

ENG 427— Shakespeare & Animals —FALL 2025: UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
Tuesday & Thursday; 8 am-9:15 am

Professor: Raul Martin IV (he/him/his)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 am-noon and by appointment (zoom / office)

Office: 4th Floor Ashe Lecturer Room **Email:** rxm1934@Miami.edu

When was the last time you visited a fantastical forest realm filled with fairies and magical creatures? Never? Well, Shakespeare has a play for you! In *Shakespeare & Animals*, we will review four Shakespeare plays through an animal lens starting with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*AMND hereafter*) and continuing with *The Tempest*, *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Of these four plays we will ask *where animals are present or absent from the text? How are the animal images, metaphors, actual representations used in the play? Why might Shakespeare rely upon animal representations in his plays? What do they add? Take away? Are these texts comprehensible without the animals therein?* By taking an animal studies lens to Shakespeare, we will grapple with these questions and work toward an understanding of Shakespeare that builds from some historical context on the influences he took liberty with as he wrote in poisonous asps, buzzing flies, humorous donkeys, and watchdogs. Overall, reading the nonhuman animal in Shakespeare's plays connects a modern readership to how Shakespeare's England lived quite close in proximity to the animal not just spatially in everyday life but also in thought and art as we will learn from these four plays.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will:

- Practice reading engagement strategies for Shakespeare modeled in first class meeting.
- Explore UM's archival material related to Shakespeare.
- Immerse yourself in Shakespeare's works through dramatized readings (some outside!).
- Take a position on the representation of animals or the environment in Shakespeare's play(s).
- Identify and investigate animal representations in Shakespeare's plays.
- Consider questions on how animal representation functioned in Shakespeare's England.

Required Texts (Provided Digitally)

All texts for this course will live in your Blackboard course shell as accessible live internet links (Internet Archive). Should you prefer a physical book, I encourage you to borrow copies (of any available edition) from Richter Library or any public library.

Course Schedule

8/19, Tuesday: Introductions all around. Model reading engagement strategies for reading Shakespeare.

8/21, Thursday: *AMND*, Act I. Court of Athens/In-Class. **Journal 1 Assigned.**

8/26, Tuesday: *AMND*, Act II: Woods/Gifford Arboretum.

8/28, Thursday: *AMND*, Act III: Woods/Gifford Arboretum

9/2, Tuesday: *AMND*, Act IV: Woods/Gifford Arboretum

9/4, Thursday: *AMND*, Act V: Court of Athens/In-Class

9/9, Tuesday: Conversation about *AMND* and animals. **Journal 1 Due.**

9/11, Thursday: Visit Kislak Center / Special Collections.¹ *Journal 1 Returned. Journal 2 Assigned.*

9/16, Tuesday: *The Tempest*, Act I.

9/18, Thursday: *The Tempest*, Act II.

9/23, Tuesday: *The Tempest*, Act III.

9/25, Thursday: *The Tempest*, Act IV.

9/31, Tuesday: *The Tempest*, Act V.

10/2, Thursday: Conversation about *The Tempest* and animals. **Journal 2 Due.**

10/7, Tuesday: [Watch Laurie Shannon's talk at Chicago Humanities titled "Shakespeare's Beasts."](#)
Journal 2 Returned. Journal 3 Assigned.

10/9, Thursday: Conversation over Shannon's talk. **Journal 3 Due. Final Paper Assigned.**

10/14, Tuesday: *Othello*, Act I.

10/16, Thursday: *Othello*, Act II.

10/21, Tuesday: *Othello*, Act III.

10/23, Thursday: *Othello*, Act IV.

10/28, Tuesday: *Othello*, Act V.

10/30, Thursday: Conversation about *Othello* and animals.

11/4, Tuesday: *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I.

11/6, Thursday: *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act II.

11/11, Tuesday: *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III.

11/13, Thursday: *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV.

11/18, Tuesday: *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act V.

11/20, Thursday: Final discussion.

Holiday Break

12/1, Monday – **Final Portfolio Due** – 3 Edited Journal Entries, Final Paper, Brief Reflection.

¹ Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-Upon Avon (Travel Postcards) Merrick Collection, Box 85.
Manuscript: Shakespeare's Dramatic Artistry, Artifice and Manuscript: Shakespeare Worked for the Burbages, and Manuscript: The Story of King Leir [sic] in Pre-Shakespearean Literature, in the William Perdue Halstead Papers, Box 1,2.

Writing Assignments

Your writing assignments fall into three categories: journal, brief reflection, final paper.

- Journal entries should be 100-250 words. I will provide feedback that improves your writing and thinking on the topics covered. My hope is that these journals serve as regular writing practice that engender in-class participation and out-of-class thought and engagement.
- The final research paper (10-15 pages) may take the form of a conference style paper OR digital essay.
- The brief reflection is your chance to share what you learned from the course with me. What activities did you enjoy most? How might the course have been better?

Final Portfolio

The final portfolio must include three edited journal entries, the final paper (or link to digital essay), and your brief reflection. I will share an example of the format to submit this in to earn the full five percent.

Grade Evaluation:

15% Class Participation

30% Journal Entries

50% Second Paper

5% Final Portfolio

Attendance and Lateness

Students are expected to attend class. In class, we will engage with our readings and complete activities. Should you miss class it is up to you to complete an alternate writing assignment that I will share with you through email. Failing to complete this alternate assignment without extraordinary cause will impact your final class participation percentage. I understand lateness is not usually planned, but this class is. I must start class on time or at the latest five minutes after official start time. If you are late, I will stop the lecture or discussion to say hello to you.

Participation

You may be wondering, “ Fifteen percent is a large percentage of my grade just for class participation.” Let me explain how to earn the full 15%: engage in discussion

- Discussion: Come to class with at least one inquiry on the reading passage. Our conversation will cover these first impressions and inquiries to engender class discussion each day that we read Shakespeare.

Tech in Classroom

Alas! No technology! Ever! Joking... I welcome luddites and digital gurus into the classroom without reservation. Use what you are most comfortable with. All I ask is that you do not use technology that will distract you from attending to the conversations we will have and the learning we will experience together. If you find it difficult to concentrate on our discussions and have technology a tap away, I encourage you to not bring it to class. In general, I trust you will make the choice that fosters the learning environment you expect to have at the University.

Academic Integrity

This course will observe the University of Miami Student **Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policy** as explained on the [Honor Council page](#). Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code and failure to credit ideas or words that are not your own (including computer-generated paraphrase) is a form of plagiarism and will be treated seriously. Students are expected to document, acknowledge, and cite appropriately even in drafts or partial assignments.

Position on AI (language directly from [\(PETAL\)](#))

If you use AI tools in any part of your work, you are responsible for the final product of that work, both academically and in the workforce. We will survey case studies of AI usage and inquire upon its limitations as well as complete an in-class survey of current usage and what is acceptable usage for this class.

Virtual Class Meetings

Should we need to have class on Zoom, I will share a Zoom link with the class at least 24 hours before our scheduled meeting period. We will follow the schedule and policies in Zoom as if we were on campus with a few modifications. I will announce to the class and ask for verbal permission should we need to record the class meeting for students who cannot attend. There will be no unauthorized recording of our meetings. Do not jump on the zoom call without checking your surrounding area and ensuring it is clear of items you would not bring to class with you.

WORKING GUIDELINES

- All changes to the syllabus will be provided to the students in writing before the implementation of the change.
- Students' Responsibility: This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the rules, policies, regulations, and ethical standards of The University of Miami as those contained in the current UM Catalog and schedule of classes.
- Instructor's Responsibility: In my pedagogy, I will be straightforward and honest with students, offering a legitimate reason for delays and alterations to the syllabus, assignment, or schedule. I will be professional and cordial in personal interactions; I will not embarrass or disparage you on discussion forums and in-person. I will be positive and encourage students, as I would like to commend you for what you know, not penalize you for what you do not.

Accessibility and Accommodations

Please let me know if you need any accommodations as documented by the Office of Disability Services (ODS): "The Office of Disability Services (ODS) provides academic accommodations and support to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in the opportunities available at the University of Miami" (<http://umarc.miami.edu/arc/ODS.html>). If you need accommodations but do not yet have them documented, please contact ODS at (305) 284-2374.

Well-Being Resources and Support

As you complete your coursework, consider how you can maintain your health and well-being as a top priority. To help you become familiar with the many programs and services available on campus, review the information collected on the Division of Student Affairs Student Well-Being and Resiliency website available at miami.edu/well-being. Please reach out to me or any of the resources listed on that site if you need assistance or support throughout the semester.

[Academic Resource Center \(language from University of Miami's site, Camner Center for Academic Resources\)](#)

The Camner Center for Academic Resources at the University of Miami offers a multitude of resources for every constituent of the University of Miami community: students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators. Our goal is to provide resources to help manage success and advance potential. The Camner Center for Academic Resources hosts the services listed below. Click the underlined text to visit the respective service site(s) to learn more or make an appointment.

[Tutoring Services](#)

The Peer Tutoring Program at the Camner Center for Academic Resources offers University of Miami students support in achieving their academic goals. The Peer Tutoring Program currently has over 100 peer tutors knowledgeable in various subjects, both undergraduate and graduate, working to help fellow students reach their academic goals

[Learning Specialist](#)

The Learning Specialist works one-on-one with students to develop college study skills and time management to achieve academic success.

Office of Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is the primary university office responsible for the coordination of auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities.

Independent Learning Initiative

The Independent Learning Initiative is an academic support program that provides structure, instruction, and monitoring for students who need additional guidance during the college experience.

Counseling Center

Along with excitement and new opportunities, college can bring on a new host of challenges and stressors that can interfere with academic success. Our mission is to provide high quality services for students from all backgrounds. From individual counseling to online resources, the Counseling Center is here for you. Click the underlined text above to visit their site to learn more or make an appointment.

Title IX and Mandatory Reporting Status

Click this link above to visit the University of Miami Title IX site to report sexual misconduct and child maltreatment. You may visit the Title IX site and learn more about Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, and Liaisons [here](#).

“Title IX is a federal civil rights law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. This law protects people (students, employees, and others) from discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Covered Persons at educational institutions are protected by Title IX — regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, part- or full-time status, disability, race, or national origin — in all aspects of the institution’s educational programs and activities.”

Journals

Journal entries should be 100-250 words. I will provide feedback that improves your writing and thinking on the topics covered. My hope is that these journals serve as regular writing and practice that engender in-class participation and out-of-class engagement with our course materials and theme.

1. Journal One

What role does setting and/or nonhuman characters play in AMND? Why do you think this is significant? Does its use of setting remind you of any other fictional tale or film you know of? How so?

2. Journal Two

Option One: Reflect on your experience reviewing Shakespeare related materials at the Kislak Center. What came to mind when you reviewed the Halstead manuscripts? And the post-cards from Stafford Upon Avon? What artifact(s) did you connect with most?

Option Two: How does *The Tempest* portray dogs? Why do you think this is significant to understanding the play and/or how Shakespeare's England perceived dogs?

3. Journal Three

Write a reflection on Laurie Shannon's talk, answering "How does Shannon's argument challenge or support how I see animals in Shakespeare?" Also, you might consider the historical context that Shannon presents during her talk to review or extend any one of your particular readings of Shakespeare's plays so far.

Final Writing Project

Write a 5–8-page research paper to be delivered as a conference reading, a digital essay format, or a slide deck visual essay. We may make time to share these. We can adjust the syllabus should anyone want to share their work. Everyone is certainly welcome to. This essay will require secondary sources.

I support you using a format you are familiar with but challenge you to practice something you see yourself doing again in the future. Select one of the following modes of presentation:

- 1. Conference Readings:** Write your paper for a listening audience, meaning be emphatic with your style and detailed with your scene descriptions.
- 2. Digital Essay:** You may utilize digital humanities tools like GitHub to create a digital home for your essay and ideas. Also, Adobe Express has browser ware capabilities you can use as part of your UM digital package.
- 3. Slide Deck:** A google or Microsoft PowerPoint slide deck is an option, too.

Single-Point Rubric²:

Concerns <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	Criteria <i>Strategies for Writing</i>	Advanced <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>
	Clarity: The central purpose of the student’s work is clear, and ideas are almost always focused on a way that supports the thesis. Relevant details illustrate the author’s ideas.	
	Organization: Information and ideas are presented in a logical sequence which is followed by The reader/viewer with little or no difficulty.	
	Mechanics: The work is only slightly interrupted by spelling and/or grammatical errors.	

Pre-writing Questions:

- 1) What mode of writing and presentation will have the most impact on my audience and draw attention to the rhetorical situation I seek to explore?

² Single-Point Rubric Credit to NC State University Teaching Resources, “Rubric Best Practices, Examples, and Templates.” Accessed 28 February 2025. https://teaching-resources.deltanctu.edu/rubric_best-practices-examples-templates/.