We’ve grown accustomed to the assertion that Shakespeare was the greatest English dramatist ever. Is this true? And, if it is, how did he get to be this way, both in his own theatrical milieu through to the present day? How, in other words, did Shakespeare become Shakespeare? English 3223 provides an introduction to Shakespearean drama through careful reading of representative plays from several different genres from the later part of his career. There are of course many similarities between the early and late plays suggesting that a sharp distinction between the two and the precise date of the transition is somewhat forced and imposed by scholars much later. There are, however, several features of the early plays, those written during or before 1600, which make them worthy of special consideration as a unit. We will notice, for instance, that Shakespeare during this period developed his dramatic techniques, focusing especially on a tumultuous period of English history known as the Wars of the Roses and festive comedies often set in exotic locales. In this course, we will pay special attention to the content and form of these texts but also to the original conditions under which they were performed as well as their social, economic, and political contexts, the networks of patronage, readership, and often collaborative authorship that led to their production, as well as their function in today’s literary and cultural marketplace.

Required Text (available at the campus bookstore):
Stephen Greenblatt et. al., eds. The Norton Shakespeare. Second Edition. If you have or can obtain a copy of the First Edition (the red one), feel free to use that.

Course Requirements: Your final grade will be based on a series of short quizzes given on each play (15%); a midterm (20%) and final examination (30%); a paper (25%) and attendance and class participation (10%). The midterm examination will consist of a variety of multiple-choice and short answer questions including the identification of key passages. The final will consist of more of the same but will also contain an essay question that requires you to synthesize some of the concepts we discuss over the semester and to compare these ideas in some of the plays that we’ll read. Punctual attendance and productive participation are essential not only because they count towards 10% of the course grade but also because discussion of these difficult texts is important in deciphering the interpretive and historical problems they pose. For this reason, attendance is mandatory and missing more than six classes may reduce your course grade by a full letter. Chronic lateness will be penalized similarly.

Paper: I believe that all literature classes should include some kind of writing component. The paper (5-6 pages) in this class will primarily be concerned with developing your close reading abilities and using specific textual evidence to build an argument about the larger issues surrounding the play. I will give you a series of passages and you will choose one to explicate in detail, paying close attention to how the language works and how the speech you chose functions within the context of the larger play. The paper will be due on Thursday, Oct. 11. Papers more than two days late will begin accruing a penalty of five points a day.
Plus / Minus Grading: As of Fall semester 2011, UTSA has shifted to plus/minus grading. This system is now mandatory in all classes in the Department of English. According to this system the highest grade of A (94% and above) translates to 4.0; A- (90-94%) is 3.67; B+ (87-90%) is 3.33; B (84-87%) is 3.00; B- (80-84%) is 2.67; C+ (77-80%) is 2.33; C (74-77%) is 2.00; C- (67-70%) is 1.67; D+ (67-70%) is 1.33; D (60-67%) is 1.00. Anything below that is an F.

Quizzes: The primary function of the quizzes is to ensure that you’ve read the assigned play on the date we’re going to discuss it. There will be a quiz every day that we begin a new play (i.e. the quiz on The Merchant of Venice will take place on Sept. 13, the quiz on Romeo and Juliet will be on Sept. 25, and so on. If you’ve read the play, you’ll find the quiz extremely easy; if not, you’re in trouble! The quizzes will consist of short-answer, fact-based questions on the plays (i.e. who marries who, where is the play set, who’s related whom, etc.). Only your top five quiz grades (out of seven) will count. If you do really poorly on one or two, it won’t adversely affect your grade. So for this reason, if you miss one, you won’t be able to make it up.

Blackboard: Log on to Blackboard for the syllabus and copies of the multiple handouts that I’ll be distributing in class. I’ll hand out paper copies of these handouts once in class, but if you’re absent that day, just get it online. I’ll also post the outlines for each play. I’ll also use Blackboard for any urgent announcements or reminders and for discussion of the works and the class, so be sure to check periodically. DO NOT use the email feature of Blackboard to get in touch with me; please use my regular email address (mark.bayer@utsa.edu) to reach me.

A Note on Plagiarism: The University of Texas at San Antonio defines “scholastic dishonesty” as including but not limited to, “cheating on a test or other class work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work in one’s own written work offered for credit), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing course work offered for credit). Should a student be accused of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member may initiate disciplinary proceedings” that could result in failure of the class or even expulsion from the university. The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers provides a detailed discussion of “Forms of Plagiarism” and “Other Issues,” including the impropriety of submitting the same paper to more than one instructor or in more than one class by the same instructor. If you have doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism, ask me. I am very good at catching cases of plagiarism, so don’t do it!

The Actors from the London Stage: In many ways, you’re fortunate to be taking the class during the fall because five renowned Shakespearean actors will be visiting UTSA for one week in mid October. Actors From the London Stage is an international touring theater organization based in London and at the University of Notre Dame. It combines the superb talents of professional actors on stage with rare opportunities for students to work with them in the classroom. Some of the actors will visit our class to discuss the very different experience of rehearsing and performing these plays for an audience as opposed to reading and studying them in an academic context. They will also be performing The Merchant of Venice at 7:30 on September 19, 21, and 22 in the Arts Building Recital Hall. This is a unique opportunity to see a play performed by professionals, so I strongly encourage you all to attend (and you’ll get extra credit).

The University of Texas at San Antonio Academic Honor Code
Preamble
The University of Texas at San Antonio community of past, present and future students, faculty, staff, and administrators share a commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge. We honor the traditions of our university by conducting ourselves with a steadfast duty to honor, courage, and virtue in all matters both public and private. By choosing integrity and responsibility, we promote personal growth, success, and lifelong learning for the advancement of ourselves, our university, and our community.
Honor Pledge
In support of the ideals of integrity, the students of the University of Texas at San Antonio pledge:

“As a UTSA Roadrunner I live with honor and integrity.”

Shared responsibility
The University of Texas at San Antonio community shares the responsibility and commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge and adheres to the UTSA Honor Code.

The Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success: The Tomás Rivera Center offers a variety of programs to meet students' individual learning assistance needs. The Tutoring Center provides tutoring for selected core curriculum courses. Academic Coaches are available for personal appointments. Information-packed Study Skills Workshops teach advanced techniques for studying, such as new ways to prepare for tests and how to remember information more effectively. All services are free to UTSA Students. They are located in UC 1.01.02.

Disability Services: Support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), MS 2.03.19. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 prior to starting classes to make arrangements, though they can contact the office at any time.

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CLASS SCHEDULE

(Bear in mind that these dates are subject to change. Although I try to keep to the schedule as best as I can, there will inevitably be slight modifications here and there, for reasons unforeseen)

Thurs, Aug. 30 - Introductory Remarks

Tues, Sept. 4 – Tues, Sept. 11: Introduction to Shakespeare’s London
READ: Andrew Gurr, “The Shakespearean Stage” (p. 79; p. 3281 in 1st edn)

Thurs, Sept. 13 – Thurs, Sept. 20: The Comical History of the Merchant of Venice
(p.1111; p. 1081 in 1st edn)

Tues, Sept. 25 – Thurs, Sept. 27: The Most Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet
(p. 897; p. 865 in 1st edn)
READ: Sonnets

Tues, Oct. 2 – Tues, Oct. 9: The Tragedy of King Richard II
(p. 973; p. 943 in 1st edn)

Thurs, Oct. 11 – Tues, Oct. 16: The Life of Henry the Fifth
(p. 1471; p. 1445 in 1st edition)
***PAPER DUE on Thurs, Oct. 11****

Thurs, Oct. 18: Review for the Midterm

Tues, Oct. 23 ***MIDTERM EXAMINATION***

Thurs, Oct. 25 – Tues, Oct. 30: The Tragedy of Richard the Third
(p. 541 ;p. 507 in 1st edn)
Thurs, Nov. 1: What is Tragedy?

Tues, Nov. 6 – Thurs, Nov. 15: The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
(p. 1683; p. 1659 in 1st edn)

Tues, Nov. 20 – Tues, Nov. 27: As You Like It (p. 1615; p. 1600 in 1st edn.)
Also READ Sonnet 20 (p. 1953; p. 1929 in 1st edn.)

Thurs, Nov. 29 – Tues, Dec. 4: Printing and Editing the Text
READ: Stephen Greenblatt, “The Dream of the Master Text” (p. 67; p. 65)

Thurs, Dec. 6: Final Review

Wed, Dec. 12, 10:30 -1 ***FINAL EXAMINATION***