Course Objectives: This class examines the plays of Shakespeare in context: that is political, social, cultural contexts, as well as the context of the theater, entertainment, and performance world that Shakespeare inhabited and so richly incorporated into his plays. We are interested in interrogating and understanding the ideas of theater, stage, entertainment and performance in multiple ways—from the physical realities of the Globe Theater, to the actors, the audience, the meaning of entertainment, and the “performance” of an execution, for example, as well as the influence of other entertainments such as dancing, singing, folk and court entertainments to traveling performers like mountebanks on Shakespeare’s plays. Our goals are to become stronger critical readers of Shakespeare, and the period in which he wrote as well as to strengthen our analytical discussion and writing skills. One of our most important goals is to be inquisitive, to make a study of inquiry and ask as many questions as possible about Shakespeare, his time, his work, and what he is inviting us to think about.

Week 1  Sept 6  Introduction
8  The English Renaissance/Shakespeare’s life, theater and entertainment

Week 2  13  Theater and entertainments cont’d.
**History Plays --Henry IV, I  Response for H4, I**
15  *Henry IV*

Week 3  20  *Henry IV*
Reading: Gurr: “Companies,” 55-65
22  *Henry IV*
Reading: Classes, “Women by Male Writers”

Week 4  27  *Richard III. Response for R3*
Readings: Classes, “Machiavelli and Augustine”
29  *Richard/ Gurr: “The Playhouses,” 139-45*
Week 5  Oct  4  Richard

Oct  6  Richard

Week 6  11  Richard / Comedy-- As You Like It
Response for AYLI

13  AYLI/ Readings: Cross-dressing, Courtier on gender

Week 7  18  AYLI / Readings: Marlowe/Raleigh poems
Gurr: “Audience”: 258—268; 275-285

Critical Essay due

20  AYLI

Week 8  25  Much Ado About Nothing
Response for Much

27  Much Ado

Week 9  Nov  1  Music and Dance in Shakespeare

3  Much Ado, Gurr: “The Staging”—209-29

Week 10  8  Much Ado
Tragedy/ Hamlet Response for Hamlet

10  Hamlet

Week 11  15  Hamlet Gurr: “The Players” – 100-105; 113-136

17  Hamlet

Week 12  22  Hamlet

24  Thanksgiving

Week 13  29  Hamlet

Dec  1  Hamlet/ Problem Plays/ Measure for Measure
Response for Measure

Week 14  6  Measure
Critical Essay Due

Week 15
13 No class
15 Measure

Recap, summary. What did we learn?

Texts:
Books are in the NYU Bookstore.
Selected readings and essays posted on Classes

Requirements:

**Readings:** Please have the entire text read on the first day we will discuss and always come to class with the book or reading materials in hand.

**Written Responses:** On the first day that we begin to discuss a play, please come to class with a written response for each play we read. The responses need to be on the entire play; if the response does not include questions/ideas on the whole play, I cannot accept it. Responses should be 2 pages long, typed; the responses will take the form of five short comments/paragraphs. In writing the comments you can raise points, ideas, questions, concerns, and issues that have inspired, puzzled, and intrigued you during your reading of the play and that you think we should discuss. You want to avoid writing comments that are too general or too vague. In order to make your comments specific, you will want to quote from the text as an illustration of the points you are trying to make.

I suggest that you read the texts on your own to see what inspires you. However, if you use any source--from Wikipedia or a scholarly text--you must list those sources at the end of the response.

Please write down in your notebooks five main points from the Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage* for discussion in class. You do not need to hand these in, but you must be prepared to share these ideas in class for our discussion.

**Essays:** Write two critical essays of 5 full pages on a topic of your choice. I recommend that one of your essays be about the play in which you perform. You are not required to do research for these essays, but you are free to do so if you wish. With all papers and, of course, with research essays you must be scrupulous about documentation. I cannot emphasize this more strongly. You will need to follow a style
sheet so that the documentation is correct. I cannot tolerate plagiarism of any kind—this will result in a failure for the class. See Gallatin’s statement on plagiarism below and link for further information.

Regarding sources: you must use scholarly sources. You could start with Wikipedia, for example, get general information, and also get further sources from them. You can then find the articles on JSTOR, and PROJECT MUSE—which are collections of academic essays on line. You can access this through Bobcat, under databases. Then you can do a search regarding your subject. Of course, there are always books and the library! Let’s not forget about books—you should consult at least one book. You can also do a Google Book search.

**Scene Performance:** Participate in performing a scene from one of the plays we are reading. There will be large, medium, and small roles to accommodate everyone’s comfort levels. I expect you all to take this very seriously and to your best to memorize lines, and to make the scene a success. You will meet with your group to plan and discuss the scene and the individual characters. I would like to see you all do a bit of research on the play you are in and your character to get a fuller understanding of the scene.

I will give you a sheet with the scenes we will perform, so that you can note your first three choices for play and role.

******On the day of the scene, you must submit in a **one-page discussion** of the main points of the scene and your character, your preparation process, as well as a **bibliography** of any sources used.

**Class Discussion:** Class discussion is crucial to the class and a major part of the final grade.

*All of the above requirements must be completed in order to pass the course.*

**Grades**
Only the essays receive letter grades, but all of the requirements figure into the final grade which is formulated at 60% for the papers and the other 40% for the other requirements: responses, scene performance and write-up, and class participation.

**Cell Phones/Computers**
Please no computers or electronic devices of any kind are allowed in the classroom. If you need to use a laptop, please talk to me about this. Please always come to class with the books we are reading.

**Revisions**
You are able to revise your essays, but you will have only 2 weeks to do so after we have discussed the revision. Remember also that a grade can change only if the essay has been revised in a substantial way. Please consult Revision Guidelines on classes.

**Documentation**

With all your work, you must be scrupulous about documenting all your sources—this means any research conducted for paper or for responses. Please consult a proper guide for proper documentation form. Complete honesty with regard to the presentation of your work is crucial. Plagiarism is not only a foolish, immoral, and illegal act, it also violates the bond we all form as members of this class. The following is Gallatin’s statement on academic integrity.

**Gallatin Academic Integrity Statement**

*Academic Integrity*

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html) for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

**Absences**

Please always come to class on time and never leave early. Please speak to me if it is necessary to do this. Please know that more than two absences jeopardizes your grade.

Please know that I am here to help you with any problems. If you have any issues please come and speak to me right away so that I know how best to help you.

To me the classroom is a learning community in which teachers and students come together in mutual respect to learn as much as possible from each other. In such an environment teachers are students and students are teachers. I look forward to a wonderful semester together in which we learn a great deal and have as much fun as possible.