

English 7220x Summer II 2018  
Department of English, Brooklyn College  
Prof. Roy T. Tsao  
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July 17 – August 15, 2018  
Tues & Weds 6:15pm - 8:45pm  
Boylan 3146

### **Seminar in Textual Analysis: Shakespeare's Roman Tragedies**

This seminar will cover Shakespeare's three great Roman tragedies - *Julius Caesar*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. We will read these plays in conjunction with selections from the author's primary source, Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, along with a sampling of scholarly critical writing on the plays.

#### **Course Requirements & Grading**

The course will be conducted as a seminar. Regular, punctual attendance is expected. A maximum of *one* excused absence over the course's ten sessions will be allowed (though strongly discouraged). Any additional absences will adversely affect your course grade, as will late arrivals. If for any reason you are unable to come to class, or arrive on time, you are expected to get in contact with the instructor by email.

Every student in the course will be required to give two informal oral presentations in class - one each on *Antony & Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. Information about the content and schedule for these presentations will be given in class during the first week of the course.

Written work for the course will consist in a single critical essay of 15-20 pages. (No additional research, beyond the assigned course readings, is required or expected for this essay.)

Course grades will be assessed on the following basis:

1. Attendance & Class Participation 20%
2. Oral Presentations: 20%
3. Seminar Paper 60%

#### **Course Texts**

1. Our principal texts will be the three plays by Shakespeare. **As this is a graduate-level seminar in textual analysis, it is essential for students to obtain and use suitable, scholarly editions of these plays.** The reason for this is that we will be dealing extensively with matters for which we will need to be able to refer to the textual collation and scholarly notes that are provided with a scholarly critical edition. **You are required to obtain *Julius Caesar*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* in one of the editions listed below.** You are *not* free to substitute a different edition, without first obtaining specific approval from the instructor. **Neglect of this requirement will adversely affect your course grade.** If you do not wish to purchase the books, you have the option of getting copies through the CUNY Library system. Electronic texts are *not* acceptable substitutes; you will be expected to bring your books to class for each session. Please do not hesitate to ask the instructor if you have any questions concerning these policies.

### Recommended Editions:

(ordered for purchase through the B.C. online bookstore)

*Julius Caesar*, ed. Marvin Spevack. New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: 1998, 2004),

*Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. David Bevington. New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: 1990, 2005).

*Coriolanus*, ed. Lee Bliss. New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: 1999, 2010).

### Other Acceptable Editions:

*Julius Caesar*, ed. T.S. Dorsch. Arden Shakespeare, Second Series (Harvard/Methuen: 1955).

*Julius Caesar*, ed. David Daniell. Arden Shakespeare, Third Series (Bloomsbury: 1998).

*Julius Caesar*, ed. A. Humphreys. Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: 1984)

*Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. M.R. Ridley. Arden Shakespeare, Second Series (Harvard/Methuen, 1954)

*Antony and Cleopatra*. ed. John Wilders. Arden Shakespeare, Third Series (Bloomsbury: 1995)

*Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Michael Neill. Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: 1994).

*Coriolanus*, ed. Philip Brockbank. Arden Shakespeare, Second Series (Harvard/Methuen: 1976).

*Coriolanus*, ed. Peter Holland. Arden Shakespeare, Third Series (Bloomsbury: 2013).

*Coriolanus*, ed. R.B. Parker. Oxford Shakespeare. (Oxford: 1994).

2. The assigned selections from Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, translated by Thomas North, are available online at the Perseus Digital Library. Please note that in the Perseus Digital Library files, the traditional section numbers are often located *within* paragraph blocks of text. (Do not be confused by the boldface phrases printed between blocks of text; these phrases correspond to marginal notes printed in the pages of the original edition of North's translation, not the section divisions.)

3. Other assigned readings will be made available electronically via the Blackboard site for this course; they are also available at the web addresses listed on the schedule of assignments (via a library server or proxy).

### **Course Policies**

1. As noted under course requirements, students are expected to attend every session of the course; repeated absences will result in a penalty to the course grade. Sessions will start punctually at 6:15 pm.

2. Use of laptops or other electronic devices is not permitted during the seminar, in the interest of fostering an environment conducive to discussion.

3. Course announcements will be sent out via Blackboard. Students are to be responsible to ensure that their email address associated with their Blackboard account is correct. Please contact ITS if you need help modifying that address.

## **Schedule of Assignments**

- 7/17 Tues**      Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* I-III
- 7/18 Wed**      Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, IV-V  
Mildred E. Hartsock, "The Complexity of *Julius Caesar*," *PMLA*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Mar., 1966), pp. 56-62 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/461308>  
Robert S. Miola, "Julius Caesar & the Tyrannicide Debate," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer 1985), pp. 271-289 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2861665>
- 7/24 Tues**      Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra*, I-II  
Plutarch, *Life of Antonius* §§13-18. Perseus Digital Library:  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0078%3Atext%3DAnt.&force=y>  
Rhodri Lewis, "Romans, Egyptians, and Crocodiles," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Volume 68, Number 4 (Winter 2017) 320-350 <https://doi.org/10.1353/shq.2017.0039>
- 7/25 Wed**      Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra*, III  
Plutarch, *Antonius* §§20-21, 29-37
- 7/31 Tues**      Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra* IV  
Plutarch, *Antonius* §§38-41  
Mary Thomas Crane, "Roman World, Egyptian Earth: Cognitive Difference and Empire in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Spring 2009), pp. 1-17. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23038035>
- 8/1 Wed**      Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra* V  
Plutarch, *Antonius* §§42-45  
Phyllis Rackin, "Shakespeare's Boy Cleopatra, the Decorum of Nature, and the Golden World of Poetry," *PMLA*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (Mar., 1972), pp. 201-212. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/460877>  
Donald C. Freeman, "'The Rack Dislimns': Schema and Metaphorical Pattern in *Antony and Cleopatra*" *Poetics Today*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (Autumn, 1999), pp. 443-460. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1773274>

- 8/7 Tues**      Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* I-II
- Plutarch, *Life of Coriolanus*, §§1-9. Perseus Digital Library:  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0078%3Atext%3DCor>.
- Harley Granville-Barker, "Verse and Speech in *Coriolanus*," *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 89 (Jan., 1947), pp. 1-15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/509764>
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- 8/8 Wed**      Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* III
- Plutarch, *Coriolanus* 10-12
- Norman Rabkin, "Coriolanus: The Tragedy of Politics," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Summer, 1966), pp. 195-212 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867716>
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- 8/14 Tues**      Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* IV-V
- Plutarch, *Coriolanus* §§13, 15-22
- Due Date for Paper Prospectus (or Rough Draft)*
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- 8/15 Wed**      Carol M. Sicherman, "Coriolanus: The Failure of Words," *English Literary History*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (June 1972), pp. 189-207. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872242>
- Stanley Cavell, "'Who Does the Wolf Love?' Reading *Coriolanus*," *Representations*, No. 3 (Summer 1983), pp. 1-20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3043784>
- Eve Rachele Sanders, "The Body of the Actor in *Coriolanus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Winter 2006), pp. 387-412 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4123493>
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- 8/18 Sat**      *Official due date for written work in this course. Papers are due at 2pm, via email. Students who submit work after this time may receive a temporary grade of Incomplete from the College Registrar. Papers received after Wednesday, August 22, will be subject to a penalty for lateness.*