

Final Project, Option 3 Creative Project

Due: May 5, 2014 (but see below for other deadlines)

For this final project option, you will make a creative project dealing with Shakespeare. You may use performance, film, props, costumes, food—really, anything you want to use to do something creative with Shakespeare's writings (pending instructor approval, of course). **By April 23rd**, you must tell your instructor 1) that you are choosing this option and 2) what you intend to do. **The catch** here is that you are responsible not just for the project, but for deciding how it will be assessed.

Form and format: Because of this assignment's creative component, the form and format are deliberately vague. You are free to "range within the zodiac of your own wit," in Sir Philip Sidney's words. Some examples of what's possible include: an in-class performance of a scene or scenes; a film production or adaptation of a scene; a musical version of something from Shakespeare; some kind of mashup or parody; a piece of artwork that draws on Shakespeare's works somehow; *Othello* with zombies; a Shakespeare book like you'd find at Urban Outfitters. **Don't feel restricted to this list, however.** The sky is the limit here—pending instructor approval, of course. If your project involves using class time (e.g., for film screening), we will agree on a time during the last two weeks of class.

Goal: The goal of this assignment is for your creative work to meditate on, respond to, think about, make new, adapt, or simply perform the works of Shakespeare, in creative ways that *tell us something new about Shakespeare*. Interpret this last part broadly, since "something new" could include a surprising amount of stuff. For instance, an in-class performance could lead us to ask new questions about a scene that we think we have a grasp on. A film adaptation could bring new perspectives to old texts in such a way that we learn something about Shakespeare and ourselves. And so on, as long as you are thinking rigorously about Shakespeare in and through your project.

Group work: For this assignment, you are free to work with a group of classmates. This will make possible a wider range of creative options, and presumably it will make your creative project better. But choose wisely: you need to make sure that you share a group with people you trust to complete their part of the work. Like the project itself, you must receive instructor approval to form your group officially. You may not change groups after April 28th.

Assessment plan: As part of the project, you must create the standards by which your project will be assessed and report on your work after its completion. First, *before the project is completed*, you must create a set of goals or learning outcomes, some kind of rubric for assessing how well you met the goals, and a brief explanation of why you chose the project you did. Be sure to ask yourself what components of the project need assessing. (For example, an in-class performance might include such specifics as line memorization and larger elements such as dramatic conceptualization.) This document must be sent to your instructor via email by **April 28th**. If you're working as a group, you only need to submit one such document, but it needs to account for all of the group's contributions (that is, it needs to specify how different members of the group will be assessed for their contributions, even if each member will be assessed the same way).

Final report: *After the project is completed on or before May 5, you must assess your own performance based on the assessment model you designed. (Hence, when you create the assessment document you should design it with your own use in mind.) You must also write a two-page, double-spaced report on the project as a whole. The report should include:*

- 1.) Reflection on the project's conceptualization, especially the way it constitutes a creative use of or response to Shakespeare's writings.
- 2.) Reflection on the completed project (be it performance, artwork, or otherwise).
- 3.) Reflection on the assessment process, specifically why you chose the assessment criteria you did and why you assessed yourself the way you did.
- 4.) Explanation of any group-work, including a detailed statement of your own contributions to the group.

You must send both documents (assessment and report) as separate files to your instructor via email by **May 12**. Note that all members of a group must submit both documents individually—failure to do so will result in an F on the assignment, even if you did a Picasso-caliber painting of Desdemona.

Grade: The grade for this assignment is based on several criteria, all of which ensure the grade's fairness. Of course, each of the project components will be assessed individually: your self-assessment parameters must be thoughtful and rigorous in how they judge your creative project. The project itself must follow those parameters well. Your own self-assessment must be realistic and honest. And your final report must provide a thoughtful meta-commentary on the project as a whole. Overall, therefore, the main criterion for the grade is the degree to which your self-assessment parameters, the project itself, your self-assessment, and your final report work in harmonious rigor.

For the written sections of the project, a very successful paper will:

- be properly formatted
- be free of grammatical errors and stylistic unclarity
- address the central questions of the assignment clearly and cogently
- be thoughtfully organized into a paragraph structure
- have paragraphs that contain discernible topics, transitions, and a cogent structure
- marshal appropriate evidence and analysis to advance the thesis
- cite all sources appropriately

Do not hesitate to contact me with questions or problems—especially in the early stages of writing, when you are choosing and researching a topic. Past students have described paper consultations with me as "soul-searching," "I wept with pure gratitude all winter break," and "he's a nice guy."