

By

EN 406: Early Shakespeare
 MWF 10:00, ~~Liben 201~~
 2 HENRY 203

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Text: The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare, ed. Sylvan Barnet.

A bibliography of criticism and background information is provided in the back of your text. References unavailable in Sullivan Library are generally available at Hamilton Library, U.H.--Manoa. You may find a handy outline of the plays helpful. The emphasis in this course is on the plays themselves and your responses to them; reading in secondary sources is encouraged, but optional--with some exceptions.

Objectives: The overall objective of the course is to enable you to read, write, and talk about the plays with understanding and appreciation. You will be introduced to a selection of Shakespeare's early plays, ranging from light comedy to a major tragedy--Hamlet. You will become acquainted with Shakespeare's style, dramatic techniques, and forms as well as with the Elizabethan age. You will discover the variety of characters and themes; you will imagine the spectacle of the performance and hear the beauty of his poetry. Relevant background on the period, the theater, and dramatic conventions will be introduced to help you comprehend. The introduction in your text provides much useful information.

Requirements: regular attendance, punctuality, participation	10%
a reading journal	40%
three quizzes, 5 % each	15%
term paper	20%
final examination	15%

Class participation includes discussion, occasionally reading a role in a scene, explicating a sonnet or short speech, and other activities that may come along.

Reading Schedule: Please note that you are responsible for relevant material in the general introduction to your text as well as the introductions to each of the plays we study.

~~Sept 7~~
~~August 27~~: Sonnets 18, 29, 30, 55, 63, 73, 97, 116, 130.

~~Sept 13~~
~~August 29~~ - ~~Sept 8~~: Midsummer Night's Dream.

Sept. 10 - 19: Romeo and Juliet.

Sept. 19: First quiz; turn in journal for initial comments.

Sept. 22 - October 1: Richard II.

October 3 - October 10: Henry IV, Part 1.

October 15: Second Quiz

October 17 - October 24: The Merchant of Venice.

October 27 - November 3: As You Like It.

November 5 - 14: Julius Caesar.

November 14: Third Quiz.

November 17: Term Paper due.

November 17--December 5: Hamlet; review for final examination.

December 11, 10:30 -12:30: Final examination.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Get an overview of each play before you read it by referring to any handy outlines of Shakespeare's plays.

If at all possible, do your first reading of the play while listening to the tapes available at the audio-visual center. You may listen there, borrow copies of them, or purchase your own for a small fee. Try to visualize the spectacle as you read and/or listen.

For your second reading, go much more slowly, checking footnotes to be sure you have not misunderstood the language. After reading each scene, jot notes to yourself about characters, prominent images, themes, and the like.

Then write your journal entries, rereading particular scenes as necessary.

For each play, we will begin discussion with the basics:

groups of characters	patterns of imagery
strands of action	conventions
conflicts	staging
major character development	structure

However, this analysis will lead us to discussion of ethical and aesthetic issues, themes, and interpretations.

Reading Journals

A reading journal is a continuous record of your thinking about the literature assigned for this course. Since your journal cannot contain comments on every aspect of even a short passage, you should ~~not~~ write about what interests you, stirs your imagination or what puzzles you. Formulate your own questions and then try to answer them. Why did such-and-such character react to another in that way? What is the real conflict between them? Why does the story or play have to end in this particular way? —Included in this syllabus are questions that might be asked of any story or play. If you cannot formulate your own questions, then begin with one or more of these and soon these questions will lead to answers that move you into even deeper questions.

The purpose in keeping such a journal is to give form to your thinking. Reading literature cannot be a passive activity like watching television. You (and the author) must activate your imagination, your reasoning powers. Until you write down your thoughts, they are often circular or repetitious. Your response to the literature can be vague and/or purely emotional. The process of writing forces you to articulate what you think and feel, much as writing the story or poem or play expresses what the writer thinks and feels about his or her subject. Most of us are not poets because we have never tried to express our thoughts and feelings in ways that will stimulate other people to a vicarious and aesthetic experience. A vicarious experience suggests that reading literature leads to second-hand experience—but an experience that is nonetheless real. The aesthetic experience, however, is firsthand and yours alone. You can share that aesthetic experience in journal writing and class discussion.

Journal writing will do many other things for you. It will prepare you to write for quizzes, mid-terms, and final examinations; it will involve you more deeply in the reading and the class discussion; and it will make most of your other writing more fluent. It should lead you eventually into drafts for a term paper.

Journals need not be typed or revised. You can scratch out, even misspell if you must. Just remember that the journal must be legible; if I can't read it, you have wasted your time. The journal does need to be thoughtful, does need to develop ~~in~~ your response in some detail. Your journal grade will take into consideration the depth and detail of your thinking, the sensitivity of your responses, and your ability to put all this into language. There is no point in repeating what the editor, the class, or some critic says about the literature. Write what you think.

Here are possibilities—

Write down some answer(s) to questions you've raised. (What's the basic conflict here? What makes me sympathize with the villain?)

Compare and contrast two characters or two settings.

Trace a motif or set of images running through the story or play—darkness, paradox, revenge, greed, ambition, goals, values, what?

Disagree with some comment made in class and explain why you disagree.

Describe how the character changes in the process of the story.

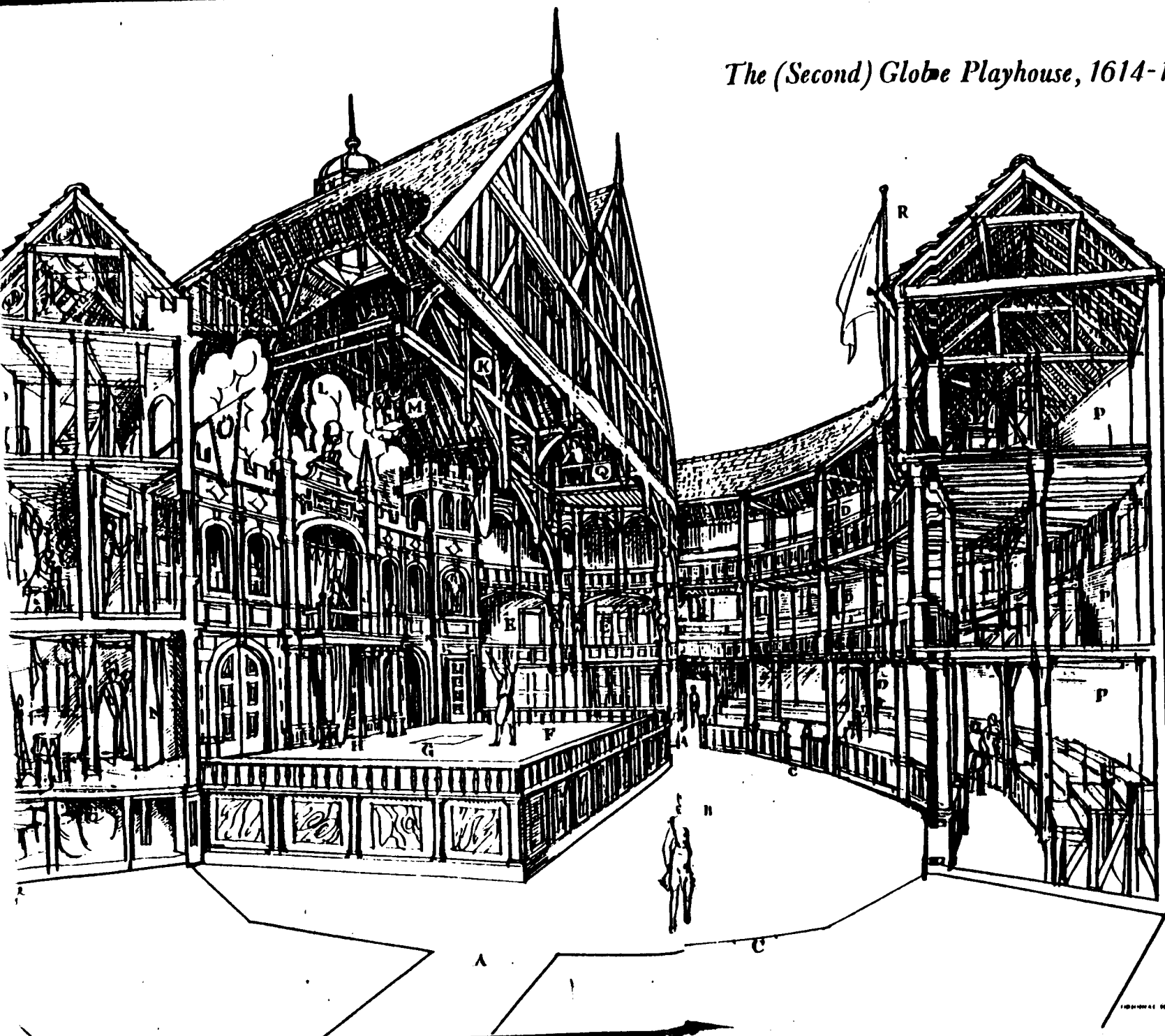
Identify ways in which characters differ in their speech.

Define shifts in points of view.

See also separate sheet.

Journals due for first comment any time after the second week of class, but no later Feb. 10 for Shakespeare class or Feb. 17 for short story and novel class. If you are in doubt about what you are doing, let me react quickly to one of your entries even before the second week is up.

The (Second) Globe Playhouse, 1614-1644.



Key.

- AA. Main entrances to auditorium.
- B. Yard for standing spectators.
- CC. Entrances to lowest gallery.
- DD. Entrances to staircase leading to upper galleries.
- EE. "Gentlemen's Rooms."
- F. The stage.
- G. The stage trap (leading from the "Hell" beneath the stage).
- H. Contained space for "discovery" scenes.
- J. Upper stage.
- K. The "Heavens" (This area probably often covered across with a stretched canopy painted to represent the sky.)
- L. Backing painted with clouds. A shutter is here shown open to allow a god's throne to travel forward. (c.f. "Cymbeline," Act V. sc. II.)
- M. The throne about to descend to the stage.
- N. Backstage area (or "living-house").
- O. Wardrobe and dressing-rooms.
- P. Spectator galleries.
- Q. "Fly" gallery in the Heavens.
- R. Playhouse flag (suspended from trap leading of staircase, and raised to denote performance days).

The second Globe Theatre, built in 1613 after a fire had destroyed the first Globe during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. This building generally resembled its predecessor in the size of the stage and the "yard" for spectators, the location of stage doors and of a contained area backstage for discovery scenes, etc. The upper acting station in this second Globe Theatre may, however, have been somewhat more elaborate than on the first Globe where spectators often sat above the stage (see p. 21). In neither theatre was the upper acting station used extensively for dramatic presentation.