2017

ENGL 487: English Capstone Experience— A Peer Review of Teaching Benchmark Portfolio

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ENGL 487: English Capstone Experience
A Peer Review of Teaching Benchmark Portfolio

Kelly Stage, Assistant Professor
English Department

Spring 2017

Reflecting on Reflecting

“David Garrick rehearsing.” By Thomas Rowlandson. LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library. ART Box R883 no. 5. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License
Abstract:
This portfolio documents the teaching objectives, strategies, and assessments for a capstone course in the English major at UNL. As the English Studies Capstone and as an ACE (Achievement-Centered Education) 10 course at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, English 487 must help students meet key outcomes for the department and the University, but it also allows flexibility and creativity in the methods chosen to meet these requirements and structure the course. This portfolio thereby reflects on the intellectual labor of designing a particular version of these requirements and on guiding students through the design. The assessments included here are measuring traditional objectives for an English literature seminar while also including less easily assessed work: reflection and intellectual labor by our students. In many ways, this portfolio represents a level of meta-process: the instructor here reflects on her objectives and work, which are deeply connected to tracking students’ reflection on, and understanding of, their own learning. At the same time, I needed to study their new work analyzing texts, writing creatively and critically, and organizing information. Productively bringing a final, major project and a reflective portfolio together is the crux of the English 487 course. Here I document the methods I used attempting to fulfill the course’s mission and what I learned about my course design by studying that process.

Keywords: English, Shakespeare, Capstone, Reflection, Literary Criticism, Creative
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I. **Objective of the Peer Review Course Portfolio**

My objective for this course portfolio is to assess the effectiveness of teaching in English 487. The goals for this course are a bit different than for many courses in the English major, in which we may be trying to teach students to master a particular body of work or a particular set of skills. As an ACE 10 course, English 487 requires that students “Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.” I am interested in how well the course achieves these goals and, as well, how well the course works as a part of the English major. In English 487, students have two major tasks: to produce a capstone portfolio—which is a collection of and reflection on work from throughout the student’s career—and they are to write a new major paper (or equivalent project) that is researched and completed during the course. This paper then is added to the portfolio. With these requirements in mind, much of my emphasis in the course has been on students’ engagement with their own work and participation in their own intellectual assessment. This has to do with the work they produce in the course, the skills they showcase in their intermediate assignments and analysis, and their active reflections. In examining their achievements in key areas of the course, I assess the ways that the course design helps students synthesize their reflection on their work, their new project, and their articulation of what the English major has helped them do.

II. **Description of the Course**

My version of English 487 was built around two main course goals: one, on generating the portfolio and thinking through the students’ full experience as English majors; and two, on producing a new, major paper related to the course’s shared topic: Shakespeare.

The portfolio is the key document for the course. Its construction is delicate, as students must think carefully about what work they want to use to tell their story. The first few weeks of the course are devoted to active reflection—beginning widely with what it means to study the humanities and how our culture thinks about the humanities, to much more narrowly thinking about students’ individual experiences and work. Students begin compiling their portfolio and writing reflectively about their past work in this first area of the course.

The portfolio also must include a new, major piece of writing (whether creative or critical) and the second area of the course, in my case a content module, feeds this major project. Shakespeare was my course’s content topic and thereby the springboard for the major papers/projects in the course. To be as flexible as possible, the course was truly about exploring “Shakespeare(s)” and not just Shakespeare. That is to say, we learned about what Shakespeare has meant in different historical moments, in different cultural contexts, in different mediums, and in the hands of different interpreters and adapters. Students were also given the opportunity to work creatively through their own adaptations and critical re-imaginings of Shakespeare and his texts. To make sure students were comfortable with Shakespeare as a basic beginning, the course focused on two of Shakespeare’s plays, using the base texts as primers for reading and thinking through early modern Shakespeare (i.e. Shakespeare as a poet of the 16th and 17th centuries). From there, I designed the content module of the course to work through engagement with Shakespeare in various contexts: 18th century Shakespearean revival, editing of Shakespeare and literary Shakespeare as a cultural idea,
theater history of Shakespeare in England and the US, Shakespeare and race, etc. This was not to glorify Shakespeare, but to raise the question of what engaging with a cultural touchstone in different times, contexts, and mediums can show us. Because Shakespeare is also a key figure in most students’ high school experiences, I could link the scholarly content portion of the course to reflection and ask them to use their high school (or even, in some cases lack of high school experience) with Shakespeare to think about their development as college English students, and continue the course theme of reflection. (See Appendix for the course syllabus)

A) Course Goals

As stated in the syllabus, I had the following key objectives for students:

1) Students will reflect meaningfully on work they have done in their major and compose new writing that analyzes their experiences.

2) Students will collect their old and new work together in a large-scale portfolio project to demonstrate a narrative of their major experience.

3) Students will engage primary texts of Shakespeare and relevant critical discussions of primary texts.

4) Students will engage revisions, adaptations, or remakings of Shakespeare and critically analyze the relationship of Shakespeare to other cultural forms, artistic mediums, or social developments.

5) Students will produce major writing that illustrates their ability to read texts closely as well as to incorporate critical or creative work and research in a sustained project.

B) Context

English 487 is the Senior Capstone course for the English Major in the College of Arts and Sciences at UNL. (See Appendix for the English Department Aims and Scopes document.) The basic requirements of the course are that students engage in a reflective and rigorous semester in which they will look back on their career in the English department and produce a new, major project. They are tasked with building a portfolio of their work, which will include the course’s major project and a reflective introduction that addresses the students’ overall experience in the major. The course is meant to serve as a “summation” and so, it should bring together all of the kinds of work that we do in the English department: active discussion in the classroom, collaboration, substantial writing, and research work. It must allow students who are involved in any of our major tracks (literature, composition and rhetoric, or creative writing) to have an active and productive engagement with the course subject.

Together, the students and professor should examine how the acts of reading and writing texts (in all of that word’s expansive applications), bring people together through communication, aesthetic expression, artistic appreciation, and imaginative reasoning. We should be able to understand, analyze, and reflect upon the way creative platforms and textual study allows for diverse dialogues, new engagements, and bringing our past and present into new understanding. The capstone should give an opportunity for students to see the way they have engaged and fulfilled the objectives of the English major. More subjectively, it should give students a chance to think about what they have learned and how they have changed over their time in the major. The final portfolio is their platform for articulating their experience in a lasting and summative document.
C) Enrollment/Demographics

Students must have senior standing to enroll in English 487, but otherwise it is open to English majors and Film Studies Majors. Film Studies students also take English 487 as their capstone, and I had three Film Studies Majors (one of whom was a double major in English and Film). Because I am also a professor in the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program (an interdisciplinary program), and that program requires majors to complete an appropriate Ace 10, my section of English 487 included two students who were also MRST majors (and had ENGL minors). In total, I began the course with 18 students, which included 12 women and 6 men. Two students did not complete the course, although one has been granted an incomplete and I hope will eventually complete the final requirements. Two students identified as non-white in class, but I did not conduct an ethnicity survey. All students in the English Major are required to have at least a minor if not another major, and as such, a diverse group of secondary interests were present in this group. Some students had taken previous Shakespeare or Renaissance drama courses, but some students had not studied Shakespeare formally since high school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Major: English</th>
<th>Second Major: Film</th>
<th>Second Major: Other</th>
<th>First Major: Film</th>
<th>First Major: MRST</th>
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III. Teaching Methods

A) Teaching methods, course materials, and activities

In discussing the teaching methods, materials, and activities I have used in the course, I want to break down the focus of the course into three main areas:

- Area 1: Student reflection on their previous work and learning
- Area 2: Particular knowledge and engagement with seminar topic, different levels of learning possible.
- Areas 3: Student work on a long term writing project, with research component

Area 1: Reflection and Portfolio

The main work of area one is the production of the student capstone Portfolio. To help students prepare this document, they need to think holistically about their degree path and their past work. I prepared students to write the main reflection through intermediary course activities: 1) Discussion (especially in small groups) for sharing their experiences and articulating their own assessment of their learning process, primed with short readings and activities; 2) short writing to log their narrative of their experiences and to revisit their previous work; 3) brainstorming and group work on their reflective introductions in class.

Several shorter assignments were used as practice for writing reflectively and for organizing students’ thoughts about their major, classes, and trajectory. These assignments included an activity called “Mapping your Major,” which I based on an assignment designed by a previous professor of English
487, and which I will discuss in my assessment section. This required students to chart their past courses, skills sets, and experiences and then to represent those past experiences in the form of a map. (See Appendix for the assignment directions). The students discussed their course experiences and their maps in separate class sessions. This assignment fed into the next short assignment asked students to identify two pieces of writing that was the student’s “best” work. They then wrote a short essay accompanying these two pieces of writing that clarified what “best,” meant, why they’ve chosen their categories, and how each piece of writing demonstrates that kind of “best.” They discussed their work with each other and I gave them qualitative, individualized feedback. I discuss this assignment in section VII as well. (See Appendix for the assignment directions.)

Students were tasked finally with refining their reflective work by completing their introductory essay for their portfolio and compiling the portfolio itself. I discuss this assignment in section VII as well. (See Appendix for an example of the assignment, as well as the rubric I used to analyze the students’ final introductory essays and portfolios).

**Area 2: Engagement with Seminar Topic**

The primary method I used to assess student’s work on the main seminar topic and their critical analysis work in the course were four short papers. These short papers gave students choices of what they wanted to write about, but were often focused on a) specific close reading of a Shakespeare play in some form; b) reaction to criticism of the play/adaptation or historical/cultural background article; c) technical skill in analytical work. (See the Appendix for examples of these assignments and the general rubric I used to score the papers.)

I also assessed student engagement with the main seminar topic in two other formats: one was a reflective essay, which did double duty as another opportunity for students to do a reflection in preparation for their portfolio essay. The other assessment was a survey of student attitudes following the Shakespeare module. (See the Appendix for a listing of the questions I asked students.) We also discussed their final experiences and reflections on Shakespeare in class.

**Area 3: Long Term Major Writing Project, with Research Component**

The final paper for the capstone course was structured over a number of intermediate steps. Students were assessed through project proposals, an outcomes-discussion short assignment, a draft workshop, preparatory conferences in class, a presentation based on their paper, and the final product. The proposal required them to explain their initial research, offer a prospective topic, make the case for their credentials, and provide an initial annotated bibliography. As students moved on to work on their drafts, they were asked to complete an “outcome assignment.” For this assignment, they needed to propose what kinds of criteria would be appropriate for assessing final projects, explain why, and consider strengths and weaknesses for using this set of criteria.

In my analysis of their work in Section VII, I track three students through this process as well as give data for the class as a whole. My interest was in gauging if these intermediate steps helped students to produce a strong final product.

The capstone papers were assessed according to a detailed rubric, depending on what kind of project the student had pursued (creative, with a critical introduction, or a straightforward critical paper). I have included the assignment sheet and both rubrics in the Appendix. These rubrics were detailed
and drew on information that the students had provided in their outcome assessment assignments earlier in the term.

B. **Rationale for teaching methods**

**Area 1**

**Outcomes Addressed:**
1) Students will reflect meaningfully in work they have done in their major and compose new writing that analyzes their experiences.
2) Students will collect their old and new work together in a large-scale portfolio project to demonstrate a narrative of their major experience.

Discussion is a large part of the process of reflection; to help students reflect and share their thoughts in a formal way, informal mechanisms help to create a common vocabulary and generate topics for consideration. Capstone classes in general, as charged by the ACE 10 requirements, are to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their educations. They are synthesizing not only data and critical observations but also a sense of their experiences. Students must create a product (their portfolios) that is uniquely about themselves, rather than about a particular subject matter, topic, or text, and this can be a very angst-inducing assignment. The difficulty for the instructor is to demonstrate meaningfulness in these reflections, and empower students to articulate that meaning for themselves.

The assignments I built in this part of the course were both progressive and multi-purposed, starting small and introducing modes or reflection that engage different patterns of thought: analytical (list making), creative (drawing and mapping), narrative (writing). These reflective preparatory assignments were linked to active in-class discussions designed for rethinking how a student could construct a narrative of their experiences as something other than a list of courses or checklist of skills. Because these students would graduate soon, I also felt it was important for our reflections to include the broader outlines of the world that these students will enter, and to discuss how the humanities in general are viewed by the public, by members of the discipline, and by institutions. We examined larger scale reflections, looking at readings by scholars like Jonathan Bate, Congressional reports on the state of the humanities, and had closer-to-home examinations of the stated outcomes of the English major.

As students finished the preparatory assignments they began to compile their final portfolio and introductory reflections. Students were provided with an opportunity to discuss their drafts of their reflections with each other, in small groups and in the class as a whole. I also spoke individually with everyone before they completed their projects to help make sure everyone stayed on track.

**Area 2**

**Outcomes Addressed:**
3) Students will engage primary texts of Shakespeare and relevant critical discussions of primary texts.
4) Students will engage revisions, adaptations, or remakings of Shakespeare and critically analyze the relationship of Shakespeare to other cultural forms, artistic mediums, or social developments.
This part of the course is the most conventional in terms of a literary focus, with a given set of texts to explore, and a series of written assessments designed to engage literary critical study. The challenge here was to construct assignments that could engage all students, who may not have taken Shakespeare in college or who may not have done much work with criticism and especially historically-focused criticism. These written assignments and class discussions were the main platforms for critical analysis of readings and other course materials (films, manga, editions, etc.).

The course looked at a long continuum of work—thinking not just about the Elizabethan and Jacobean era of Shakespeare’s plays, but also about 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st century Shakespeare. For this reason, I focused on just two plays that we could track across cultures and through time. This could give snapshots of Shakespeare as an entity in multiple dimensions; for example, via adaptation, reputation, and cultural engagement. The reason for this shape to the course design was to be able to a) bring together all parts of the English Studies curriculum (i.e. creative writing, composition and rhetoric, and film studies, as well as literary studies) and b) to echo the theme of reflection in thinking about Shakespeare as a cultural icon. In thinking about how Shakespeare has been used as a reflecting glass for hundreds of years, we could also think about the larger role of arts and humanities in mediating different kinds of cultural and educative engagements.

Area 3
Outcomes addressed:
5) Students will produce major writing that illustrates their ability to read texts closely as well as to incorporate critical or creative work and research in a sustained project.

Because their final projects were tied to the Shakespeare component of the course, Area 2 would necessarily shape Area 3. However, in terms of actually carrying through the large project, the set of skills involved is far more expansive than those needed to master a subject. The major paper is a key element of the portfolio and the course: it demonstrates key elements of the Ace and English curricula. For example, the final paper may mean doing interpretation, field-appropriate research, synthesis, and being technically proficient in their field (Ace and English), or showing literary analysis skills as well as composition skills (English), or being able to explain or make creative and critical work (English). As in my approach to the portfolio, I structured the final project in steps to build gradually and allow intervention through collaborative work (discussions, conferences, workshops). In past courses, I have realized that students, when faced with a large project, often struggle to manage the necessary steps involved in exploring, focusing, researching, drafting, and editing that make a final project successful. The last several weeks of the course were primarily built around giving them opportunities to do this work, discuss it with peers and with the professor, and hit progressive goals through these intermediary assignments.

C) Illustration of Changes from Previous Sections/Years

2017 marked the first time I have taught English 487. While I used the resources available to me from the English department, including some suggested assignments (as I noted above, I modified the mapping assignment and the “best paper” assignment from previous professors’ materials), the design and focus of the course was new to me. I followed the script of the Aim and Scope document, dividing the course into modules based on the portfolio project, the content area, and the major paper. I did also bring back reflective activities (like a Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet reflection—see Appendix for the assignment) in the second and third portions of the class. I will be
teaching this course again, and I will be able to use this portfolio and my results to modify future work.

IV. The Course and the Broader Curriculum

English 487 and the English Major

The Aim and Scope Statement for English 487 reflects a major overhaul of the course that was conducted in 2007-9. The first paragraph of the statement explains a broad sense of what was “new” in this retooling of the capstone course: “English 487 provides senior English majors a capstone experience that turns upon some line of inquiry that allows our students an opportunity to develop substantive writing projects. These writing projects enable them to integrate their learning over their course of study as an English major.” This statement is necessarily vague. The course needs to emphasize two things: that students will create a reflective portfolio that synthesizes their experience in the major, and that they will complete a major project—which should turn on their own interest relative to the course—that is substantive and skillfully executed. While all students will complete a portfolio in the course, and the guidelines for these portfolios are the same for any version of 487 (a portfolio of about 40-50 pages, including new reflective introduction (5 pp) written by the student during the course, a series of examples of student work, and the major project from the capstone course) professors can choose to structure the project portion of the course as a) a shared topic seminar, b) an individualized topic seminar, c) a professionalization seminar. There are positives and negatives to any of these design, but they all need to provide students with opportunities to do original work and to reflect on their past work.

About ten years ago, the English department conducted a study of how the capstone course had worked in the past and should work in the future. The study of the course by the English Department Assessment Committee, Undergraduate Studies Committee and a specially formed Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG) led to the course’s current form and the adoption of portfolios. These were seen as a necessary part of creating the synthesis and reflection elements that students previously had been lacking. Data from previous versions of the course and student experiences collected through exit interviews and other assessments were used to reconsider the course design in early stages of the review. The English Department Assessment Committee evaluated data we had, and found that this course was the one course in the curriculum that truly brings our majors together at the same point in their careers, and that data we collect is more accurate if the courses are built around shared guidelines. A new model of the course was developed at this time, working to “address student concerns” for a shared experience and sense of summation for their studies. As explained in the internal department document, “Capping off the English Major Through Synthesis, Reflection, and a Final Project,” which serves as a guide for instructors of 487, those studying our capstone realized that some of the inadequacies of the course could be addressed by focusing on student development. The document explains that this model works, as C. Rowles et al argue, by [placing] “a high degree of importance on the opportunity for students to engage in meaningful reflection, synthesize learning from personal, academic, and professional contexts, and plan for the
future.”¹ This shift in design was intended to make the course more like typical capstones across the U.S., as they have been documented in Jean Henscheid’s work.²

I have already discussed that English 487 is meant as a “summation” of the English major. It has to do several things at once as a result, including, but not limited to:

- Fulfilling Ace 10 requirements and being assessable in that context
- Serving our population of English Studies students, which includes students who have focused their work in either literary studies, composition and rhetoric, creative writing, and in some case, film studies. The course should help students communicate with each other through the shared topic of inquiry but also allow students to explore their diverse interests and showcase their skillsets.
- Providing an opportunity for sustained, original work to be done by the student which should also include a substantial research/data gathering component that is appropriate to their project and the individual course goals.
- Assisting students in evaluating and synthesizing their experience in the major as a whole. The course should help students find a sense of completion.

Students in the English major have usually been exposed to all three of English Studies’ major areas by the time they are seniors. As well, their skill levels in each of these areas may differ considerably, such that students may be at the senior level overall but have uneven proficiencies. The course design should ensure that students are able to pursue their final projects and treat the main topic of the course with a degree of shared competency. In a topic-based seminar like mine, that means making sure that the course provides opportunities to build the core skills that the seminar topic requires, especially if students did not have strong previous experience with that topic.

V. Analysis of Student Learning

Area 1

1) Students will reflect meaningfully on work they have done in their major and compose new writing that analyzes their experiences.

2) Students will collect their old and new work together in a large-scale portfolio project to demonstrate a narrative of their major experience.

The work in this area was divided into assignments and discussions I considered “preparatory” and the more formal work of the two key components of reflection: the introductions to the portfolio and the portfolio itself. Alongside these assignments were many class discussions. The two preparatory assignments I discuss here fit into the category of “fostering reflection.” The introduction and the portfolio itself fit into a category of reflecting, collecting, and synthesizing.

“Mapping Your Major”

This assignment involved students looking back at all of their courses, the skills they have acquired, and their process of moving through the major. (See Appendix for assignment instructions). Eventually, the students created a map of their experiences and discussed their maps with their classmates. In assessing the map assignment, I looked at the materials they handed in, but also on their class interaction. I have four examples from a group of students (Mapmaker A, Dustin, Mapmaker C, and Mapmaker D) who worked together (see Appendix), and I refer to them in my commentary below.

The maps are all very different in style and construction, but all of them are an immediate snapshot of student experience. The images compiled are far different from the generally un-organized lists of classes the students had made for the first step of the project. In the maps, it is very clear when students are expressing their likes and dislikes, their anxieties, and their emotional responses. Student were charged with reflecting on their own maps (see Appendix for examples), and in these writings, students mention that it was difficult to think about how to match topography and space to their skills and courses. The assignment required a different kind of intellectual work in making the map than just saying “what they did” for the last four years. Their comments on others’ maps gives a sense of their engagement. In regard to the least visually specific map, the students note that the mapmaker had a story that went with each of the elements on his map. Although Dustin may not have been keen on drawing, there was a clear link from his representation to a more specific narrative that he developed and a reason for how he presented himself graphically. In this case, student comments showed what happened in the group and what, in this case, a map didn’t show.

“Best Paper”

Students next completed the “Best Paper” assignment (see Appendix), which required them to write a short essay about two papers they considered their “best” and then share the new essay and their two previous works with classmates and the professor. Reading these essays was wonderful—I got to know the students better and I got to know their work. I have to admit that I was surprised by how good they were. While there were some writing infelicities, the students all had a good sense of their voice and their mission in these essays. They also recognized that whatever they submitted was not going to be “perfect” and that “best” did not have to mean “perfect.”

Here are a few randomly chosen samples, of how students discussed “best.”

Example 1, creative writer:

“... no story or piece of writing is ever going to be perfect enough, to where every single person that reads it is going to love it. So, in order to actually sleep at night, I feel that a story has become the best possible version of itself when it doesn’t tell the reader a story, it shows it. You always want the reader to feel like they were there, to feel what you were feeling when you were writing, or to feel the same emotions as the characters alongside with them. However, in order to ignite those fires, an author has to be able to not only push boundaries of society, but within themselves. When it comes to categorizing pieces as my best ones, I look to see if was I able to push myself to be raw with my writing, to say what I've always wanted but never had the guts to do it, but in a manner that shows my reader what I'm trying to say rather than simply telling.”

Example 2, Film Studies Focus:
“Ultimately, this piece is included among my best because it, to me, is the culmination of different teachings from many classes. I was able to edit my own work in it by examining the text through the lenses of my creative fiction writing classes, as well as the historical fiction class it was written for. It shows off my voice while fitting inside the restrictions of genre and quality writing.”

Example 3, Literary Criticism and Rhetoric focus:

“Best” is a very tricky term. If I was much younger, I would define “best” as no grammar mistakes and abundant vocabularies using. Now I examine “best” by how much I learned from the process of writing paper . . . . In my mind, “best” does not equal to perfect. I was trying my best on writing these paper, but so far they are not the perfect as for me. Every time when I read my paper, I can always find mistakes to edit. This process is like learning, and there is no end on the way of learning.” [English is not this student’s first language.]

I have included the rubric evaluation of the essays in the Appendix, but suffice it to say that the students performed almost exclusively at the high end of the evaluation.

With these two assignments, students showed competence in Outcome 1. Bringing their work together in a final portfolio with a new introduction would be the last step (Outcome 2). For this work, they needed primarily to build on what they had done in their “Best Paper” assignment, adding some of the personal elements from their maps and profiles. (Students were not obligated use the work they selected from the “Best Paper” assignment).

Final Portfolios and Reflective Introductions

The final portfolios were largely well done. A few students could have included more previous work, but no one fell short of the requirement. In class conferences, some students revealed anxiety about the final introductory reflection, and seemed quite afraid of doing it “wrong.” I think this had to do with a few things: 1) anxiety about finishing the class and having a “last word” 2) that I had presented the assignment in a way that had made them think it was harder than it was. (See assignment in the Appendix.) I wanted to allow them space to do something interesting and personal, but they seemed instead to feel uncertain of what they needed to do.

The key element of the reflection is synthesis, and I think at first, they were not sure how to work through this idea. I explain in the prompt that they should “consider diverse ways you understand your experience, not only your emotional reactions (though these are valid and important). You must synthesize your intellectual response and your passionate response to your experience.” They had all done exactly this kind of work in the “Best paper” assignment, where they discussed the ways that they may critically and emotionally think about what “best” meant. So I knew the students could do this, but they seemed to freeze at first when I explained their task in these terms.

Most assembled excellent portfolios. Deficits—mostly minor—were in execution. However, my rubric results are largely positive for this assignment. The portfolios themselves were well-constructed and appropriately designed. Students did an excellent job picking a selection of pieces that worked well for their narrative.
Portfolio Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Does the Portfolio contain all the required work? Does the reflection help contextualize that work?</th>
<th>Do the portfolio pieces offer a chance to reflect on kinds of work that the student has done in the English major (i.e. offers a sense of the student's interests, skills, accomplishments?)</th>
<th>Has the work been presented in a professional, clean, finished way?</th>
<th>As a whole, the portfolio shows “technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.”</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly</td>
<td>15</td>
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Synthesis is necessary for the portfolio and the introduction, though students struggled at times to express that synthesis in writing, as evidenced by the introductory reflections.

Introductory Reflection Rubric

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<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Does the reflection represent the important intellectual work of reflecting on and critically commenting on past work and development?</th>
<th>Does the reflection contextualize the work in the portfolio and provide a sense of what the portfolio represents?</th>
<th>Is the reflection a unified and organized piece of writing, with a sense of a sustained narrative and completion?</th>
<th>Does the reflection show a sense of polish, strong composition skills, and clarity that serves the student and the portfolio well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes-Highly</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While everyone fulfilled parts 3 and 4, and while a majority or 50% did a highly competent job, some had difficulty unifying and polishing their reflections. Anecdotally, I can add that conversations with students revealed that many left the reflection as the last element to finish, despite having time in class to discuss, edit, and revise the narratives. The reflection that was lowest rated for #3 seemed to be confused about how to finish the assignment after starting out fine. For #4, the problem was a matter of, perhaps, a rush for some to finish. None of these were sloppy, but some could have benefitted from more care.

Area 2

3) Students will engage primary texts of Shakespeare and relevant critical discussions of primary texts.

Synthesis proved to be the most difficult element for students as they transitioned from Area 1 to Areas 2 and 3. I was highly encouraged by the work the students had done in the reflective preparation assignments, but I was surprised by the difficulty some of them had working through a transition assignment that was to bring together critical work and reflective practice. It was also designed to help flush away some of the “Shakes-feat.” Their assignment was to write a short paper...
of about 600 words, about some specific element of Romeo and Juliet that resonated with them. They were to explain this personal point of contact with the play and consider some larger idea about life, literature, Shakespeare, education, culture, or etc, in connection. (See Appendix for assignment sheet.) While students did not do poorly on the assignment as a whole, I noted two key areas of difficulty: 1) the ability to bring together a clear moment in the play or critical discussion of the language to a personal reflection and 2) coherence and structural organization. Overall, 9 students performed in the middle range, 5 in the high range, and 2 in an exceptional range. Compared to the performance in their portfolio assignments, there was a notable dip in the quality of writing and coherence of the papers.

Similar difficulties played out in the Critical Reaction papers that students completed during the Shakespeare content portion of the course. In general, students struggled in writing in response to critical essays, or essays about literary or theater history. Students at times focused primarily on elements of the readings we discussed in class, but avoided dealing with the readings comprehensively. (See Appendix for an example of a reaction paper prompt and grading rubric.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Reaction Paper 1</th>
<th>Reaction Paper 2</th>
<th>Reaction Paper 3</th>
<th>Reaction Paper 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't do assignment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results indicate that students did not gain facility in writing short, critical papers over the course of the content module. The first assignment was the most successfully completed, and the choices for that assignment allowed students (some, not all) to dodge the critical readings. The second assignment required students to grapple with a critical article or position. The third assignment gave them choices that didn’t require engagement with a reading. Yet, many chose to deal with some element of the readings for this assignment. What I notice in looking back at the papers is that deficits in construction, specificity, or formality are common for the papers in the middle ranking. None of them have bad ideas or are particularly off the mark—they just aren’t “great” as papers. Their engagement with the critical ideas can certainly be stronger, but they also simply could be crafted more cleanly.

Despite my frustration with the critical papers, the students reported gains from the content portion of the class. At the end of the Shakespeare section, students completed an anonymous survey. The full results of the survey are in the Appendix. My take-away point from the data is the following: nearly all of the students registered that they felt comfortable, or very comfortable discussing/studying Shakespeare by the end of the class. One student testified to no longer despising Shakespeare (positive, I guess). A strong majority of students (10 out of 16) also stated that they were more comfortable now than when the course began, with three others stating they had made modest gains in their Shakespeare ability. This result is significant to me because I had assumed
students would basically feel comfortable with Shakespeare coming in, or would not choose this capstone. (See Appendix for full survey results)

We also had a “regrouping” final discussion in class to finish the Shakespeare section. Students were keenly able to articulate strategies for rethinking Shakespeare’s place in culture and how we encounter Shakespeare. The discussion told me that students had become far more invested in what we were doing than I had thought they were. It was an important moment for me when a student explained that the way we had studied a play in depth, through the original text and then through several adaptations, was really important for that student’s understanding and would have been helpful in his high school experience. Another important moment came when a student articulated the difference between reading a text and looking for a synopsis as substitute. The observation cut to the core of issues we had explored in discussing textual adaptation and appropriation. This activity was a clear example of students synthesizing their reflections and their intellectual work.

**Area 3: Student work on a long term writing project, with research component**

The final capstone paper was divided into several steps to help students make steady progress on the project. The students completed a paper proposal, had a research session in the library, completed an outcomes/assessment assignment, had a draft workshop in class, and gave presentations in class. While the final paper’s result is important, I am also interested in tracking whether the work of the structured assignments contributed to student success. Here, I’m going to look at three papers in a trajectory to document the paper-building process. To choose the selected examples, I divided the students into three groups: 1) those with strong, well-constructed proposals; 2) those with good ideas in proposals but a need for guidance and shaping; 3) those with proposals that fulfilled the requirements but clearly needed some work for the project to take a proper shape. From each group, I chose one representative to follow along at each step.

In general, the proposals in group 1 (9 students, though 1 soon after left the course) were strong, with clear ideas of where they wanted to go and appropriate research already conducted, with a good annotated bibliography included in each proposal, as required by the assignment. Proposals in group 2 (5 students) had good general topics, but needed refinement in terms of their scope and argument. These were projects that had a good start on their bibliographies, but had cast wide nets and would require additional reading and work to refine the project to a more manageable scale, or one whose intentions were interesting but needed to make a more specific argument or clarify its focus. The third group of proposals (3 students) were projects that were well intentioned, but that had a vague outline or required more research. I have included short excerpts from the proposals selected in the Appendix. These are the “goal” statements for these proposals. In reviewing the proposals and my rubric, I note that while the purpose of the proposal is largely to get students moving on their work, the rubric could have been more helpful. I should have been more specific in the categories to emphasize the key elements of constructing the paper and refining the argument. While my comments on proposals offered specific areas to focus on and questions for students think about, the rubric itself could have helped them (and me) differentiate the positive and negative aspects of the proposals more.

**Draft Workshop**

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3 For clarity’s sake: students were not aware of these groupings; these are just designations I have tracked. When working in collaborative settings, students chose their partners and were not given “groupings.”
The projects took an interesting turn at the draft stage. In following the three groups I outlined above (as a whole), all but one of the students in group 1 came into the draft workshop with a substantial or complete draft of their papers. (That student had a very short draft). In group 2, all but one of the students came into the workshops with substantial or complete drafts. One student came in with nothing, and as it happens, was the student who being tracked in this group. The student submitted a substantial draft a few days late. In group 3, one student came in with two pages (the student being traced), one student came in with a substantial draft but of a different project than outlined in the proposal (this student had consulted me about changing topics and finding a new direction), and the third student had a bare outline, but not much else. I was disappointed that students showed up to the workshop with insubstantial or nonexistent drafts. That said, most students treated the workshop seriously and read each other’s work conscientiously. Workshop sheets students filled out for each other gave them a “take-home” reading on what peers saw in their work. I also commented on drafts. I have included in the Appendix my comments on the selected students’ drafts.

Presentations

The presentations were the next step toward completing projects. In verbalizing and presenting their ideas in a condensed form, students had to be able to boil down their main focus, explain their innovations or research questions, and discuss some of their findings/progress. They also solicited feedback and questions from the class. The presentations ranged from nervous and a bit disorganized to passionate and provocative. A key realization came from presentations in any group: without properly foregrounding the main idea of the paper’s argument, or the core setup of a creative project, the audience was quite lost in terms of why given choices or argumentative points mattered. Students often rushed through the opening, general statement about the paper as a whole.

The student I followed from group 3 had both the bad and good luck of the draw to present on the first day. This was good because it forced the student to get into gear (this student had difficulty submitting assignments on time throughout the semester), but also bad because the student was clearly still rushed. Because the student comments were a bit pointed, I was concerned that the student would feel discouraged and spoke with her after class. I suggested ways she could respond to the problems the students pointed out, and directed her toward ways to refine the project focus. However, I was concerned that the scope of the project would continue to be a problem without more clear refinement. (See Appendix for comments and samples of feedback on presentations.)

The student I followed in group 2 did a strong job in the presentation, illustrating substantial work between the late draft and the presentation. While a key critical problem became evident in the presentation, which I raised in my comments to him and in class, it was evident that the student had used comments offered to him from conferencing opportunities in the classroom and responded to my draft comments as well. The student in group 1 did a very competent job in the presentation, even though slightly squeezed for time. (That was my fault for not cutting off another presenter sooner.) Nonetheless, the presentation showed the project was taking shape, and the questions the presenter asked the audience elicited helpful responses.

Final Papers

All of the students’ final papers were acceptable and met the requirements of the assignment. The student from proposal group 3 handed in a very ambitious, if disorganized, paper. It was admirable in its attempts to engage critical ideas and cultural topics, even if it had some problems. It ended up on the low end of the middle range. The paper being tracked from group 2 improved considerably
from the draft. The polish and construction of the paper was good, though there were still some gaps in the kinds of critical and theoretical engagements the paper should have acknowledged. The student being tracked from group 1 turned in a project that was considerably advanced from the state of the draft, and impressive in its scope and creativity. It required a considerable amount of research, special care in modulating the project’s voice and outreach to audience, and a good deal of creative work. The project was not perfect, but it impressed me in terms of its creativity, synthesis, and thoughtfulness.

Overall assessment (these are abbreviated rubrics for space. Full sample rubrics are in the Appendix)

**Critical Papers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Argumentation</th>
<th>Readings of primary source texts and relevance to Shakespeare: may include discussion of contextual importance of Shakespeare in Culture</th>
<th>Use of Secondary Sources/Criticism/Theory</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Writing, Voice, and Appropriate Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3[3]</td>
<td>6[6]</td>
<td>3[3]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
<td>2[2]</td>
<td>5[5]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Creative Papers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Creative project’s engagement with Shakespeare</th>
<th>Creative Project’s development of original ideas</th>
<th>Writing and execution</th>
<th>Critical introduction clearly explains mission statement and critical influences</th>
<th>Structure and Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>7[7]</td>
<td>6[6]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>1[1]</td>
<td>2[2]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
<td>4[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Assessment: 7 high range papers, 9 medium range papers.

Ultimately, significant gains were made in proposal group 3, where all the students moved into the “middle” achievement range for their final papers. Proposal group two had two students solidly move to the top group, and a few students slipped out of the highest group to the middle group. These papers were ambitious and the problems to overcome were slow starts and complicated topics requiring research and background reading. Overall, the difficult part of the assignment for most students was in the organization and execution of the final projects, rather than in intellectual quality or analytical skill. Though I helped students narrow research questions, more intervention was needed to help some projects stay on track and ease the pressure on the final composition.

**VI. Planned Changes**

Overall Course Emphasis

One key problem is that the portfolio section of the course and the content/project section of the course feel very separate. Although I think the use of a few transitional assignments was helpful, and I would keep these, I also need to make more time for students to make sure they have a full mock-up of the portfolio and draft of the introductory essay earlier in the course. Even if they will revisit these, to deal with ironing out the kinks of expectations earlier will relieve anxiety at the end of the course, when students (especially those graduating) are especially stressed. That said, while I think the reflective assignments worked very well and that students excelled in this area of the course, I also would like to beef up my rubrics and expectations, asking students to make a more solid transition between treating these subjects somewhat casually or informally and as assignments that require polish, editing, and more care in their final versions. I am happy with the assignments I used in this part of the course, and I think they had a clear trajectory to build up to the portfolio. The synthesis of the materials will be a key area to emphasize in the next rendition of the course.

Content Area Changes

I am most dissatisfied with the content area design. This is reflected in the fact that although the students reported gains in their facility with Shakespeare and enjoyed working with the various adaptations and cultural critiques, I wanted more from their work and their engagement in this section of the course. Students were of more varied backgrounds and experience than I had expected, and had need for core instruction in reading techniques for drama and Shakespeare as well as for successfully working with literary, cultural, and historical criticism. Another key problem was that students lacked a strong sense of history and literature in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, and most had a lack of critical vocabulary. For example, my easy distinctions between the Restoration, Enlightenment, Romantic, and Victorian periods was something that at least some of the students did not easily follow. I realize now that I needed to more fully explain how to characterize these historical moments. Students were also unfamiliar with critical terms and ideas, like postmodernism and pastiche, or what cultural capital meant, and some seemed to shut down when asked to think about these kinds of concepts. Clearly there are gaps to be bridged.

Because only eight weeks of class can be devoted to the content topic, the content area design is especially challenging. I tried to focus the course through the two plays we read and the series of adaptations and contexts we looked at for each play. However, several students wanted more plays, and I think some did not see the films we examined or the articles we read as “texts” in themselves. I am planning on teaching the next version of this course around a key critical crux: adaptation vs. appropriation. There is a body of criticism that deals with this topic, and though I introduced and discussed it, offering recommended readings for additional discussions of the critical distinctions and debates over these terms, few students took up the thread in a serious way. By highlighting this critical idea as a core base of evaluation, I can still keep historical and cultural criticism examples, but avoid trying to historicize all of Shakespeare. Also, I can more easily introduce other forms of adaptation and appropriation. Though students enjoyed the films, manga, and other theatrical adaptation, we had little time to delve into the myriads of possibilities for exploration (music, visual art) or applications (for example, global Shakespeare and Shakespeare in Prison). By centralizing the critical inquiry to a key topic, I should be able to include more diversity in materials.

In the assignments for this section of the course, I plan to stick with reaction papers, but also adopt a more segmented rubric that emphasizes to students the importance of presenting ideas, offering
precise textual discussion, and always working to submit clean, polished, and appropriately formal work.

**Capstone Paper Changes**

The difficulty of the final paper is primarily in getting students to make progress early enough in the semester to produce a truly finished final product. A number of students were able to follow the intermediate steps I designed and produce a strong paper. Some students would have benefitted from more time or better organization. Although I met with all the students in conferences either in class or in my office hours, some students could have used more commentary on drafts or more guidance early on in the process. I gave students a large—perhaps too large—amount of latitude, and I may need to rein them in more. Again, with a more focused approach to the critical core of the class, students may be able to more explicitly define their critical positions, or have a deeper set of useful vocabulary to deploy. Although I took students to the library, arranged a session with a librarian, and devoted days in class to research and composition work, it seemed evident that students are not as well versed as I expected them to be in using online databases, ILL, or simply in reading journal articles. I consider these important skills that any English major should have. If they need to learn these skills in their capstone course, so be it.

I also need to redesign my rubric for grading the final projects. Although the rubric was based in part on the students’ contributions through their Outcomes/Assessment assignment, in which they submitted their sense of appropriate objectives and levels of attainment, I need to make sure the categories I assess are giving a full picture of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses. The critical paper rubric is fairly standard for this kind of research paper; however, the creative paper rubric has some problems in weighing the critical introduction and research components of the paper.

**VII. Summary and Overall Assessment of Portfolio Process**

In working through this process, I have learned a lot about thinking through what individual assignments do. I feel that I have been more deliberate in my design of assignments—in this class and the others I have taught while working through the program. While much of what we do in English Studies has to do with exploration and interpretation of texts that is up to the reader/writer to determine, the gateways to those critical positions are not simply open for all comers. To bring students along a path means structuring all the stepping stones, and while I have always been purposeful in my assignments and I am fond of scaffolding skills, I have learned to be more explicit about the connection of skills to more global outcomes. I was also more clear and open with students in explaining every step of what we were doing, whether they liked it or not, and I think they respected (for the most part) the process and that I had certain constraints I had to work with as well as certain freedoms.

Working through this process has made me reflect on how much my course design often depends on my expectations of students and the so-called level of the course. However, students take courses in different orders, in different clusters, and with different expectations. Even in the capstone, the students may have very different levels of preparedness. The outcomes I want to meet, and that the course demands, require initial assessments of student preparation before work begins.
I also have seen through this process that my teaching became more purposeful. I came back to my mission and outcomes more often, and wanted to keep articulating those goals for students. I also emphasized course themes throughout this semester, and wanted the experience to feel synthesized for them as well. That meant that while I was frustrated at times, if I reminded students of our larger purpose and the design of what we were doing, they often too could re-center and move forward rather than resist something they weren’t sure about. I also have realized the importance of thinking about what kinds of data an assignment can offer in advance, and I am more likely to see assignments as data, not just grades. This has made me always be thinking about how to make my course design more efficient and more purposeful for myself and my students. This also means recording and remember what I observe during the semester.
VIII. Appendices

A. Syllabus

English 487: Capstone
Shakespeare
Prof. Kelly Stage
MWF 12:30-1:20, Andrews 39

English Capstone Experience
Shakespeare(s): Adaptation, Interpretation, Bardolatry and English Studies

This course is multiform: its purpose is to provide you with an intense, intimate, final experience for your major. You will reflect on the coursework, skill development, personal development, and educational experiences that you have had in your time at UNL, and particularly, in your major. You will produce a sizeable portfolio project in your time in this class, and you will add to that portfolio—a representation of who you are as a student—with the final major, individualized paper that you will complete in this course. You will also write a new introductory essay for this portfolio which will reflect on your experiences and your portfolio selections, as well as your final essay for this course. The portfolio should total about 40 pages in length, a chunk of which will be your new final paper for this course.

The focus for our work will be Shakespeare, but not just Shakespeare’s plays. We will examine the text of two of Shakespeare’s plays in this class, but then we will go much further to think about what Shakespeare means in various contexts, and what difference ways of engaging Shakespeare can show us. We will consider how Shakespeare has been treated in different time periods, different artistic media, different classrooms, and different cultures. We will read critical essays on the plays from various perspectives, but we will also read and watch adaptations and translations of the plays into various forms. Students’ final projects should engage with this main topic, and should begin with one of the plays we study in class, but can engage the topic in a variety of ways, from thinking about the plays and performance in their own time, to the culture of editing, to the creation of Shakespeare mythology, to the perpetuation of Shakespeare as a cultural icon, to the adaptation of Shakespeare in other media (film, tv, novels, graphic novels, video games, opera, etc), to the shaping of education curricula. Thus, we will read and work with some Shakespeare in the course, but your emphasis of attack for your final project should reflect your interest in the major and your concentration area—whether that be in literature, rhetoric, or creative writing. Those interested in film, global studies, women’s and gender studies, and cross-culture exchange can certainly find rich work here, as can those interested in book culture, editing, rhetoric, or theories of taste. There are many other avenues to explore, and students are encouraged to follow their own paths.

Intermediate assignments will include both formal and informal writing, group work, and in-class presentations. These assignments will help you prepare the portfolio and the final paper. Much of our work in this class will take place in cooperative group/class environments, so realize that your attendance and participation is vital. Although I have only required a couple of books for this course, there will be plenty of reading that comes from other sources—critical essays that are online, electronic texts available through our library, films that we watch in class, and sources that you will track down yourselves.
Course Objectives:

6) Students will reflect meaningfully in work they have done in their major and compose new writing that analyzes their experiences.
7) Students will collect their old and new work together in a large-scale portfolio project to demonstrate a narrative of their major experience.
8) Students will engage primary texts of Shakespeare and relevant critical discussions of primary texts.
9) Students will engage revisions, adaptations, or re-makings of Shakespeare and critically analyze the relationship of Shakespeare to other cultural forms, artistic mediums, or social developments.
10) Students will produce major writing that illustrates their ability to read texts closely as well as to incorporate critical or creative work and research in a sustained project.

Required Texts:
*Romeo and Juliet*, Texts and Contexts Series, Bedford St. Martin's Press, ed. Dympna Callaghan

You will be expected to access several supplementary texts through the course website and the UNL library’s electronic text links.

**Achievement Centered Education (ACE) Information**

This is an ACE 10 certified course, which means that we will:

“Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.”

The English Department says: “English 487, Senior Capstone, is a seminar that serves as a final, culminating experience for the English major. Faculty members teaching the course explore an area of scholarly interest with a small group of undergraduates in a way that focuses on broad connections between texts, genres, and the artistic, cultural, political, and social contexts in which they emerge. Although the topic and texts will vary with the instructor, students generally focus on a few core texts that are read within the context of a theme so that students can explore how various issues shape literary and nonliterary production, textuality, and the cultural and social historical influences on the processes of reading and writing. The course is also designed to help students reflect upon their training as English majors and apply the reading and writing skills they have developed in order to produce substantial writing projects suited to their individual areas of interest. Students approach these texts in a variety of ways and use a variety of methodologies, including creative, critical, research, and experiential writing.”

Furthermore: “English 487 is a discussion-based course, and students are expected to participate orally and engage in class writing and reading activities designed to foster critical thinking. Assignments will provide a range of opportunities for students to apply historical knowledge and textual analysis to problems and issues relevant to the texts under discussion. Informal writing assignments are designed to require both close reading and analysis of texts while formal writing
assignments, usually in the form of a major scholarly or creative project, are designed to demonstrate the skills, methodologies, a student has learned as an English major.”

**Requirements**
Participation + Portfolio Prep Assignments 10%
Presentation 10%
Major Paper 35%
Introductory Reflection + Completed Portfolio 25%
Reaction Papers 15%
Prospectus 5%

**Attendance and Participation**
Attendance is required. I quote here the official policy of the Department of English, which I will follow: “The Department of English expects students registered for English classes to attend all scheduled class meetings and to have a reasonable excuse for any absence. Instructors are expected to lower the grades of students who miss classes without reasonable excuses and to penalize any work turned in late because of such absences. **Students who miss more than twenty percent of the scheduled class meetings of any course will ordinarily fail the course for that reason alone**, except that (1) if absences occur before the Withdrawal Passing period ends, the student may receive a “W” grade, and (2) if the absences are excused by the instructor or approved UNL policy and a large majority of them occur after the work of the course has been substantially completed, the student may receive an Incomplete (“I”) grade. In both of these cases, it is assumed that the student meets the eligibility requirement stated in the Schedule of Classes. Members of the teaching staff may have more restrictive attendance policies than are here stated.” The 20% applies to ALL absences whether they are excused or not. If you have an extreme issue, like a bad illness, a surgery, an accident, etc. that causes you to miss more than 20% of classes, we need to discuss appropriate actions. If something serious happens, we may be able to make things work out. However, what must be paramount is the student’s recovery and health; that may mean taking time off from school and it may be the best solution for a student to prevent his or her GPA from suffering in a way that does not reflect the student’s real abilities.

I will allow you to miss up to **four classes** without penalty or explanation, though I advise you not to miss them all in a row. I will excuse absence in the event of major illness or injury **documented by a note from your doctor**. If you are engaged in an academic or athletic pursuit that takes you away from campus (like a conference or competition, again with documentation), or in family or personal emergencies (again, with reasonable and clear explanation), I will excuse absences when appropriate and documented. This policy is designed to let you miss a day here or there when you’re ill or have a scheduling conflict. So, thus, no I don’t want you to come to class if you have a nasty fever. However, if you’re sick enough that these “freebies” won’t be enough, I want you go to the doctor!

Finally, **class participation** is a part of your grade. **Attendance is not the same as participation.** You are expected to participate frequently and thoughtfully to receive credit. The reading in this course may be challenging and heavy at times. To participate meaningfully in class, and to get the most out of class, you will need to complete the reading and written assignments on time. This class really depends on your participation and cooperation with other students. Please remember, others are also depending on your honest work in class.
Canvas
A Canvas website for this class will be used regularly. Important documents and content for the
class (syllabus, assignments, policy papers, PowerPoint slides, discussion group questions, readings,
links, etc.) will be housed there. It’s also an easy way to get in touch with me, and I will use Canvas
to send emails to the entire class.

Disabilities and Support Services
The UNL Services for Students with Disabilities office provides individualized academic
support for students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities should contact me for beginning
arrangements for reasonable and recommended accommodation, as well as be in touch with SSD.
They can be reached at 472-3787. Students who have not yet registered with SSD but are having
difficulties with coursework that you cannot seem to resolve, may also want to schedule an
appointment to discuss the challenges you are experiencing. Find more information at:
http://www.unl.edu/ssd/home. Please know that you may speak confidentially with me about any
of these concerns, but only students registered with SSD are may have official accommodation.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated. I will adhere to the policies set forth by the
UNL code of conduct. They set out the potentially very stiff penalties and state clearly “The
maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any
student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary
sanctions.” You can read the entire section of the code at: UNL’s Student Code of Conduct (Section
1.B.3).

That said, let’s avoid this issue. Doing your own work is the only way to actually learn. This course
will expect you to use proper MLA citation and to cite and credit all primary and secondary sources.
DO NOT TEMPT FATE WITH THIS. IT IS NOT WORTH THE RISK. I DO NOT
TAKE THIS LIGHTLY.

Written Work
All major written assignments must be completed to pass the course. Even if your average
could survive a zero on a paper or exam, you will fail if you do not complete the portfolio or the
capstone paper. Your grade will suffer if you do not complete the other assignments; like the
Introductory essay (for the portfolio) or the reaction papers. These short assignments and are
designed to do two things: to make you think about what you have read (and to keep reading!) in a
focused way. The intermediary portfolio assignments are designed to help you deal with this very
large project incrementally, as are the steps involved in the large paper project (like the prospectus).
Blowing off short assignments is harmful to your grade and to your overall ability to complete the
course.

Late Work
Late work loses 10% of its possible value each day it is late. A paper handed in one day late that
would otherwise have been a 95% becomes an 85%; a paper handed in five days late that would
have been a 95% becomes a 45%. After ten days, any late work will be worth zero points. If you
hand in an assignment after this point, it must be completed according to rubric standards. Missing a
short paper or a quiz will not result in failure, but of course, will negatively affect a student’s grade.
My late policy is strict, yes, but I aim to protect the vast majority of you who hand in your work on
time.
Medical emergencies or other kinds of exceptional situations may arise, and those will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Whenever possible, it is important to address exceptions or conflicts well before due dates. I encourage you to address any problems you are facing with me if you feel they are affecting your performance in class. It is far better to be proactive and bring matters to me than to allow them to get worse without my having any idea you are struggling. See the attendance policy above as well.

**General Expectations**

- Please help us to maintain a classroom environment that is respectful of all.
- Do your reading for class and complete assignments on time. Be ready to speak in class.
- Please ask questions! Address them to your peers as well as your professor.
- Please put away electronic devices and free yourself from phones, earbuds, alarms, vibrations, pocket typing, alerts, messages, tweets, twits, twinkies, scroll-finger-itis, tumblr, and the next thing that I don’t know about. Here’s the rule for class: chill out and pay attention. Leave that other stuff behind. If I ask you to put something away, do so, and do no touch it again. If I have to ask twice, I will take participation points away from your grade. If you are so engrossed in something else that you are effectually not in class, I reserve the right to mark you absent.
- Please understand that I do have reasons for including the material on the syllabus, even if on occasion, we can’t cover everything in class.

**Readings** (Subject to change if needed)

**Week 1: What’s Your Story?**
Jan 9. Introduction
Jan 13. Mapping Skills/Courses, pt. 1

**Week 2**
Jan 16. **MLK DAY--NO CLASS**
Jan 20. **Best Paper Choice Assignment due**; group discussion

**Week 3**
Jan 25. *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 3

**Week 4: Shake it up**
Jan 30. *R and J*, critical essays (Canvas); discussion
**Reflection, pt. 1 due.**
Feb 3. Garrick’s *Romeo and Juliet*
Week 5
Feb 6. Essay: Branam on Garrick; Stage history via RSC; Folger Shx. Video
Feb 8. 19th Century Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson
Feb. 10. Film Pt. 1: Romeo and Juliet Adapted: West Side Story 1 (Short intro link on Canvas)

Week 6
Feb 13. West Side Story 2
**Reaction Due: Garrick**
Feb 15. West Side Story 3
Feb. 17. Essays (Canvas): West side Story; including “West Side Story and the Vestiges of Theatrical Liberalism” by Andrea Most

Week 7:
Feb 20. Film: Baz Luhrumans’ Romeo + Juliet
**Reaction Due: West Side Story**
Feb 22. Film: Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo + Juliet
Feb 24. Finish Film; essays on Luhrman’s R + J; including Courtney Lehmann, Screen Adaptations: Romeo and Juliet: A Close Study of the Relationship Between Text and Film

Week 8
Feb 27. Othello 1-2
**Reaction due: Luhrman’s R and J**
Mar. 1. Othello 3
Mar. 3. Othello 4 & 5

Week 9:
March 6. Othello: Critical Essays (Canvas) including Michael Neill, Matthew Steggle, and Clare McManus. **Reaction due: on one Othello essay**
March 8. Othello: 18th and 19th C Othello: Critical essays (Canvas) Virginia Vaughn Mason, Edward Kahn
March 10. Library Visit

Week 10:
March 13. 20th C Othello: Film
March 15. 20th C Othello: Film
March 17. Finish Film. Date Proposal due.

Week 11
Spring Break

Week 12
March 27. In-class post-break project work. Group consult.
March 31. Manga Shakespeare: Othello

Week 13
April 3. Wrap-Up discussion.
April 5: Group Conferences and Portfolio check-in
April 7. Library Day

Week 14:
April 10. Group Conferences.
April 12. Portfolio discussion day.
April 14. **Draft Workshop.**

Week 15
April 17. Presentations
April 19. Presentations
April 21. Presentations

Week 16
April 24 Presentations
April 26. Presentations
April 28. Class wrap/Reflections

**Final Portfolio and Paper due during Finals Week.**
B. **Aim and Scope Statement, English 487, Department of English**

**ENGL 487: English Capstone Experience**

Aim & Scope Document

**BULLETIN DESCRIPTION**

- Credit Hours: 3
- Course Format: Lecture 3
- Course Delivery: Classroom
- ACE Outcomes: 10
- Prereqs: Senior standing

Integration and application of skills and knowledge gained in courses taken for the English major. Involves synthesis, reflection, and a substantive final writing project.

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**Language to be added to syllabus:**
The University requires information on ACE (when relevant) and ADA to be on your syllabus. The English department recommends the following language, which may be modified to suit your specific syllabus. Note, you must now include the "Opportunities" language of ACE, wordy as it is. Not all sample syllabi may reflect this requirement.

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**Achievement Centered Education**

*By passing this course, you will fulfill ACE Learning Outcome 10: “Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.” Your work will be evaluated by the instructor according to the specifications described in this syllabus. At the end of the term, you may be asked to provide samples of your work for ACE assessment as well.*

**Opportunities to achieve this outcome:**

English 487, Senior Capstone, is a seminar that serves as a final, culminating experience for the English major. Faculty members teaching the course explore an area of scholarly interest with a small group of undergraduates in a way that focuses on broad connections between texts, genres, and the artistic, cultural, political, and social contexts in which they emerge. Although the topic and texts will vary with the instructor, students generally focus on a few core texts that are read within the context of a theme so that students can explore how various issues shape literary and nonliterary production, textuality, and the cultural and social historical influences on the processes of reading and writing. The course is also designed to help students reflect upon their training as English majors and apply the reading and writing skills they have developed in order to produce substantial writing projects suited to their individual areas of interest. Students approach these texts in a variety of ways and use a variety of methodologies, including creative, critical, research, and experiential writing.
Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of this outcome:
English 487 is a discussion-based course, and students are expected to participate orally and engage in class writing and reading activities designed to foster critical thinking. Assignments will provide a range of opportunities for students to apply historical knowledge and textual analysis to problems and issues relevant to the texts under discussion. Informal writing assignments are designed to require both close reading and analysis of texts while formal writing assignments, usually in the form of a major scholarly or creative project, are designed to demonstrate the skills, methodologies, a student has learned as an English major.

ADA language to be added to syllabus:
Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides individualized academic support for students with documented disabilities. Support services can include extended test time, textbooks and handouts in alternative formats (electronic texts, Braille, taped texts, etc), classroom notes, sign language interpreters, and transcriptionists. SSD not only accommodates students that have visible disabilities, but students with other varying types of disabilities that impact college life. If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call SSD at 472-3787 and schedule an appointment. If you do not have a documented disability but you are having difficulties with your coursework (such as receiving low grades even though you study more than your classmates or find you run out of time for test questions when the majority of your peers finish their exams in the allotted time), you may schedule an appointment to discuss the challenges you are experiencing.
C. Mapping Assignment and Data

Mapping: Part 1

1) Go to your transcript or other list of courses you have taken.
2) Make a list of just your courses for your major.
3) If you only have course numbers, make sure you go back and put course titles (as specific as possible) with those course numbers.
4) For each course, try to come up with a short description of what you remember the course being about and the key things you learned about there. Shoot for three things about each course. If you complete that and have time to do more, go ahead! But this is just to get our mind going.

Mapping: Part 2

1) Think about how to connect your courses. Which courses had overlap or contributed to skill building together? What are the bonds between them? Create a map that shows the links.
2) Look at your map. Are there any courses that feel really central to you? Are there clear senses of progression? Did one course lead you to another? Why if so? Are there outliers? Why?
3) With your maps in mind, come up with a list of skills that you think you’ve learned/mastered in your various courses in your major. Consider the kinds of things you reported about yourself as a student in your profile.
4) Add these skills to your map in some way. You might want to add skills to individual courses, or you might even rearrange the map according to skill areas if that makes more sense to you.
5) On Wednesday, have a finished map that cleanly displays (in whatever way you think best organizes your assessment of your coursework) together. You can choose if you want to stick with the course connections and add skills in to your course descriptions, or if you want to more broadly re-organize your map according to skills first and courses that fit these areas. It’s up to you in how you see your experience fitting together.

*I also presented students with a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate examples of different kinds of maps, to help them think creatively about what they could do. I am not including this document in the portfolio for reasons of space

Student Map Examples
Mapmaker A (please note, this is a draft copy as the final version was not available)
Mapmaker B (Dustin Gardner, who asked to have his name retained with his work)
Mapmaker D
Reflections and Comments from Mapmakers:

Mapmaker A
Reflection:
“A) The most important things to me when mapping were establishing spaces between certain points, especially comparing experiences at [a previous school] and the rest of my education, as well as my goals in relation to learning. B) The hardest part of the assignment was spacing things out and trying to figure out ways to represent ideas topographically.”

Comments on others:

“[Mapmaker B] Dustin:
  A) Story that goes along with each landmark
  B) Each landmark reflection the story’s judgment on it, eg. philosopher’s tower looks kooky.
  C) What made you fall in love with criminal justice? Why couldn’t you stay?

[Mapmaker C]:
  A) Super intricate
  B) Areas that get more space
  C) Why do some areas get more space than others? What’s up with rhetoric? Safety shore?

[Mapmaker D]:
  A) Juxtaposition of density and open spaces
  B) Roads/connections between landmarks
  C) What about CLAS connects it so much else? What about each class makes it that kind of topography?”

Dustin
Reflection:
“For me, the most important [thing] was getting everything in proper order and finding the right geographic locations to describe each filed of study. The hardest was trying to make it interesting. Although I switched a few times, I always knew what my end goal was [--] I was trying to find the quickest and most interesting way out.”

Comments on others:
[Mapmaker D]: Not open, but not crowded. Interesting 254, 315B, 200, 333 ARE LARGE while 230, 362 are just DOTS.
[Mapmaker A]: OPEN, but very direct. DEFINITELY know where you wanted to end up:

Mapmaker C
Reflection:
“The most important thing about the construction of my map was how the certain landmarks symbolized how I felt toward the class and how everything connected in path. For example, rhetoric is in death hills but the easier courses don’t lie directly in the hills. The hardest thing about the map was coming up with new ways to symbolize the class instead of just listing course numbers. I also had a lot of space I needed to fill, so it was hard filling up awkward, empty space.”
Mapmaker D
Reflection:
“The most important thing for me was to show that very few things are connected. I took most, if not all, of these specific classes to fulfill graduation requirements. While I did learn somethings in each class, I cared for some more than others. The hardest thing was to figure out how to differentiate the classes and how to lay them out on a map that makes sense to me.”

Comments on others:

Map A:
“[The Student’s] map is very open, but everything is connected. She has roads of how the sections connect with goals and experiences. Around the towns she has the types of things she has gone through. I am curious about the ‘letting it go bridge.’”

Map B:
“Dustin wrote a story with his map. I love that he chose to make his stops possible majors/topics and made them waystations almost. I am curious to know if anything is along the roads between his stopping points.”

Map C:
“There is so much going on in [this student’s] map. I really like all of the different parts of her land and the different sections she has in each of those towns. I am curious to know if there is a correlation between the Swamp of Stress and the surrounding areas.”

D. “Best Paper” Assignment and Data

Assignment

English 487
Portfolio work
Choosing Writing

In English 487, one of our major tasks is to assemble a portfolio of your work that represents you in the major.

What does this mean?

The portfolio should be a reflective document, in which you assemble 20-30 pages of writing from larger, formal projects, and a mini-folio of smaller, perhaps informal projects that are key for understanding your work and development. These might include reflections, reaction papers, journals, presentations, etc. You will also write, during this course, an introductory essay that is a reflection on your work that explains and explores the way you have come to think about your work over the past four years and through this course.

For next Friday, you’ll invest some time thinking about which pieces of formal writing you think you might want to include in the portfolio. Spend time over the next week looking over your past work.
You should identify two pieces of writing that you consider your *best* work. Now, you might be saying, “How can two pieces both be my best?” That’s possible because “best” is a really tricky term. I want you in looking at your work to find at least two ways you would define what is your “best” and two different pieces that reflect that difference.

Then, I want you to write a short essay accompanying these two pieces of writing that clarifies the difference of these “bests,” why you’ve chosen those categories, and how each piece of writing demonstrates that kind of “best.” You might ask yourself, “is this the best thing I’ve written in terms of my skills as a writer?” or, “Is this the best job I’ve ever done communicating to an audience?” or, “Is this the best work I’ve done in crafting ___ genre?” or “Is this the best I’ve ever done presenting a rhetorical argument?” There might be other ways you would define your best.

Your new essay should be about 600-700 words, or roughly 2-3 double spaced pages. Bring four copies of your essay with you to class, and bring two copies of each of the two “best” essays you’ve chosen.

Rubric with scoring for the class (black):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did student define what “best” meant in terms of their work?</td>
<td>Yes—With detail 17</td>
<td>Yes—With some specifics</td>
<td>Yes, but not clearly</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the different pieces correspond to different definitions of “best”?</td>
<td>Yes 14</td>
<td>No 5</td>
<td>Yes, but the student did not draw this conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student discuss more holistically the individual pieces and meaningfully reflect on them?</td>
<td>Yes—With insight 14</td>
<td>Yes—But not very specifically 1</td>
<td>Yes—But unevenly (one more than the other) 2</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student carry out the work with care?</td>
<td>The work was well done and polished 16</td>
<td>The work was done with interest, but technically flawed 1</td>
<td>The work was perfunctory</td>
<td>The work did not meet requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I should note that category 2 does not really have a “good” or “bad” attached to it. This is data about how students looked at the assignment: did they want variety, or did they want to pull their pieces together? The numbers here do not add up because some students offered an overarching reason that their pieces were “best” and a unifying statement for those definitions.

E. Final Reflective Introduction Essays and Portfolios

Reflection Assignment
Reflection

You have done a number of different kinds of intellectual work as a major in this department, and you have constructed a course of study for yourself, within our curriculum guidelines, that has asked you to do many things. You have written in a variety of different voices and genres, with a variety of audiences in mind, with a variety of constraints or conventions, and for a variety of purposes. You have studies far-reaching texts, from different literary traditions, different cultures, different times, and with different audiences and purposes. You have honed your skills to look critically and carefully at these texts and at your own writing. Now, we’re asking you to turn your attention to the last several years of work and think about what you have done, what you have learned, and how you feel about that process. Your task is to write a reflective introduction to your portfolio. This task may seem easier said than done. But, here are some ways to think about what you’re doing, and possibly, what to avoid.

Reflection and Being Critical

Your work here is to be critical. That does not mean to be mean to yourself or to argue with yourself. It means to think clearly and objectively about your experiences and how you want to present them. It means to consider what kinds of ways you would want to understand your experience, not only your emotional reactions (though these are valid and important). You must synthesize your intellectual response and your passionate response to your experience.

As such, you may need to keep in mind that there are some temptations to this kind of writing that may come with the nostalgia of finishing your degree.

1) It may be tempting to describe your time in the major as one of growth and success. I.e.: “I was not good at x things when I began, but now I am.” Or “I made a lot of progress in doing x, and I am proud of that.” These things may be true, but what does this really tell us about the work you have done? Thing about questions like this instead of defining progress: What kinds of tasks have you been asked to do? What have those different tasks meant to the way that you have developed? What kinds of texts and writing did you encounter? What have you learned from the variety of elements you have been asked to synthesize? What do your areas of strength tell you about your studies?

2). Avoiding a passion-driven diatribe or celebration. It may be easy to gush or gripe about your experiences, only evaluating the program of study rather than your own work and learning. Your reflection is about yourself and your writing, not just the department and the course of study.

3). Avoid thinking about your “success” or growth only in terms of your grades. It’s easy to take outcomes and ideals and think about grades or grading yourself. Professors have already graded you and thought about your work in this frame. We’re not interested in a checklist here, but rather, in a reflection of what it means to cultivate these skills.
**Reflective Introductions: What to do**

1. Look for patterns in your work in the major, but don’t obsess over them or try to force your work into them. What kinds of work do you come back to and enjoy? Think about your maps and what kind of path you chose and why. Think about the kind of writing that led to more writing, think about the kind of writing that challenged you—even if you did not succeed—and how it relates to your narrative.

2. What kinds of elements of your studies have been in conversation over the past years? When you took critical/historical classes, how did they relate to your other classes? How did a course you did not expect to be what you were looking for change something about a favorite area? What kinds of different parts of the program had an effect on you, even if it was not your main chosen work? How did your main concentration or focus become “yours?” What have your writing practices shown to you about yourself and about the world that you engage?

3. When you think about outcomes, don’t just think about if you can “do” these things. Think about what pursuing these skills has taught you. How will you continue to use them? How will you describe yourself and your skills set as you seek to participate in the wider world?

*(The Introductory Reflection Rubric is included in the main text of this portfolio, so it is not included in this Appendix.)*

**Final Portfolio Assignment**

*English 487 Capstone Portfolio and Reflective Introduction*

You will be compiling your portfolio as we close the class. This portfolio will take the form of the folio: about 40-45 pages of work, which includes your major project for this course, plus a reflective introduction and a selection of work from your major that you feel represents you.

Here are the parts of the portfolio broken down:

1) The Reflective Introduction (new writing)
2) Your survey of work (past writing)
3) Your capstone paper (new writing)

**The Reflective Introduction**

This piece of new writing should represent the important intellectual work of reflecting on and critically commenting on your past work and skill development. The introductory essay should be 4-5 pages of your portfolio, and it should allow an opportunity for you to contextualize the work you will include in the portfolio and provide a sense of what the portfolio represents. More details about the reflective essay are included in the individual assignment sheet for that part of the portfolio.

**The Survey of Past Work**

We began this process in January, when you went back through your work and chose two of examples of what you thought of as your “best work,” thought about your major in map-form, and
contemplated your “profile” as a major. You may use the pieces that you selected for your best work, or you may select different pieces, to put together as a whole in your portfolio. You might want to think about the way your maps and profile came together and what kind of work you think represents your path through your major. The group of written texts that you will assemble should represent your personal passions and interests along with a range of skills and knowledge that you have developed in your studies.

You might want to look back at the learning outcomes of the department that we have discussed several times in class, to think about what the major has set out to develop in your studies, and what you have most valued as well as where you have excelled (or, not). You also are not required to select long projects, and you can excerpt from longer pieces if it is appropriate or necessary for your portfolio. (For example, if you wrote a long honors thesis and would like to a sample from it, you may do that rather than include the whole thing.) You could create a unit that is connected by skill or theme: “here are several short close reading or reaction papers that demonstrate the development of analytical skills.” Or, you could offer a collection of short poems that show a variety of forms that you have worked through. It is up to you how you want to present yourself and what you want to include in the scope of this portfolio. You will want to think about what pieces you want to put together and why, and be able to articulate what those pieces mean to you. You do not need to revise work from previous courses for presentation in your portfolio, but you should certainly feel free to do so. If you leave work in its original form, you have an opportunity to comment on your development or trajectory as a student. **Do present clean copies of your work, without marks or comments from your professors.**

**Your Capstone Paper**
The final element of your portfolio is your substantial project for this class, which will represent a sustained engagement with the capstone topic and with your interests. The final paper included here will be a copy of the same paper that you hand in as your major assignment, and does not need to be tweaked to be included in the portfolio. This is a new piece and very substantial piece of writing, and you might think about how it works with your other pieces in the portfolio as you craft your reflective essay and think about your overall development.

The portfolio, including the final version of your major paper, is due on May 2 by 4:30 PM. It MUST come in on time and it MUST be complete. You are welcome to hand the portfolio in before that date, and you are welcome to speak with me about how to put it together or to help you think about what to include, at any point. I must confirm your grades before you can be cleared to graduate, so I cannot wait any longer for portfolios than May 2. Handing in the Portfolio late will have a very detrimental affect on your grade and could jeopardize graduation.

*(The Final Portfolio Rubric is included in the main text of this portfolio, so it is not included in this Appendix.)*

**F. Shakespeare Reflection Assignment and Rubric**

**Assignment**

Reflection Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*

**Due:** January 30
Task: Think about your experience with *Romeo and Juliet*, now and previously. Consider some element of the play that resonates with you. This could be an element of the text that speaks to you in some way or an element of your experience with the text that speaks to you. Write a short reflective essay that uses a point of contact with the play to consider some kind of larger idea about life, literature, Shakespeare, education, culture, performance, or well…anything. You should give some clear and careful discussion of *Romeo and Juliet* through a point of contact in the play that you want to use as your interface, but how you use it and what you do with it in the essay are up to you.

Some ways to begin this process:
- You could start with a quote and expand upon what it makes you think about and why that process is important.
- You could start with something that happened in your life—an anecdote—and bring some element of the play—a quote, a speech, a series of character interactions—into the discussion.
- You could talk about an area of theory or criticism that interests you and bring an example from *R and J* as a way to discuss the implications of theory and criticism and how it makes you think.
- You could discuss an interpretation of model of a scene/speech/character that you’ve seen and how it compares with the text or your interpretation of it.
- You could find a point of contact with your previous experience of the play (in high school or other classes, for example, or in pop culture) and discuss how your interaction with the play now compares.

In other words, this is not a straight up close-reading or short research paper. There need to be two elements: a consideration of Shakespeare (which is fairly specific and refers directly to the play/textual evidence) and a consideration of something beyond that which is important to you for some reason. These two must in some way connect, and you must explore and explain why that connection is valid and productive. The paper should be considered a formal assignment: that is, you should strive for clear, proof-read, spell-checked, well constructed work.

**Rubric**

An excellent paper (A range): Is able to provide a nuanced, if short, reading on some element of R and J, using clear critical language, and finds a useful and pertinent tie with this element. The discussion in the reflection is equally well thought out, detailed, and carefully written. The piece should feel synthetic, and the main idea the writer discusses should be clear and revelatory in some way.

A good paper (B range) is able to make a connection between the play and the writer’s subject matter, though the connection may be more general. The evidence produced might be more of a holistic sort than something detailed and specific that stands up to a highly intense reading. The paper may be somewhat imbalanced in terms of the relationship of the point of contact and the larger reflection. The larger reflection as well might be more general or more undeveloped in terms of the contact made. The writing is clear and mostly correct.

A sufficient paper (C range) treats the play in some way, though may be very imbalanced in the way it reflects on either the connection or the text itself. The construction of the paper may be disorganized or too blocky—that is, that the
connections of the elements may not synthesize and the parts may remain too separate to understand how the reflection is supposed to work. Both elements are there, but the reflection may not seem directly related or closely supported by the Shakespeare element. Writing is good, but may have some serious errors.

An insufficient paper (D or below) may not be of an appropriate length, may not go into detail, may flub or otherwise mischaracterize elements of the Shakespeare discussion. The paper may heed only lip service to one of the elements of the assignment, or may leave out an element altogether. It might not offer depth or may suffer from poor writing and unclear communication of ideas.

**G. Critical Reaction Papers**

**Example Assignment: Reaction Paper 2:**

Write a short paper of 2-3 pages discussing one of the following options in light of our viewing of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* and Courtney Lehman's chapter (or, if you wish, Bourdieu).

1) Lehman discusses the idea that Luhrmann is struggling between originality and legend in his work with *Romeo and Juliet*, and that he must position himself not only in terms of early modern culture and performance of Shakespeare, but also, in terms of cinematic precedent. In discussing an aspect of Lehman's critique of Luhrmann's problem of "originality." Consider, in light of her critical discussion, what the problem of "originality" means for Luhrmann's film, and whether you see his cinematic contribution as in itself original, or, as commenting on the impossibility of originality.

2) Compare *West Side Story* and *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* in terms of their cinematic work. Lehmann writes about how Luhrmann's film may be seen in postmodern terms—as in itself, using (through pastiche and other techniques) a bricolage of cinematic influences to craft its own identity. We can see *West Side Story* as, potentially, one of these points of cinematic contact that Luhrmann contends with. How do the two films ultimately relate to one another, and, what does seeing Luhrmann's production (which many of you may have encountered first) and *West Side Story* back-to-back allow one to newly evaluate—for either cinematic "text."

3) Think about the way that Luhrmann's film trades in cultural capital. What is Luhrmann's comment on the way that popular culture uses and consumes other cultural, social, or artistic products? How does the film, as an LA-styled, theatricalized, yet, supremely self-aware cultural object understand its position in the trade of cultural motifs and ideas? We might ask what is the value of the idea of "William Shakespeare" in *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, and what is Luhrmann's position (as an artist, as a filmmaker, as someone working for a commercial film study) in this web of cultural products?

**Rubric for Critical Reaction Papers**

*Each paper was assessed on a scale of 1-10 according to the following general rubric:*

9-10: Superior paper, well written with detailed attention to the text(s) being discussed. Uses close reading and proper evidence (including quotation, with citation) to analyze language and provide reasons for conclusions. Shows organized thought with a clear introduction, topic sentences, developed body analysis paragraphs, and conclusion. Elements of the paper are clearly linked through rhetoric of the writer. Balance of argument and analysis.
8-9: Good paper, with good attention to the text and use of key details. Might summarize some larger points with a little too much generality, or conversely, might dwell on detail without completely developing the main thrust of the analysis. Main ideas are clear and thoughtful, although the paper may not show a complete logical arc or totally clear development of an idea. Clean writing, but there may be some mechanical mistakes or awkward spots.

7-8: Sufficient paper, with references to the text in at least a general way and attention to the main focus of the assignment. Develops an idea, although may not make a complete and compelling case. Discusses the text more generally than specifically. May have writing errors or weak structure.

6-7: Paper scratches the surface of the assignment, working with generalities. Does not show complete or detailed understanding of the text. May suffer from weak writing or unclear thoughts and ideas.

Below 6: Paper fails to adequately address the assignment or may be so poorly written as to be an unacceptable attempt.

H. Survey On Shakespeare Content Area

Data Collection: 487

What is your relative feeling of comfort in studying or discussing Shakespeare, after having completed our section of the course on Shakespeare?

Pretty, or “decently” comfortable 9; Very 2; Quite 1; “This course was made for me.” 1; Don’t despise anymore 1; Do more! 1; Better 1

Do you think you feel more, less, or the same level of comfort in dealing with Shakespeare or these particular plays than when you began the course?

More 10; Same 3; Same plus 1; More Othello, same R and J 1; A little more, maybe 1

What elements of the course were most helpful in adding to your critical abilities in discussing or writing about Shakespeare?

Written adaptation elements 3; Class discussion 5; Readings 3; None 1; Didn’t like films. 1; Liked Films 2; All the different kinds of adaptations 3; Freedom to discuss in class 1

If you think about the reaction papers that you wrote (the 4 short papers in our Shakespeare unit) what kinds of discussions were most interesting to you? Was there a paper that you recall helped you engage a play or topic in a new way?

Historical context 1; First Othello paper 2; Adaptation-based ones 1; Lubrmann assignment 3; Romeo and Juliet Culture/West Side Story 4; Romeo and Juliet 3; Culture-based in modernity 1; Don’t remember what they were about 1; Tragedy/Comedy/ Romeo and Juliet class discussion; All interesting 1

Was it more useful to watch whole films when we discussing adaptations, or did you like seeing more, different versions even if it meant not seeing films in full? (i.e. how we studied Romeo and Juliet on film vs. how we studied Othello on film?)
What would you add to the Shakespeare portion of the course?

Additional play 4; Separately, 2 students mentioned Macbeth and 1 Merry Wives of Windsor; Design a modern adaptation 1; More adaptations (US) 1; More reflection papers 1; More group work 1; More creative work 1; More creative mediums 1; Add other plays and cut Romeo and Juliet 2; Wider view of R and J 1; Comedy 1; Not sure 1; Class is fun and interesting 1; More International 1

I. Proposals

Assignment

English 487
Fall 2017

Major Project Proposal:

Write a proposal for the major project you’ll undertake this semester. Please write the proposal as a formal document, using section headings to set off the main content. Please include at least the following sections in your proposal:

1) Tentative Title of Project
2) Abstract (explain the main idea of the paper/project you are writing, what kind of a project it is, and what its main design/focus will be)
3) Goals for the Project (explain why the idea matters, how it fits into our course, and who your audience is)
4) Author’s Credentials (how does your English training prepare you to write this project?)
5) Bibliography (a list of 3-4 published works that connect with your project), including short summaries of these sources (a few sentences) and how they connect to your project.

As you complete the proposal, please add, though this can be less formal:

- What skill set do you need to employ to succeed in this project? Are there parts that you feel more or less nervous about?
- What kind of resources do you need to help you? What kinds of documents that we have read/watched/or referenced would be helpful? (I.e. original works? Theoretical arguments on, say, appropriation, adaptation, cultural capital? More sources on historical context or literary history? Theater history? Film criticism? etc.)
- What work do you need to do next?

The initial proposal counts for 5 points of your project's total points (35).

Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title and Abstract</td>
<td>Full Marks: Gives detailed abstract with clear sense of the project's shape, even if not a complete argument. A workable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gives a clear sense of why the project is important to the person or what they want to accomplish through it; project matches these goals. 1.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credentials</td>
<td>Person clearly describes their past work and reasons they are the right person for the project. Person may also acknowledge areas of weakness or that are new, but shows an understanding of this hurdle. 1.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>Person gives full set of sources and a sense of what the source is about and why they have chosen it. Sources make sense for the project. 1.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skillset/resource/planning</td>
<td>Person answers honestly, shows some forethought for what they are planning to do. Recognizes strengths and/or weaknesses/anxieties moving forward. Realistic sense of what lies ahead. 1.0 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points: 5.0

Proposals examples

From Group 1 (High) paper proposal excerpt:

**Tentative Title:** The Bard's Collective: Shakespeare Adapted for Modern Children

Abstract: It’s not uncommon for teenagers and adults to develop a disliking for William Shakespeare. Although he is praised as one of the greatest poets in human history, his language can be difficult to follow. Plain and simple, people just don’t talk like that anymore. The Bard’s Collective will attempt to change this view in one simple way: by initiating an excitement and appreciation of Shakespeare at a younger age. In this “book,” there are adaptations of some of Shakespeare’s greatest plays put into language children can follow. There are also games, activities, illustrations, tools to help guide an understanding of Shakespeare’s language, and tips for adults to aid in teaching children about Shakespeare.

Goals: This idea for the project came to me because I have been spending a lot of time lately trying to come up with a way to teach my four-year-old about Shakespeare. As the abstract states, I think that the best way to create a more positive attitude towards Shakespeare in society is to begin teaching children bits and pieces of Shakespeare before it is thrust upon them in high school. This
project will fit into our course in a very obvious way, as I am hoping to create my own small adaptations of Shakespeare, with children like my son and my eight-year-old niece in mind.

(This student had a strong bibliography, with four appropriate sources summarized and explained for their relevance to the project.)

Comment from professor:
Cool idea. I really like it. I think you're aware of some of the challenges that you're facing and this proposal does a really good job enumerating those things and also your ideas. I hope this process has been helpful. I think that what you need to do is decide what you want to present and how much. Do you want to do a version of one play? Do you want to write a paper about how to work through these challenges alongside a few samples of the kinds of things that would fit into this approach? This could allow you to explain and explore what students are lacking at the later age (high school) and what might work at a younger age. Would you prefer to design something and discuss what it would do, with some part of it completed but not fully done, then, narrating and explaining the rationale for the different elements? No matter what, it needs to be a project that is doable in the time you have, and to the extent that it can best represent what you want to show. I'm emailing you a handful of articles I found on ERIC that might be helpful—there are a billion more—merely based on abstracts/titles. They may not all be helpful or hit what you're looking for, but it would be good to have something to back up the "kids hate Shakespeare in high school" claim but also some evidence for why Shakespeare is still good to teach, and why teaching Shakespeare even younger is good. I think one key issue for this "problem" of Shakespeare is that, as you state, people get scared of the language. Personally, I think people are as scared of the fact that it's poetry as anything else. So, I would challenge you to think about strategies for getting kids to think through poetry. After all, they do it all the time with basic rhymes. Shakespeare's just a little different. Using some of the lines that are a little more innocent (maybe a sappy sonnet or two) could be a nice way in. You'll have to think about what to do with the naughtiness of Shakespeare and his adult themes. What is ok for kids? What age kids?

From Group 2: (Middle)

Title: Created with a Stubborn Outside: Powers of Shakespeare From Past to Present

Abstract Main Idea
The main idea of my upcoming project will be to outline and analyze the how and why of the longevity of Shakespeare’s works, specifically that of Romeo and Juliet, in the literary world. I hope to simplify why not only the themes of his stories, but also his actual stories themselves have engrained themselves into Western culture to the point of continual repetition, the works being taken and adapted in different manners yet keeping the same “core”, and how the name of Shakespeare is recognized in practically every household.

Goals for Project
This idea matters because the works of Shakespeare is easily a major part to be studied in the evolution of Western literature. The influence of these specific forms of literature has affected Western culture and literature as a whole for centuries now and the understanding of why that is the case is part of the foundation of studying Shakespeare as a whole. The fact that this topic is a study of Shakespeare is a clear indication to how it fits into our course and as for who the audience is, essentially any individual that looks to understand why Shakespeare is as prevalent in Western culture as much as it is.
(This student had three sources in the Bibliography, two of which were appropriate and one less so. There were descriptions of the books, but one was an essay collection and no single essays were mentioned.)

Comment from professor:

So, I am imagining that as you are gathering information on this topic, you're looking at lots of different ways that people might describe Shakespeare's longevity or his popularity. There's indeed a whole branch of Shakespeare worship and then, lots of study on Shakespeare worship (Bardolatry) to try to understand it. I would suggest though, that as this is the subject of rather huge books, and you'll need to find something that you can focus upon in a relatively contained way. This will help you to find a way to offer a more specific claim that you can manage in the limit you have of both pages and time. So, let's think about particular parts of Shakespeare you might be curious about and why they are still or became popular or well-known. For example, you could write about how Romeo and Juliet are iconic in literature and culture, and what that means for versions of the play as it goes forward. Or, you could think about how different moments/critics over time have changed their opinion on characters like Desdemona or Iago. But, regardless of what angle you choose, you need to define what it means to study this particular aspect of Shakespeareania. For example, if you want to write about how Shakespeare becomes fodder for Bollywood, great. But, then, you'll explain WHY this development is so important.

From Group 3: (Aspirational)

Tentative Title
Othello and Double Consciousness

Abstract
Othello, as apart of early British Literature could be seen as one of the earliest evidence of Double consciousness. W.E.B De Bois first coined the concept “double consciousness” in 1903 in a publication of “The Souls of Black Folks” Although this term was used in regards to American Society in 20th century, it is applicable in Othello in the era it was developed. The character Othello psychologically changes throughout the play, this psychological transformation is very reflective of what the term double consciousness means. De Bois, explains that double consciousness is when African American cannot have a unified identity such as a “black” and an American Identity not being able to merge . Because of the racial tension was intense in that era African American people would almost be forced to see their selves from an outside lense, “through the eye of white” folks. This concept can be easily transferred and applicable to the play Othello. Using evidence from the play such as characters like Iago, Roderigoe, and Brabantio as a reflection of racial tension, that very much mimics the racial tension that existed in American society in the 20th century.

Goals
The concept double consciousness is an important ideal to explore because it is a concept that explains what an African American’s experience can be like in a racially intense environment. If we continue to explore this concept it gives us an opportunity to analyze society and race relations. And if the concept can be applied to a culture other than American culture , and be applied within a different time as well, it could more than likely keep applying to societies with certain racial variables that creates the double consciousness experience in people. If the term double consciousness was in reference to black people, can it transfer to any other person who feels “otherness” such as muslim, people in America, or even Mexican American people in America. What variables does it take to create a society where a certain minority feels not at home or subjected to unfair treatment by its own community?
Although this paper is centered on race relations, Shakespeare deliberately creates these scenarios that can invite us to think about race relations, before racism was even a developed term.

(The student had two main bibliographic sources, the DuBois essay and a commentary section from the edition of Othello that we had used for class. This was an allowed source, but the bibliography was not robust.)

Comment from Professor:

Ok, I really think this can be a great project. You will need to make some choices about how you want to follow the connection of DuBois's ideas and Shakespeare's. You could look at 16th century Shakespeare and consider if the text seems to open a possibility for imagining something *like* what DuBois describes (obviously, with some changes and tweaks, since even the complex identity that DuBois describes in dual term (American and Black) is less fractional than Othello's options. As the Neill article relates (and please do use that one, it should be helpful) the Venetian and Moor identities for Othello are tricky. But Othello is also sometimes "black" (a term as unstable as moor) sometimes African, sometimes Christian, and related to "Turk" as well. So, this is tricky but important. Another way you could go is to think about Othello in the early 20th century, and consider what Othello in DuBois terms would mean. You could look at some theater history from the early 20th century, or even throughout the 20th century, to think about how black actors and audiences might have been framing Othello in light of the kind of tensions and problems that DuBois describes. I'd recommend looking at some of the texts in: _Othello : new essays by Black writers_ , edited with a background essay by Mythili Kaul. This is available in the library (not on reserve) and I also have a copy if you can't get your hands on it. This is also a good popular press article that you might find helpful: http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/theater/2015/11/why_is_othello_black_understanding_why_shakespeare_made_his_hero_a_moor.html . The Bedford edition should also have some really good places to start, and I'd be happy to help you think about what these options are and how you want to follow. In a paper of this length, I'd say you want to look at one or the other option here, rather than try to do both. I.e. "Shakespeare's Othello, and re-engineering race" (looking back from DuBois and thinking about how and how not those ideas would work) or "DuBoisian Othello: the Double Consciousness of 20th Century Othello" or "Thinking about Othello and Race in the wake of Dubois." etc.

H. Draft Workshop

Comments on Drafts

Group 1 Draft

I'm impressed with the research you've done so far and the clever ways you've put together this historical and cultural introduction material. The images are a nice touch, but you'll need to make sure you give proper credit for those. As you note in your comments, you have some work still to do in thinking about the adaptations you want to include, what proportion of the project those will be, and how you want to transition between the different sections. (Your Act/Scene structure now is cute, but will this be overwhelming?)

There are a number of good things to think about post-draft thoughts. A) with the length, let's think about that in targeting words. I think we can massage the length of the portfolio to make sure you can include enough other pieces given the nature of your project. If you've chosen the pieces you want to include, it should be about 25 pages or so. That leaves you with about 20 for the project, but the project does need to be substantial on its own. Since you're including illustrations and etc. in it, we can perhaps recognize that the word count rather than the page length is key. So, let's touch base about your length when you do your presentation.
We talked about this in class the other day as well, but I hope you’ve gotten a sense of how big you want the project to be. I did just want to note that it should have a works cited or bibliography somewhere to note where your information and research came from.

**Group 2 Draft**

I’m glad to see a draft came in, that you were able to take some time and get some work in. I think there’s still probably more here than you need to chew over for this project, and maybe it would help to focus more. I think you want to think about what 19th c/ 20th c. movements do with Shakespeare and how they treat him, and why it's important. The discussion of imperialism, for example, is right but pretty uncomplicated in terms of being a sketch of colonial history but not really detailed about Shakespeare. Let’s avoid trying to cover the world and narrow this done to something that you can make an interesting argument to think about. Maybe it would make sense to define what the clubs and groups are that you want to think about and what they do with Shakespeare? I think it would be helpful to define how you want to treat the topic, the question that you want to ask beyond "how did this happen" to "what does it mean?" Why should anyone care is the explicit underlying question, and it’s a fine question to ask. The trajectory can really be about what did these groups/clubs gain by thinking about/using/branding Shakespeare? This is a cultural capital kind of thing. Can we talk about it? I’d love to help you trim this down so you're not swimming EVERYTHING. it's ok to skip over lots of stuff here.

**Group 3 Draft**

As you’re finishing your paper, I hope that you’ve found some ways to help organize and focus your discussions. Recall that we talked about the following structure in our conference, and make sure that you’re clear about what the progression of your ideas in the paper may be.

1) Offering the proposition that Shakespeare Othello is an important text as a work of literature but that it can also offer an advantage to creating new discussion about race even in a modern context. As you say in your draft, it creates a model text to think about what an experience of "otherness" may look like. By then discussing and studying reactions and critical assessments of the play or its performances, audience have had ways to begin conversations about race in neutral ways, which may buffer the effects of politics in any given situation.

2) You need structure for your discussion about ideas of race in the play and the way the the text contributes to discussions of what becomes "racial discourse." As we discussed today, you can explain that a) looking at the play in this context of its own cultural moment helps us to see that race has not always been the same idea and treated the same way in history. Shakespeare’s play shows ambiguities and uncertainties about how to talk about otherness, blackness, and a variety of conditions that Othello embodies.

3) Intervention 1: In thinking about the ambiguities and uncertainties of race, we can think about how to look at the play in other contexts/critical ways. For example you’ve identified a pairing of Othello with W.E.B. Dubois’ idea of "double consciousness." By bringing these texts together, you can offer a critical reading of Othello that also employs the ideas that Dubois offered in his essay. This shows the way that critical ideas about race can make us look differently at older texts, and how a historically removed text might be revived to speak to a new generation.

OR

3) Intervention 2:
You could think about race through the ways Othello has been performed by white actors. You can consult the Bedford edition of the text for some notes on Othello’s performance history in the 20th century to be able to discuss what the staging of Othello means for being able to "read" a history of race in the US.
Then…

4) Conclusion. By thinking through race, we see important ways to explore the relevance of Othello to our society. We can show ways that even this highly historically removed text can be used to create conversations about race and experience.

I just wanted to summarize some of what we discussed together in response to your draft so that you had a nice, clear version.

J. Rubric and Comment for Presentations

Comments on presentations, from professor to students, for sample trajectory:
Student from Group 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student explains the paper’s main topic, applications of it.</td>
<td>Succinct, precise, and complete discussion of topic, its origin, and its applicability. 2/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explains what the paper set out to argue or main creative goal.</td>
<td>See comment below 1.8/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explains two main points or aesthetic choices pursued.</td>
<td>See comment below 1.8/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation helps us see what new ideas or understanding they seek</td>
<td>See comment below 1.9/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation polish and preparation.</td>
<td>Presenter is at least calm if not excited or passionate about project. Speaks confidently and clearly, and has well-rehearsed and planned presentation. May be nervous, but does not show any problems or loss of focus because of it. Can address the class, field questions, and avoids simply reading off notes or off of powerpoint pres. Does well answering questions. 2/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points: 9.5 out of 10.0

Final comment: Very good job in the style and mode of the presentation. You were slightly pressed for time, but you handled that pressure well. You might have gone a bit faster than you even needed to, but that’s really my fault for the schedule. Adding a visual or two from your actual project might have been great, because it’s hard to see how you want to put together the "treasury" without them. It helped me understand what you were doing instantly when I was
Students had some helpful ideas for you, I think, in terms of justifying your project. You could have talked a bit more about why these things are appropriate for small kids. In the q and a you helped explain what the purpose of the history/other elements really is in terms of getting interest—this idea should be in your main project.

Student from Group 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Presentation rubric</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student explains the paper's main topic, applications of it.</td>
<td>I think you explain well the scope and the topic itself, but I am concerned that this is still just a huge huge huge huge topic. I think that there is a sense of being able to separate the early Shakespeare preservation from later forms of Shakespeare spread, but there are a number of different narratives that came into play for explaining Shakespeare's survival and in some ways, worship.</td>
<td>1.8/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explains what the paper set out to argue</td>
<td>I think in some ways Sarah helped to broach this subject in her questions—what is the way to apply and think about this, what is the critical element of the historical survey you propose?</td>
<td>1.8/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explains two main points or aesthetic choices</td>
<td>The points you bring up were very complete—a lot of detail is included in the early Shakespeare/Readerly Shakespeare part of the discussion. The two pieces are also really quite large and important, but there is a difficulty of trying to condense an enormously complex worldwide, 400 year history into a few pages. I think some particular examples might really be necessary in order for these segments to be at a level of detail that is similar to your first point.</td>
<td>1.9/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation helps us see what new ideas or understanding they seek.</td>
<td>I think the payoff is the tricky part here—is this project justifying Shakespeare? Is it accepting his legacy? Is it questioning his legacy? If you're curious about why he stayed popular, your conclusion about what that means and why this is something you've uncovered/realized/understood anew need to come out. In some ways, I feel your paper needs to address with that &quot;social important&quot; or &quot;social use&quot; of Shakespeare in these scenarios is. Popularity means shaping the zeitgeist in some way. The question of what Global Shakespeare really means—how does it create a connection between east and west, what are the politics of that connection—needs to be addressed somehow.</td>
<td>1.8/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation polish and preparation.</td>
<td>Clearly you were prepared and the presentation looks good. There may be a little more text on here than you really need for being able to talk more off-the-cuff. But the ideas your presented were clear in regard to your topic and scope. The paper will have a harder time filling in the blanks of that presentation due to that scope and the need to define what these tracings of literary interest/popularity mean for shaping Shakespeare as a subject, a cultural icon, and an object of study.</td>
<td>1.9/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points: 9.2 out of 10.0

(Extensive comments are included in the rubric rather than as a final comment)

Student from Group 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Presentation rubric</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student explains the paper’s main topic, applications of it.</td>
<td>The overall idea of the project was still in some development, and you were honest about this with the class, but the general approach got a little lost in the number of points you want to bring up. So, framing is really key.</td>
<td>1.7/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explains what the paper set out to argue</td>
<td>I think there is a good sense of the direction you want to go and the contribution that this kind of discussion can make: thinking through race and understanding how discourses work is really powerful. But, there needs to be more certainty and focus to communicate strongly.</td>
<td>1.8/2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Presentation rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student explains two main points or aesthetic choices ideas they explore in the paper/project and what/why they use these points?</td>
<td>You had a lot of points that you wanted to explore and a good number of details. Being able to connect the points and your overall goals will help a lot, though. Viiks seemed a little lost by what you wanted to do. 1.7/ 2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation helps us see what new ideas or und...</td>
<td>I think you have a clear sense that there can be a payoff and that this topic is making you feel passionate about something—that means it is contributing. But I think this is a communication issue in the project/presentation. How to make your audience understand those goals? 1.8/ 2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation polish and preparation.</td>
<td><strong>No details</strong> Good job, even without visual aids you had clearly rehearsed and were comfortable speaking to the class. The note cards you had were helpful, but it did seem like at times you needed to remember your train of thought a bit. Still, you had to go first and had to the least time to prepare, and you had to do something really new here, so I think we should also give you some slack on this. 1.8/ 2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comment:** Students enjoyed thinking about your topic, but I think they were a little confused by your mission. There, I hope, was some product needed. Additional Comment: At times you needed help in the questions and answer session or you...

### K. Final Capstone Paper Rubrics

#### Critical Paper Project Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>9-10</th>
<th>8-9</th>
<th>7-8</th>
<th>6-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td>Strong, clear overarching point expressed that addresses chosen topic and answers the “so what” question. Introduction to your topic and argument should indicate how you are engaging with critical ideas through your secondary research.</td>
<td>Supportable main point, but perhaps less well defined or less clearly presented. Less clear how your argument will answer the “so what” question. Place of your discussion in larger field of critical debate, historical or cultural ideas, or engagement with later materials is suggested but not defined.</td>
<td>Main idea not well defined or not enough attention paid to the larger scope of the topic. Sense of what the paper’s discussion will contribute to our interpretation is hazy. How this discussion will go beyond a reading of the text is not strongly indicated.</td>
<td>Specific argument not defined. Main topic may be vague. Secondary materials or larger scope of engagement not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings of primary source texts and relevance to Shakespeare. May include discussion of importance of Shakespeare in Culture</td>
<td>Ample evidence, quotation from primary texts, integrated discussion of evidence and what it shows. Skilful discussion of language and its implications in close readings.</td>
<td>Good evidence, quotation-based analysis. Some discussion of language. Integration or analysis less sophisticated, but present.</td>
<td>Some evidence, including quotation. Discussion of evidence more limited to observation or paraphrase rather than true analysis. Focus on precision and drawing direct evidence is still needed.</td>
<td>Little evidence, few if any direct quotes. Discussion limited to obvious points, or evidence itself not elaborated upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Secondary Sources/Criticism/Theory</td>
<td>Incorporates and explains secondary sources with fluidity. Uses sources productively to develop paper’s argument. Clear discussion of the main ideas of the source as well as use of individual quotes and points from sources. Responsibly discusses the kind of source material and tradition from which it comes, and why it should be used to clarify primary source or main topic.</td>
<td>Mentions relevant secondary sources; they can be used responsibly in service of the writer’s argument, but may not be totally integrated or the best sources. Understanding of secondary sources as whole texts of their own (situating source’s arg. Vs. just picking quotes) is not always evident. Source may seem to be relevant but it may not be entirely clear that writer shows why and engages with source ideas rather than simply using them at face value.</td>
<td>Secondary sources are included, though not treated at length. Relevance of source to particular argument may be questionable; use of source limited to broad statements or perhaps a cherry-picked quote or two. The source may not seem to clearly fit with the discussion at hand.</td>
<td>Secondary source is referenced, but inclusion does not significantly add to the paper. Reading of the source may show misapplication of the source or unclear use of the evidence.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Obvious structure relayed in introduction. Smooth and logical transitions, strong paragraphs and topic sentences, careful building of argument to conclusion. Excellent transitions and incorporation of the secondary sources with main analysis of primary text.</td>
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<td>Defined structure, good paragraphs with topic sentences. Some disconnections of logic or loss of linear flow, but constructed with obvious transitions. May have some difficulty moving between primary and secondary texts or fluidly incorporating outside sources.</td>
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<td>Structure not very clear from introduction. Topic sentences less effective, transitions between paragraphs may be unclear. Transitions within paragraphs may be choppy. Logic connecting paragraphs or within paragraphs may be fuzzy. Incorporation of outside sources is weak and possibly.</td>
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<td>Introduction does not set structure for paper. Paragraphs lacking flow. Topic sentences need more focus or may in some cases be missing. Conclusion may be abrupt or not fully reached. Analysis, whether from primary or secondary sources, does not flow logically from point to point or paragraph to paragraph.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Writing, Voice, and Appropriate Style</th>
<th>Fluid, active, precise sentences with high level vocabulary and correct grammar, mechanics, and punctuation. Sense of writer’s voice and style apparent. Critical language and vocabulary for engagement are appropriate for project and audience.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Active, strong sentences. Good vocabulary and word use is correct. Minor errors in grammar, mechanics, or punctuation. Writing is clear and declarative. Mostly shows proper formality or employment of language that works with critical stance at a high level. May have slips in informal language or incorrectly used terminology.</td>
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<td>General sense of proper sentence construction, with possible lapses in formal language. Some major errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation. Some lapses in clarity. Does not employ precise, critical vocabulary with consistency and may fail to be certain in how to position the author's authority.</td>
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<td>Some lapses in sentence construction. Difficulty maintaining clarity. Frequent basic errors requiring correction. Sentences may be confusing. Fails to properly engage the level of the audience and to use appropriate critical vocabulary for assumed audience.</td>
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### Creative Project Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>9-10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative project’s engagement with Shakespeare</td>
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<td>Project has clear ties to Shakespearean texts and specific interventions with plays or poetry that are creatively incorporated into the project. Understanding of the texts is clear by way of the creative alterations explored. Adaptation/alteration is creative and appropriate. Marries very well new genres/forms with Shakespeare and aspects of reading or watching Shakespeare, and has a clear position on how it is contributing something new.</td>
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<td>Project states ties, but may develop a central idea without clear connections or commentary on the base text being explored. While there are surface ties, the goal of the project and its contribution as a creative work is not dependent on the mission of adaptation. May have broad relations to Shakespeare, but details are primarily singular to the created project. May seem to copy or re-do previous adaptations.</td>
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<td>Project uses an aspect of Shakespeare, but does not show deep engagement with a pre-text or other adaptations of Shakespeare. May be very unoriginal in its application of adaptation, or may be so “unique” that the creative project really has very little to do or comment upon in the supposed Shakespeare pre-text. The creative project draws weakly on a pre-text or other adaptations, such that the “new” work has little recall of details that are pertinent or does not make changes/additions that are in some way revelatory for the piece.</td>
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<td>Project touches on Shakespeare but veers away from only the most basic engagement. Engagement may be very surface related, and may not be a well-though-out sense of how completely the project can fulfill a goal of adaptation. How the project is original or unique in taking on Shakespeare is unclear. Project does not commit to negotiating form or developing genre to be compatible with Shakespeare.</td>
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<td>Creative Project’s development of original ideas</td>
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<td>Creates a premise for the new project that well defines a “new” way or take on Shakespeare. Carefully develops details that show a coherent grasp on the new genre and its goals as a creative work. Adds a new dimension that contributes to an imaginative rethinking of the original, or makes evident the intervention that the creative work makes.</td>
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<td>Premise may be similar to some works that have come before, adding on to a legacy of adaptation; less evident what the project has to offer that will create new appeal. Grasp of the project’s limitations are less clear; project may suffer from being too ambitious or not ambitious enough, leading to an unfulfilled idea or a less than innovative revision.</td>
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<td>Premise is weak or makes clear that there is not a strong motivation for the project. Overarching structure or main theme has gaps or inconsistencies which may make both the creative endeavor and the relation to the original material unclear. The advantage of using a new or different genre is not fully explored or clear. Premise may be only vaguely different from the original story or may seem arbitrary.</td>
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<td>Project does not commit to negotiating form or developing genre to be compatible with Shakespeare. Fails to make a significant new idea; may copy too much from other adaptations. May, conversely, stretch so much to fit a new or radical genre or vision that the project does not hit a target. Audience may be confused about what the project’s purpose is or leaves too many gaps in the new vision to be a coherent piece.</td>
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<td>Writing and execution</td>
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<td>Project is coherent and consistent in authorial voice and style. Uses language that fits with the creative project’s overall goals and in some way contributes to the audience’s construct of Shakespeare. The adaptation or creative idea succeeds in engaging audience. Ideally, can speak to audience broadly, but also fulfills a mission to speak to its audience in a particular way about Shakespeare—which could mean bringing a new audience to Shakespeare or could mean complicating Shakespeare for a knowledge audience.</td>
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<td>Project promotes an authorial vision, though at times the control over the project may slip—possibly losing the author’s sense of voice or possibly relying too much on Shakespeare or other adapters. The writing is still clear and mostly correct, avoiding distortions of the reader because of mistakes in form, punctuation, or typos. Uses form to its advantage, but also may rely on convention or convenience at times. Audience is engaged, but may be less clear about its pitch (high/low).</td>
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<td>Project’s vision may take too much from others or may not be consistent. There may be too many errors and problems in writing to avoid distraction and undermining of the project itself; project may suffer from a lack of polish or seeming rushed. Audience may not be less engaged or the project may misjudge a given audience (too difficult for new readers of Shakespeare even if target audience; too basic for well-versed readers; language not meshed with a particular age group or target.)</td>
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<td>Project does not seem to have a coherent vision and writing is poor. Many errors and lack of consistent voice or control over the narrative/form. Project does not seem to have a good grip on the way to address its reader or create excitement for audience. May be difficult to read for these reasons.</td>
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<td>Critical introduction clearly explains mission statement and critical influences</td>
<td>Fully explains the reason for the project and what influences and ideas have helped the writer engage. Explicit discussion of adaptation/appropriation and how critics or other writers have developed these ideas. Sets out clear distinctions of mission and audience targeted; amply displays an understanding of Shakespeare and critical intervention the project makes. May only briefly explain the project or, may spend too much time explaining project and not enough time explaining influences and critical sources/influences. May not offer an appropriately formal introduction to the work. May seem to skirt explaining Shakespeare research or may be a little fuzzy on what adaptation means for the writer based on critical ideas. Does not engage strongly with the critical or exploratory aspects of adaptation or Shakespeare. Shows little evidence of having researched or read to have completed the project. May not have any bibliography behind the project or may only weakly comment on Shakespeare and the project’s contribution to Shakespeare studies. Fails to adequately explain mission of the project or why it is relevant to studying Shakespeare or its chosen genre. Seems unfocused or uncritical of itself and of literary/creative work. Author’s mission and audience are not well defined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure and Organization</td>
<td>Project is well defined; operates and succeeds within possible parameters; leads fluidly between critical introduction and project; is finely devised. Project may have some creaky transitions or some unrefined points of its construction. May not always be totally clear that it is progressing toward a given ideal. Some awkward moments or wrong turns. Project seems loosely formed or moves without purpose at times. Structure of the creative work does not gel with Shakespeare or chosen new genre well. May feel incomplete or undeveloped in potential. Project has little to no structure and wanders through a replay of Shakespeare without formal development. Does not connect to introduction and fails to fulfill project as the author has defined it. Difficult to read or finish because structurally poor or ill-conceived.</td>
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