situations merit.

Class Schedule

Week 1

- M, 8-30** Introductions
 Watch Stella Young TED talk
HW: Read course syllabus
 (optional) Fill out questionnaire
 Read "The Theatrical World" and "The Texts of Shakespeare" (ix-xxviiiw)
 (BB)
 Read Rosemarie Garland-Thomson "Becoming Disabled" (3-8) (BB)
- W, 9-1** Discussion of course syllabus
 Discussion of Garland-Thomson "Becoming Disabled"
 Discussion of "The Theatrical World" and "The Texts of Shakespeare"
 Introduction to Shakespeare's Histories and the Wars of the Roses
HW: Read *Richard III* acts 1, 2, and 3

Week 2

- M, 9-6** **LABOR DAY—NO CLASSES**
- W, 9-8** Discussion of acts 1, 2, and 3
 Activity: Is disability an anachronism in Shakespeare?
 Assign 1.1 (Summary)
HW: Read acts 4, and 5
 Write assignment 1.1

Week 3

- M, 9-13** **Assignment 1.1 due**
 Discuss the whole play
 Introduce Problems: What still needs interpreted in *Richard III*?
 Assign 1.2 (Beginning)
HW: Read sample beginning (BB)
- W, 9-15** Discuss sample beginning
 Writing in high school vs. writing in college
 Working with quotations
HW: Write assignment 1.2
- Th, 9-16** **Email your Problem to me by 5pm. Explain why it is a good Problem to write about.**

Week 4

- M, 9-20** **Assignment 1.2 due**
 Assign 1.3
 Middles
 How *not* to structure your essay
 How to improve your writing
HW: Write as much of 1.3 as you can
 Read sample essay 1 (BB)
- W, 9-22** Endings
 How *not* to structure your essay
 Discuss sample essay 1
 Group activity: Brainstorming the Middle
HW: Finish 1.3
 Sign up for conferences
- F, 9-24** **Participation Form due at 5:00pm**

Week 5

- M, 9-27** **Assignment 1.3 due**
 Peer Review of 1.3s
- W, 9-29** **NO CLASS: CONFERENCES HELD T, W, TH, F**
- F, 10-1** **Screening of *The Hollow Crown: Richard III***
 Location and Time TBA

Week 6

- M, 10-4** Discussion of *The Hollow Crown: Richard III*
 2016 in Context PowerPoint
 Introduction to Essay 2
 Introducing the Fundamental Structure of Academic Argument
HW: Read secondary source TBA (BB)
- T, 10-5** **ESSAY 1 DUE BY 11:59PM**

W, 10-6 Discussion of secondary source
 Assign 2.1 (Summary of secondary source)
HW: Write 2.1
 Read sample essay 2 (BB)

Week 7

M, 10-11 **Assignment 2.1 due**
 Merits and Flaws
 Discussion of sample essay 2
 Assign 2.2
HW: Send me an email of 2 flaws you will use to evaluate the secondary source

W, 10-13 How did you come up with your flaws?
 Data/Evidence in films
HW: Finish 2.3

Week 8

M, 10-18 **Assignment 2.2 due**
 Peer Review
 Outlines of full drafts
 Assign 2.3

W, 10-20 Essay 2 Middles and Endings
 Outlining throughout the writing process

F, 10-23 **Participation Form due at 5:00pm**

Week 9

M, 10-25 **Assignment 2.3 due**
 Peer review 2.3

W, 10-27 **NO CLASS: CONFERENCES HELD T, W, Th, F**

F, 10-29 **Screening of Richard Loncraine's *Richard III***
 Time and location TBA

Week 10

M, 11-1 Discussion of Richard Loncraine's *Richard III*

1995 in Context PowerPoint
 Assign 3.1
HW: Read Sample Essay 3

T, 11-2 **ESSAY 2 DUE BY 11:59PM**
W, 11-3 **Assignment 3.1 due**
 Introduction to Essay 3
 Discussion of Sample Essay 3
HW: Read article 1

Week 11

M, 11-8 Discussion of article 1
 Summarize according to the Fundamental Structure
 Merits and Flaws
 Assign 3.2
HW: Work on 3.2
 Read article 2

W, 11-10 Discussion of article 2
 Summarize according to the Fundamental Structure
HW: Read articles 3 and 4

Week 12

M, 11-15 Discussion of article 3 and 4
 Summarize according to the Fundamental Structure
 Establishing, Evaluating, Entering the Conversation
 Assign 3.3
HW: Finish 3.2

W, 11-17 **Assignment 3.2 due**
 Beginnings peer review
 Body Paragraphs

F, 11-19 **Participation Form due at 5:00pm**

M, 11-22 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

W, 11-24 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 13

M, 11-29 **Assignment 3.3 due**
Peer review

W, 12-1 **NO CLASS: CONFERENCES HELD T, W, Th, F**

Week 14

M, 12-6 **LAST DAY OF CLASSES**
What did you learn this semester?
What didn't we cover this semester?
Course evaluations

F, 12-10 **Participation Form due at 5:00pm**

?? **ESSAY 3 DUE DATE TBA (Final exam calendar will be published after
add/drop period)**

Veritas vos liberabit.
The truth shall set you free.
Official motto of The Johns Hopkins University