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**Office: Webb 506**

**Love and Courtship in the Shakespearean Imagination**

**Core Shakespeare Course, Spring term 2017**

### **Detailed Course Syllabus**

Shakespeare remains one of our most challenging and inspiring poets of the human, especially with respect to the complex range of human emotions which fall under the elusive category of “love”. In this course we will explore Shakespeare’s poetic-dramatic treatment of love and courtship across his poetic and dramatic oeuvre, while focusing on key poems and plays in the Shakespearean corpus. We will attempt to trace Shakespeare’s evolving thought about romantic love and its rhetorical-poetic praxis, as it relates to numerous literary, social, and religious conventions about love, courtship and marriage in the early modern period. Our aim will be to understand not only how Shakespeare conceptualizes love in the human-social sphere, but more importantly how he translates such conceptualizations into the matter for complex dramatic and poetic art.

Primary texts: The course will focus on the close textual reading and analysis of the following texts: “Venus and Adonis” and “A Lover’s Complaint”, a selection of sonnets, and the following plays: *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. \* It is advisable to get hold of copies of the plays in advance of the course (buying online through websites like bookdespository.com is the cheapest and quickest option). The recommended edition is the Shakespeare Arden series. However, cheaper editions (which are less heavily annotated) are also available either through Penguin, the Shakespeare Folger Library, or similar publications. In any case, it is compulsory to read the plays before they are discussed in class and always to have a text in class for reference.

Requirements: Attendance in the course is compulsory (as per university regulations, students who fail to attend class may be penalized accordingly). There will be a midterm exam (worth 30%) and a final exam (worth 70%).

## **Class schedule**

13.3 – Introduction: Shakespeare in love?

16.3 – Introduction: The language and conventions of Elizabethan courtship

20.3 – Introduction: Courtly love and the literary tradition, from Ovid to Petrarch

23.3 – Introduction: Courtly love and the literary tradition, from Wyatt to Shakespeare

27. 3 – Shakespeare and the erotic love lyric: a reading of ‘Venus and Adonis’

30.3 – Shakespeare and the erotic love lyric: a reading of ‘Venus and Adonis’

## **Part 1: The tragicomedy of young love**

3.4 – The ‘beautiful youth’ sequence of the sonnets (select sonnets assigned)

## **PESSACH BREAK**

20.4 – The ‘beautiful youth’ sequence of the sonnets (select sonnets assigned)

24.4 – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* \* Holocaust Memorial Day (changes to schedule may occur)

27.4 – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

4.5 – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

8.5 – *Romeo and Juliet*

11.5 – *Romeo and Juliet*

**12.5 – Midterm exam Moed Alef (this falls on a Friday) – 9:00am-11:00am**

**\* Exam will cover the material of up to and including *MSND***

15.5 – *Romeo and Juliet*

## **Part 2: Labouring in Love’s wit**

18.5 – A reading of ‘A Lover’s Complaint’

22.5 – *Much Ado About Nothing*

**25.5 – No class \* Yom HaStudent**

29. 5 – *Much Ado About Nothing*

1.6 – *Much Ado About Nothing*

5.6 – Passionate shepherds and the pastoral mode (discussion of assigned poems)

8.6 – *As You Like It*

9.6 – **Midterm exam Moed Bet (this falls on a Friday) – 9:00am-11:00am**

12.6 – *As You Like It*

15.6 – *As You Like It*

### **Part 3: Rethinking Adult Love**

19.6 – A reading in the ‘Dark Lady’ sequence of the sonnets

22.6 – *Antony and Cleopatra*

26.6 – *Antony and Cleopatra*

29.6 – *Antony and Cleopatra*