

DECOLONIZING SHAKESPEARE: RACE & GENDER ON SCREEN



Monday to Thursday
(9:00-noon)

Instructor: Alice Joubin

Office Hours: by
appointment

ajoubin@middlebury.edu

<https://ajoubin.org/>

BLSE 7262A

CRN: 700

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In the era of #BlackLivesMatter and #MeTo, how do we engage with classical texts that are traditionally associated with colonial and patriarchal practices?

Through the lenses of critical race and gender theories, this intensive seminar examines cinematic representations of Shakespeare's plays, with a focus on strategies to "decolonize" the canon.

This seminar will equip you with pedagogical strategies and critical tools to de-colonize Shakespeare's plays. Taking an intersectional approach, we will examine theories of race, gender, sexuality, and disability, that are most relevant to our contemporary cultural life, and apply these theories to Shakespearean films.

In particular, we will focus on racialized bodies, performance of gender and sexuality, disability narratives, feminist interventions, religious fault lines, class struggle, and intersectional identities. Collectively we will reflect on our embodied vulnerability.

PLAYS & FILMS (to watch before each class)

- *Shakespeare in Love* (bio-fiction; Madden)
- *Romeo and Juliet* (tragedy; Luhrmann)
- *The Tempest* (romance play; Taymor)
- *Richard III* (history; Loncraine)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Essential tools for enjoying Shakespeare as both texts and films
- Learn textual and film analytical skills
- Hone library research skills
- Close reading and evidence-based argumentation
- Understanding Shakespeare's and directors' language and conventions
- Connect critical analysis to your life beyond the classroom

No previous experience with film studies or Shakespeare is expected. This seminar fulfills Group 2 and Group 5 requirements.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- **Contract grading system** (details below)
- Low-stake, small assignments
- Theories and films by people of color, women, disability / LGTBQ-identified writers

IMPORTANT INFO

- Adobe Express, free video editing tool: <https://www.adobe.com/express/feature/video/editor>
- Fill out this [intake questionnaire](#)
- All readings and films on [Perusall](#)

ASSIGNMENTS

- Discussion board before each class
- Final project (two options, see below)

- ◆ **Watch the Films Online** (for optimal viewing experience, download the files)
 - *Shakespeare in Love* www.dropbox.com/s/zi51e5prqxlq6bx/Shakespeare%20In%20Love.mp4
 - *Romeo + Juliet* <https://www.dropbox.com/s/tboaeoww0qhzkzx/R%26J%20Luhmann.mp4>
 - *The Tempest* <https://www.dropbox.com/s/xq0r6ew6kx569rd/Tempest%20Taymor.mp4>
 - *Richard III* <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1el4wg346gtiu91/Richard%20III%20Loncraine.mp4>
- ◆ **TEXTS**
 - Digital texts of all the Shakespeare plays for this class: shakespeare.folger.edu/
 - *Shakespeare in Love* screenplay: silo.tips/download/shakespeare-in-love-screenplay
- ◆ **Perusall** is an interactive platform for annotating texts and films
 - [How it works \(video\)](#). [How it works \(textual description\)](#).
 - All the films, readings, and commentary assignments are on Perusall.
 - Go to perusall.com, click Login, and create a free account.
 - Don't use an alias or pseudonym. Do use your preferred name.
 - Select "I am a student" and enter the course code given to you.
 - To build a community for our class, please upload a profile picture of yourself.
- ◆ **Low-stake Assignments on Perusall**
 - Post approximately 100 words of reflection to Perusall before each class (i.e., Monday to Thursday) for a total of 400 words per week.
 - As long as your response is (1) submitted on time, (2) meet the length requirement, and (3) substantive, you will earn full credit. If you fall short one day, you can make it up by posting more the following day.
 - **Choose one.** There are multiple "artifacts" (texts and film clips) for each class. Choose one and write a reflection on it. Feel free to explore and watch the other clips, but you only have to choose one item and write a reflection on it.
- ◆ **Token:** You have 1 token ("get out of jail" card) to use on an absence or missed homework. No questions asked. You can earn more tokens through extra credit activities such as hosting a watch party.
- ◆ **Office Hours:** Make an appointment. I'll be available in person on class days and via email on Friday and Saturday.
- ◆ **Copyright Statement:** As a student officially registered in this class, you have access to the digital videos and texts during the semester. You should not copy, share or distribute any material through any channel outside the class.

✱ Organizing Principles

- Critical theories that are most relevant to our contemporary life
- Test cases for application of theory: 3 plays and their film adaptations
- Anchor critical theories in films to foster a wholesome intellectual approach

✱ “One-stop shop”: We use Perusall for everything: readings, films, assignments

✱ **Contract Grading.** Choose your own path to success depending on the time you can commit to this class. This system entails a contracted number of assignments of specified quality that correspond to specific letter grades.

✱ Learning Outcomes. At the end of this class, students should be able to

1. Understand the key themes in Shakespeare
2. Appreciate films of Shakespeare's plays
3. Summarize various approaches to the study of culture and discuss how those approaches overlap and have changed over time, such as race and gender.
4. Read a visual text (broadly defined) closely.

✱ All of us learn in different ways. This course aims to accommodate each student differently. If you do not have a documented disability but feel that you would benefit from learning support for other reasons, please don't hesitate to talk to me. If you have substantial non-academic obligations (e.g., work, childcare, language barriers, financial issues, technology access, etc.) that make learning difficult, please contact me. I'll keep it confidential, and together, we can find ways to meet your needs.

✱ Examine our comfort zone:



Tuesday July 19 **Introduction: Race and Gender at the Crossroads**

Course overview and demonstration of how to use Perusall.com
 Chapter 1 of *A History of Shakespeare on Film* by Samuel Crowl
 “Critical Theory,” *How to Read Texts* by Neil McCaw
 Handout on film terminology and camera movement

In-class accessibility / equity exercise on Alt-Text “image description”:

One student describes an image or a film still. Another student comes up with a drawing based on that description. [Why?](#) Alt-texts meet the needs of individuals with print, visual, cognitive disabilities.

Alt text is an essential part of accessibility. It is often disregarded or understood through the lens of compliance, as an unwelcome burden to be met with minimum effort. We can instead approach alt text thoughtfully and creatively.

July 20-21 **Feminism and Queer Theory**

Shakespeare in Love, dir. John Madden
Romeo + Juliet, dir. Baz Luhrmann
 Introduction to *Shakespeare and Feminism* by Marianne Novy
 “The Male Gaze” by Laura Mulvey
 Optional: “Shakespeare in Hetero Love” by Sujata Iyengar
 Optional: “Introduction: Acting in Concert,” *Undoing Gender* by Judith Butler

July 25-28 **Race and Postcolonial Studies**

“Race and Epistemologies of Otherness” (by Alice Joubin) in *Race*
The Tempest, dir. Julie Taymor
 “The Vocabulary of Race” in *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* by Ania Loomba
 “Colonialism in *The Tempest*” by Meredith Anne Skura

August 1-3 **Disability Theories**

Richard III, dir. Ian McKellen
 “F*#\$ the Disabled” by Robert McRuer
 “Teaching Shakespeare in a Time of Hate” in *Shakespeare Survey 74* by Alice Joubin and Lisa Starks; [open-access full text on Cambridge UP](#)
 Optional: “Enabling Richard: The Rhetoric of Disability in *Richard III*” by Katherine Schaap Williams

August 4 **Conclusion**

Final Project due before class. Two options: The first involves critical writing, while the second amplifies your artistic creativity.
 Which theoretical perspective will you study further or use in your teaching (race, gender, disability) to decolonize Shakespeare? Why?
 Which film did you find most compelling?
 Optional: *Racial Literacy: Implications for Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Policy*, ed. Detra Price-Dennis

This method of assessment gives students full control of their grades. Focus on getting the most out of each assignment and enjoy the writing process. Your final grade is determined by your effort.

Individual assignments are not graded in the traditional manner. Instructor's feedback focuses on substantive matters rather than justifying a grade. The writing is not graded for quality, though feedback does address the strengths and weaknesses of the work, similar to how scholarly peer reviews work in the real world.

Grade	Work Completed
A	All Perusall commentary assignments and final project
B	All but one Perusall commentary assignments and final project
C	All but two Perusall commentary assignments and final project
D	All but three Perusall commentary assignments and final project
F	Missing more than 4 Perusall assignments (equivalent of one week) and no final project. Or: No work completed.

All contracted conditions for a particular grade have to be met. The instructor will respond to emails/discussion posts within two business days on weekdays, and will provide feedback on assignments within one week.

Netiquette Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online: Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times. Remember that a real human being wrote each post and will read what you write in response. It is easy to misinterpret discussion posts. Let's give the benefit of the doubt. If you have a strong opinion on a topic, it is acceptable to express it as long as it is not phrased as an attack. Please be gracious with differing opinions.

When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted or emailed in anger are often regretted later. Proofread and use the spell check tool when you type a post. It makes the post easier to read and helps your readers understand what you are saying.

I reserve the right to delete any post that is deemed inappropriate without prior notification to the student. This includes any post containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Posts that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed. For information on how to interact effectively and constructively with course colleagues, please consult [Engaging in Online Discussions](#).

Perusall Assignments

Description. Comment on any or all “artifacts” (film and/or article) on Perusall before each class. Write a minimum of 100 words each day which can be spread across multiple threads, e.g. 50 words on a film + 50 words on a theory text.

Each thread is like a chat. This exercise is collaborative in nature. You are encouraged to respond to other students’ comments. You can also use the annotation to ask questions; your classmates can provide clarification. Conversely, help others resolve their questions, too (which helps you learn).

Point out a trope used in the scene or a rhetorical choice made in a theory text. Explain the effect of such choices. Effective annotations stimulate discussion, offer thought-provocative questions or comments, and engage deeply with the reading or film. A successful comment demonstrates thoughtful reading and insightful interpretation of the material.

Purpose. To apply the theories we have studied to analyzing the films. To deepen your understanding of film adaptation as a field. Your commentary lays the groundwork for learning. Read the text thoroughly and watch the film at least twice. Your goal in annotating each text or film are to stimulate discussion by posting good questions or comments.

Skills. By doing this assignment, you will gain and practice the skills of close reading a play and extrapolating main themes from a film. You will acquire employable skills by completing this assignment:

- ability to synthesize info from multiple sources
- time management
- ability to break down complex ideas into smaller units

Knowledge. By doing this assignment, you will use and solidify your knowledge of both Shakespeare’s crafts and modern filmmaking techniques to tell stories. You will have opportunities to close read the plays and the films through this exercise.

Criteria for Success. You receive full credit if your reflection (1) is on time; (2) is substantive; and (3) meets the length requirement. The writing is not assessed with a traditional letter grade, though feedback does address the strengths and weaknesses of the work, similar to how scholarly peer reviews work in the real world. Instructor’s feedback focuses on substantive matters rather than justifying a grade.

Writing annotations and commentary on film and theory texts is the foundation for strong, independent research. While the commentary is not a research paper, it should still contain the key elements of effective writing.

THESIS: Good writing begins with keen observations. What is the “essence” of this scene or theory?

CONCRETE DETAIL: Every statement you make relevant to your thesis should have an example to back it up. Details should not be given at random. State a fact.

KEY TERMS: If you use technical terminology from the reading (which you should) either quote or define it in your own words -- or both.

CONCLUSION: Tie together any loose ends you may have in your writing. Make sure that you have made ALL the connections for the reader. Your argument is weakened when the reader is asked to “connect the dots” for you.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY: The quality of your sentences is more important than how many words you write. You must learn to argue succinctly because the majority of written work you will do in the “Real World” will be short (i.e. memos, abstracts, e-mails, proposals, grants, executive summaries).

How to Use Perusall

Log in to www.perusall.com/ and go to Assignments (on the navigation panel on the top next to Library).

The screenshot shows the Perusall interface for the course 'ENG 3440W Summer 2022: Shakespeare, Race, and Gender on Screen'. The 'Assignments' tab is selected. The interface displays a list of assignments for Week 1, including 'A History of Shakespeare on Film', 'McCaw - What is Critical Theory?', and 'Film Terminology'. The 'Open' button for the first assignment is highlighted.

Scroll down to the relevant course week or date. Click the item you are interested in; it may be a text or a film clip. Click OPEN on the right.

The screenshot shows the Perusall interface for the assignment 'Week 1: A History of Shakespeare on Film'. The 'Open' button is highlighted with a red box.

Week 1: A History of Shakespeare on Film
Due Wed May 18, 2022 5:00 pm EDT

Each week, you have to post 300 words (total) to Perusall. Please choose one item (or two!) -- can be a text or a video. Comment on the reading or film. You can spread the 300 words across a few comments (as long as they add up to at least 300 it's all good).

Annotate Crowl's history of Shakespeare on film

What are some of the key features of the history of filming Shakespeare?

Open Edit Duplicate Extended deadlines Copy full title for LMS Delete

Analytics Confusion report All comments

Highlight any portion of the text to leave your comments. You can see your classmates' and my comments (and questions) as well.

The screenshot shows a digital reading interface. On the left, a document titled "1 ESTABLISHING SHOT" is displayed. The "History" section contains two paragraphs. The first paragraph discusses the history of Shakespeare on screen, mentioning the late nineteenth century, DVD extras, and the relationship between Shakespeare and film. The second paragraph discusses the evolution of Shakespeare on film and television, mentioning the silent era, Hollywood, and the end of World War II. On the right, a "Current conversation" sidebar is visible, featuring a text input field with a placeholder: "Enter your comment or question and press Enter. Mention a friend by typing @. Add hashtags by #." The sidebar also includes a profile picture of a user and a list of formatting options (B, I, A, etc.).

In the case of a film clip, play the clip. Click PAUSE when you have something to say about the scene. Click ADD COMMENT on the upper right and write your comments in the box. The steps are the same as above.

The screenshot shows a video player interface. The video player is displaying a scene from a film, showing a man in a white shirt with a ruffled collar. A blue play button is overlaid on the video. Above the video player, there is a header bar with the text "3440W Summer 2022: Shakespeare, Race, and Gender on Screen" and "Shakespeare in Love: The Writing Hand". To the right of the header bar, there are links for "All comments", "Help", and a user profile picture labeled "Alexa Jout". Below the header bar, there is a blue button labeled "+ Add comment".

Final Project (Two Options)

Final Project Option 1: Book Rationale

Submit your essay to the final essay folder on Perusall.

Write a 1000-word “book rationale” explaining why a particular text matters in your school and classroom (choose from *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and *Richard III*). Book rationale is a powerful tool for educators. Use your expertise in literacy and teaching. Ground your arguments in theories we studied and in student needs.

Include in your rationale an executive summary, grade-level suggestions, and teaching methods. For samples, see <https://ncte.org/book-rationales/>, a database of hundreds of book rationales.

Read “[Standing Up for Students’ Right to Read in the Face of Censorship](#)” by the National Council of Teachers of English:

“The right to read is one of the foundations of a democratic society, and teachers need the freedom to support that right so their students can make informed decisions and be valuable contributors to our world. A story can encourage diversity of thought, broaden global perspectives, celebrate unique cultures, and motivate the reader to achieve their dreams. This right matters.”

Final Project (Two Options)

Final Project Option 2: Film Adaptation

Submit your project to the appropriate folder on Perusall.

The final project consists of two components: (1) a 800-word essay explaining your rationale, and (2) a film trailer (between 30 seconds and 2 minutes maximum in length) uploaded to YouTube, Vimeo, DropBox, or Google Drive.

On the top of your essay, please **include the link to your short video**.

Choose one of the plays we have studied. Review the techniques and strategies of adaptation in the films we have studied. Envision your own film adaptation of that play. Explain your rationale (setting, context, themes) in the essay, double-spaced.

Do you plan to keep Shakespeare's language, or write a new script? Do you plan to update the setting or keep the historical context of the story? What is the main theme of your adaptation? Why? The essay should explain your general approach to the production, including decisions about contemporizing vs. historical, realistic vs. stylized, etc.

You may discuss your decisions about soundtrack and music, casting, set and costume designs. You may compare and contrast your film to an existing film ("how does your adaptation differ from the existing film?").

In your short video, express the main themes of your film through soundtrack, still images, and stock videos. While it is not required, feel free to shoot your own footage.

Format for the essay: WORD (.docx file format), double spaced, approx. 2-3 pages.

Tools: Adobe Express, a free web-based video editing tool, <https://www.adobe.com/express/feature/video/editor> or any video editing software you are familiar with, such as QuickTime or iMovie. Detailed instructions and resources for extra help are included below.

How: This short video walks you through, step by step, how to use Adobe Express, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvhddhDjyzU&ab_channel=Howfinity

Purpose To apply the techniques and theories of film we have studied. To give you an opportunity to bring critical analytical skills and artistic creativity together. To deepen your understanding of film adaptation as a field.

Knowledge By doing this final assignment, you will use and solidify your knowledge of both Shakespeare's crafts and modern filmmaking techniques to tell stories.

Continued

Final Project Option 2: Film Adaptation

Skills By doing this assignment, you will gain and practice the skills of close reading a play, extrapolating main themes from a narrative, and producing an impactful short video (a film trailer). You will acquire employable skills by completing this assignment:

- ability to synthesize info from multiple sources
- time management
- ability to break down complex ideas into smaller units
- effective written and visual communication

Criteria for Success

- Evidence of background research - 20%
- Creativity and coherence - 30%
- Persuasiveness of interpretation - 30%
- Effectiveness of delivery (essay and video) - 20%

Resources for Free Stock Images, Music, and Video

Free Stock Video

- [Pexels](#) - free stock videos shared by the Pexels community
- [Pixabay](#) - tens of thousands of stock videos
- [Videvo](#) - over 300,000 clips of stock video footage

Free Sound Effects and Music

- [BBC Sound Effects](#) - over 33,000 clips from across the world from the past 100 years
- [freesound](#) - a collaborative database of Creative Commons licensed sounds
- [SoundBible](#) - free sound clips for download
- [Bensound](#) - royalty free music
- [Free Music Archive](#)
- [Pixabay](#) - thousands of music and audio tracks

Stock Images

- [Pixabay](#) - tens of thousands of stock videos, images, and music
- [Pexels](#) - free stock videos shared by the Pexels community
- [Unsplash](#) - beautiful high resolution photos
- [freephotos.cc](#) - free stock photos
- [The Noun Project](#) - icons and photos for everything

Continued

Final Project Option 2: Film Adaptation

Are you looking for ideas for your final project? A film trailer, while short, conveys a lot of key information: themes, mood, setting, time period, costuming choices.

Samples (Projects by Previous Students)

- *Verona*, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Elisabet Lindskog https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1aDMdejZAQ&ab_channel=lethargicTurniptruck
- *Richard III*, a contemporary political allegory by Zachary Kovach https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSb5Bdilg8U&ab_channel=ZacharyKovach
- *Ryan and Julian*, a queer adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Jillian Jordy, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1cDBHHRXIk&ab_channel=JillianJordy
- *Frederick and Emma*, a *Romeo and Juliet* set in 19th-century America by Jonathan Daniel, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar4-QBqUGw4&ab_channel=JonathanDaniel

Sample Film Trailers

Here are some trailers of Shakespeare films to serve as your inspiration.

- [Trailer for Ian McKellen's *Richard III*](#): gripping, period drama about English royal family, war, Fascism
- [Trailer for Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story* \(2022\)](#), an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*: musical, inter-racial, modern take on gender roles
- [Trailer for Claire McCarthy's *Ophelia*](#) (2019), based on *Hamlet*: feminist interpretation, re-telling the story from Ophelia's point of view

Writing Effectively

Quality of Writing	Developing	Competent	Exemplary
Argumentation (main ideas; research questions)	The writing does not present a clear idea or purpose.	There is a thesis but it is not thoroughly developed or not compelling.	Thoroughly developed thesis statement in a clear and sophisticated fashion.
Supporting Evidence (close reading, selection of a scene or paragraph to support the argument)	The argumentation is based on generalities. No supporting details. Did not unpack the passage or the scene.	Examples chosen for close reading are facile and not consistently unpacked and explained.	The chosen examples are clear and coherent, supporting the argument and explained in a persuasive fashion.
Organization and Fluency (structure of ideas, beginning with a purposeful lead and moving toward a logical ending)	The writing lacks organization. Ideas seem random. There is no identifiable structure.	There is some order but it confuses the reader due to illogical movements through the case studies.	The organizing structure compels and enhances the arguments. The main ideas progress in a logical fashion.
Overall Quality (language that flows with rhythm and grace. Well-crafted sentences)	Writing does not flow. It is difficult to read due to grammatical errors or incomplete sentences.	Writing moves along but is not polished. There is no original voice. It does not quite flow.	Writing flows with rhythm and cadence. Elegant. Persuasive. Free of grammatical errors.

How to Take Screening Notes

Examples of screening notes as you watch a film:

Much Ado About Nothing, dir. Kenneth Branagh

In the film's long opening sequence a lot of characters are showering, men and women in their separate "camps." Note the rapid intercutting between female and male characters in the bathing sequence.

Shakespeare in Love, dir. John Madden

As part of the film's opening sequence, we meet Shakespeare hard at work at his desk, except he isn't writing (he is suffering from writer's block). He merely practices signing his name in various styles. This scene seems self-consciously kitschy. There is a modern (time traveling?) mug souvenir from Stratford-upon-Avon

King Lear, dir. Richard Eyre 2018

1:05:00 Edmund puts his hand on Regan's derrière. It's one of the first signs that Regan is having an extramarital affair (husband seems oblivious at this point)

1:35:00 Gloucester dies in an empty house during bombardment with Edgar by his side (Gloucester touching Edgar's face, hinting at his recognition of his son). He interrupts his father's second suicidal thought (the first was at the Dover cliff) by saying "Men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither: Ripeness is all." --> what does ripeness mean in this context? [A point for further reflection.]

- * To make the most of this course, we must create together a rigorous and lively forum of ideas that is welcoming to everyone. The opportunity to speak freely and know that you will be heard, even if not agreed with, is crucial.
 - * Given the sometimes sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. I will foster an environment in which each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class.
 - * Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself, the TA, or other students, causes discomfort. Feel free to discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to you in order to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
 - * This course serves students from all backgrounds. The course materials reflect diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.
 - * Refer to the last page of the syllabus for mental health service, disability support services, and the university policy on religious holidays.
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- * The pandemic has been challenging for all of us, but we can treat this as an opportunity to learn. Let us focus more on trying new things than on fear of failure.

How to Do Things with Films Part 1

Analyzing Film Adaptation

Let us analyze the differences and continuities between the play and several film versions. When viewing the films, you must pay attention to the choices the directors made in the following categories.

Setting

What is the setting? Where is the scene taking place?

What do props and costumes tell us about the time period, about the characters and their standings?

What do these directorial choices reflect the director's interpretation of the scene?

Cinematography

How often are there cuts and transitions?

How long does the director stay with shots?

When are there close ups, long shots? To what effect?

Language Elements

What lines are emphasized, cut, or rearranged?

How are emotions conveyed?

Overall Effect and the Big Questions

What is the effect of each of these aspects on the scene and the play?

How does each director establish a tone for the film? To what genre does this film belong: action, thriller, historical chronicle, philosophical drama?

What are the themes or leitmotifs of the film adaptations? Ambition, love, revenge, misogyny, friendship, betrayal?

Taking Notes on Film Screenings

Screening notes help you remember interesting shots, lines of dialogue, plot discrepancies, and other elements of the film's form, style, or contents that intrigue or confuse you. You can draw upon these notes later, whenever you need to refer to the texture of a film and the experience of viewing it: to prepare for class discussion, to make detailed arguments for an essay, or simply to develop a record of your own movie-watching history.

Do not try to write down everything you see. You'll end up with a cramped hand and missing half of what transpires on screen because you were so busy writing. A happy medium

How to Do Things with Films Part 2

Writing Film Analysis

1 How is writing about film similar to other types of writing?

The paper follows the same structure as most other argumentative essays—you provide a position or argument and examples which support it.

2 How is **writing about film (film analysis)** different from **writing a film review**?

Most argumentative papers *do not include evaluative judgment* about a particular movie because you need not like a movie in order to say something insightful about it. In a film review, however, evaluation is far more central.

A film review is essentially a judgment about the quality of the movie, backed up with enough information to indicate your judgment is based on good reasons.

Good film criticism, however, is more than a simple “thumbs up” or “thumbs down.” A good argumentative film essay (analysis) can be as descriptive as a film review, but it analyzes as closely as possible the elements that constitute the film’s overall meaning. Your *description* of the film paints a vivid picture in the reader’s head. But his description serves a clear purpose: it shows how, using a variety of cinematic techniques (slow tilts, intercuts, depth of field), the director conveys an overall feelings of meaningless and futility. Note that the author’s personal opinion about the film (good or bad) is not made explicit.

3 What problems are unique to writing about film?

a You should try to see the film twice.

- b Try taking notes during the film, even if you are sitting in a dark auditorium.
- c You might also write down your thoughts immediately after viewing the film. Try talking about your reaction to the film with fellow students or friends who have also see it.
- d Find supplementary readings that put the film in some critical, cultural, or historical context.

4. What to Look for in a Film

a **Setting:** locations, time period, atmosphere, etc.

b **Costumes:** Are period costumes used? How are the leads dressed? How do the costumes reflect the character being portrayed?

c **Pacing:** Does the film’s action drag at any point? How and why? How does the speed or lack of speed affect your interpretation of the film?

d **Special Features:** In *Hamlet*, there is a climactic sword fight among major characters. What do the special features and effects add or not add to the performance?

e **Blocking** (director’s planned movement for the characters): Where to the actors stand in significant scenes? Does the camera focus your attention on one character more than on another by special blocking?

f **Acting:** What did one actor or actress do with his or her voice? Did any one actor dominate the performance? How?

How to Do Things with Films Part 3

Film Sequence Analysis

Describe the significant shots in the sequence in great detail. Consider these elements:

- lighting
- shot duration
- transition type
- topic or theme
- action or plot
- dialogue
- diegetic sound, music
- shot distance
- camera angle, camera movement
- effect

Analyze how the shots and the sequence contribute to the overall effect of the film, and examine whether the film remains open-ended or insists on a specific interpretation of the Shakespearean play.

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#### *Incorrect description of a shot*

Medium shot of a woman standing outside. Cut to a close-up of a dress behind a window. à Sentence fragment.

#### *Correct*

After a medium shot of a woman standing outside a window, the film cuts to a close-up of a dress behind the window. à Complete sentence.

#### *Even better*

An eyeline match links a medium shot of a woman looking into a shop window to a close-up of a dress inside. This shot/reverse shot structure reveals her desire for the dress, and prompts the viewer to share this desire. à detailed description and in-depth analysis

## GUIDELINES FOR QUOTING VERSE, PROSE, and DIALOGUE

### When Quoting Three Lines or Less....

#### QUOTING PROSE

If a prose quotation runs three lines or less, put it in quotation marks and incorporate it in the text.

The immensely obese Falstaff tells the Prince: “When I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle’s talon in the waist; I could have crept into any alderman’s thumb ring” (1H4 2.4.325–27).

#### QUOTING VERSE

When quoting two or three lines of verse, use a slash with a space on each side [ / ] to separate them.

Claudius alludes to the story of Cain and Abel when describing his crime: “It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t, / A brother’s murder” (*Ham.* 3.3.37–38).

### When Quoting Four Lines or More....

When quoting more than three lines, you will need to indent your quotation. These are commonly referred to as block quotations. The lines should be arranged as they appear in the text if you are quoting verse and arranged as a paragraph if you are quoting prose.

#### QUOTING PROSE

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Benedick reflects on what he has overheard Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio say:

This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne.  
They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity  
the lady. It seems her affections have their full bent. Love  
me? Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured.  
They say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love  
come from her; they say too that she will rather die than  
give any sign of affection (2.3.217–24).

#### QUOTING VERSE

Jaques begins his famous speech by comparing the world to a theater:

All the world’s a stage  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages (AYL 2.7.138–42).

One does not need to include the title of the play in this parenthetical citation as the author notes it directly before the quote.

Because this is verse, the original spacing – in this case the long indentation in the first line – remains.

### When Quoting Dialogue...

Begin each part of the dialogue with the appropriate character’s name indented one inch from the left margin and written in all capital letters. Follow the name with a period, and start the quotation. Indent all subsequent lines in the character’s speech an additional quarter inch. When the dialogue shifts to another character, start a new line indented one inch from the left margin. Maintain this pattern throughout the entire quotation.

HAMLET. Then is doomsday near. But your news is not  
true. Let me question more in particular. What have you,  
my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune,  
that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN. Prison, my lord? (*Ham.* 2.2.231–235).

# Citing Shakespeare in MLA Format

## In-text citations

### What's included in parentheses?

When citing Shakespeare plays, list the **ACT**, **SCENE**, and **LINES** in parenthetical citations (page numbers are NOT included), separated by periods. Enclose the citation in parentheses. For example:

(*Macbeth* 1.3.14-17) refers to Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 14 to 17 of *Macbeth*.

### Do I use the author's name or the title of the work?

If writing about one play, use the author's last name in the parenthetical citation. However, if writing a paper that refers to more than one work, use the play's title. For example:

If one were to write a paper on Othello in which he or she quoted *only* that play, Shakespeare would be used in the citation.

- (Shakespeare 3.3.165-171)

If one were to write a paper about Shakespeare's tragedies in which the author quoted *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, use the play's name in the citation.

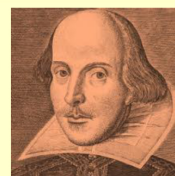
- (*Hamlet* 3.2.115) or (*Ham.* 3.2.115)★

★ After introducing the full play title in parentheses, it is acceptable to use MLA-approved abbreviations for any later citations.

## ★ ABBREVIATIONS

|      |                            |
|------|----------------------------|
| Ado  | Much Ado about Nothing     |
| Ant. | Anthony and Cleopatra      |
| AWW  | All's Well That Ends Well  |
| AYL  | As You Like It             |
| Err. | The Comedy of Errors       |
| Ham. | Hamlet                     |
| 1H4  | Henry IV, Part 1           |
| 2H4  | Henry IV, Part 2           |
| H5   | Henry V                    |
| 1H6  | Henry VI, Part 1           |
| 2H6  | Henry VI, Part 2           |
| 3H6  | Henry VI, Part 3           |
| H8   | Henry VIII                 |
| JC   | Julius Caesar              |
| LLL  | Love's Labour's Lost       |
| Lr.  | King Lear                  |
| Mac. | Macbeth                    |
| MND  | A Midsummer Night's Dream  |
| MV   | Merchant of Venice         |
| Oth. | Othello                    |
| Per. | Pericles                   |
| R2   | Richard II                 |
| R3   | Richard III                |
| Rom. | Romeo and Juliet           |
| Shr. | The Taming of the Shrew    |
| Son. | Sonnets                    |
| Tit. | Titus Andronicus           |
| Tmp. | The Tempest                |
| TN   | Twelfth Night              |
| Wiv. | The Merry Wives of Windsor |
| WT   | The Winter's Tale          |

For all Shakespeare abbreviations see section 7.7.2 in the *MLA Handbook*



## The edition I have uses roman numerals to designate acts and scenes. Should I use roman numerals in my citation?

According to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Projects*:

In general, use arabic numerals rather than roman numerals for division and page numbers. Although you must use roman numerals when citing pages of a preface or another section that are so numbered, designate volumes, parts, books, and chapters with arabic numerals even if your source does not. Some instructors prefer roman numerals, however, **for citations of acts and scenes in plays (i.e. *King Lear* IV.i), but if your instructor does not require this practice, use arabic numerals (i.e. *King Lear* 4.1).**

## PROPER FORMAT FOR WORKS CITED

### Citing a Play Published as a Book

Author. *Title of Play*. Editor or Translator (if applicable). City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of Publication.

**Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Ed. Tom Smith. Oxford: Globe Theater Press, 2005. Print.**

### Citing a Play Published in an Anthology

Author. *Title of Play*. *Title of Anthology*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Page Numbers of the Anthology on Which the Play Appears. Medium of Publication.

**Shakespeare, William. *King Lear. A Collection of Great Drama*. Ed. Tom Smith. Oxford: Globe Theater Press, 2005. 1235-1298. Print.**



Please let your instructor know during the first week of the semester of your documented disability or intention to be absent from class on your days of religious observance.

### **University policy on observance of religious holidays**

In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details and policy, see: [students.gwu.edu/accommodations-religious-holidays](https://students.gwu.edu/accommodations-religious-holidays).

### **Academic integrity code**

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For details and complete code, see: [studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity](https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity)

### **Safety and security**

- In an emergency on campus: call GYPD 202-994-6111 or 911
- For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook: [safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook](https://safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook)
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out: [go.gwu.edu/shooterprep](https://go.gwu.edu/shooterprep)
- Stay informed: [safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed](https://safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed)
- In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

### **Disability Support Services (DSS)**

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information see: [disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/](https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/)

### **Mental Health Services 202-994-5300**

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For additional information see: [counselingcenter.gwu.edu/](https://counselingcenter.gwu.edu/)

### **Average Minimum Amount of Out-of-Class Independent Learning Per Week**

In a 15-week semester, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction, for a minimum total of 2.5 hours a week. A 3-credit course should include 2.5 hours of direct instruction and a minimum of 5 hours of independent learning, totaling a minimum of 7.5 hours per week.