

ENGLISH 185: CRITICAL READING and WRITING
DR. SARAH HIGINBOTHAM
OXFORD COLLEGE of EMORY UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

Critical Reading and Writing as Attunement

In a sense, this entire course is about learning how to pay attention. The most important skills that universities seek to develop in their students -- the ability to assess the soundness of an argument, to accept and act on criticism, to express ideas clearly, to imagine alternatives to existing approaches, and to formulate and defend a point of view -- all begin with close listening, or “attunement.” So this semester we will foreground what it means to be attuned to texts, people, voices, and ideas and how to write and speak in a way that makes other people actually want to listen.

Our two primary literary texts center on attunement as explored by two quite different authors: the late Elizabethan dramatist William Shakespeare and the post-modern experimental novelist David Mitchell. We will also read a book about academic writing that claims that the best writing emerges from the best listeners, from being able to hear and respond to those who think differently than us.

English 185 seeks to develop critical abilities that are fundamental to a college education: the ability to read texts closely and critically, to express ideas effectively both in writing and aloud, and to synthesize other data and perspectives into your own argument.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 5	datamining due
September 17	first essay due
October 17	second essay due
November 14	draft of research essay for peer review due
November 16	research essay due
November 30	substantial revision of one project (final)

FALL 2017

1J TTh 1:40 - 3:20 Murdy Hall Seminar

3J TTh 3:30 - 5:10 Seney 322

E-mail: sarah.higinbotham@emory.edu

Office hours: By appointment in
Humanities Hall

MATERIALS

REQUIRED

Hamlet, William Shakespeare
Arden, 2006

Black Swan Green, David Mitchell
Random House, 2007

They Say, I Say
W.W. Norton, 2016

Articles, chapters, and poetry
assigned on syllabus

WEBSITES

[Canvas](#)

[Dr. Higinbotham's Website](#)

[Library Research](#)

[Voyant](#)

EVALUATION

Every assignment will have specific and thorough guidelines that explain the project. You can access the assignment information on both Canvas and the course website. You can also discuss an assignment with me before it's due. While the assignments themselves are challenging, you should never feel lost or confused about the actual parameters of an assignment or my expectations. If you do, please ask questions in class, make an appointment to see me, or e-mail me.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING



The **reading quizzes** will occur regularly at the beginning of class. The first quiz question will always be to write a quotation from the day's reading on the board, with your name beneath. Sometimes the reading quiz will be an impromptu essay on the reading. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, which includes a 0 received for a quiz given during a class absence. The grade includes your attentive and active participation in class (explained more fully below in "Classroom Policies").

In the **research essay**, you will closely engage with either *Hamlet* or *Black Swan Green*. Seek to answer a question in either the play or novel, conduct research, and write a 6-page paper.

The **two short essays** will explore a metaphor, theme, trope, or image in the play or novel. These papers will not use outside sources.

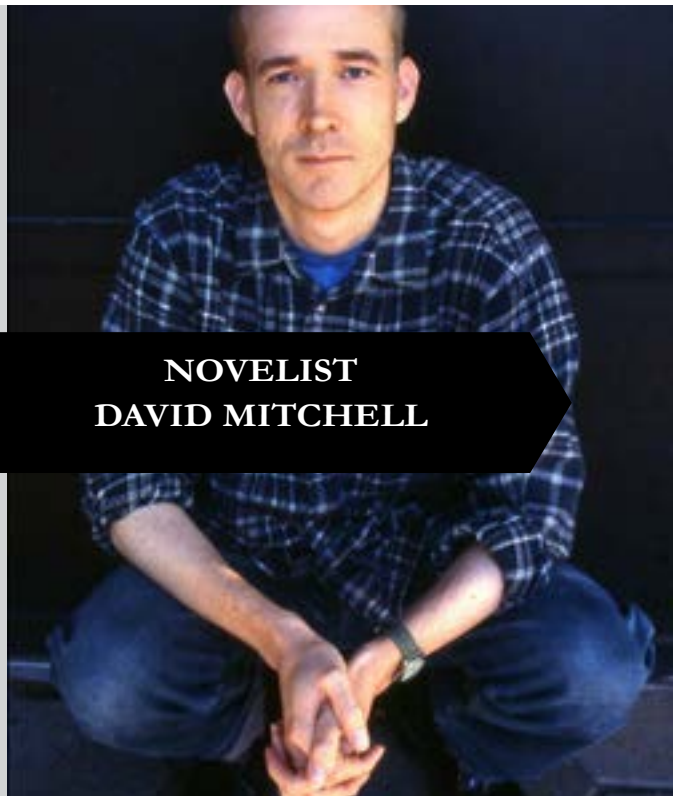
The **Prezi** assignment provides you the opportunity to design a book cover for either of the literary texts and present it, sharpening both your oral and visual abilities.

The **data mining assignment** requires you to create four different infographic representations of *Hamlet*, each with a paragraph of explanation, using Voyant.

The **Final** project will involve choosing one project from the semester, getting structured peer review from two classmates, and revising it significantly.

"If you show someone something you've written, you give them a sharpened stake, lie down in your coffin, and say, 'When you're ready.'" David Mitchell, *Black Swan Green*

NOVELIST DAVID MITCHELL

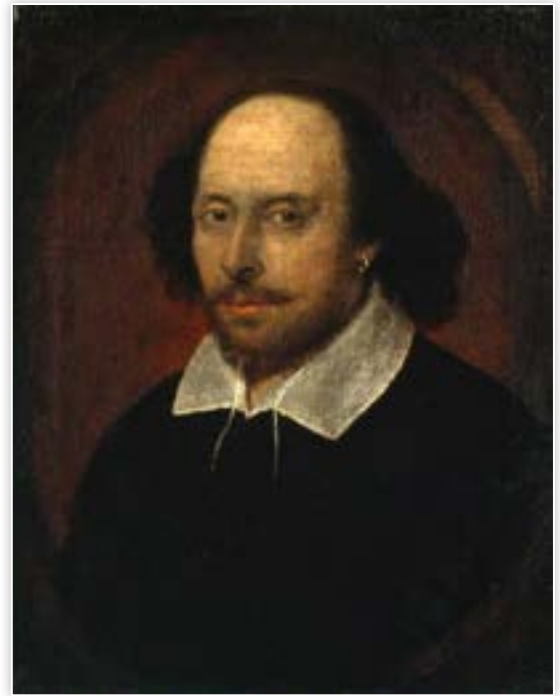


ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism, from the Latin word for kidnapping, is presenting another person's work as your own. When you deliberately use someone else's language, ideas, images, or other original material or code without fully acknowledging its source by quotation marks as appropriate, in footnotes or endnotes, in works cited, and in other ways as appropriate, you will be in violation of Emory Oxford's Honor Code.

[Honor Code](#)

[Process for academic misconduct](#)



Taylor, John. *William Shakespeare*. 1651. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, London.

MISTAKES ARE WELCOME

A writing teacher I admire, Nick Carbone, has this to add about plagiarism:

Unfortunately, the term “plagiarism” is more technical than practical. It’s used to describe equally mistakes in handling and citing sources and deliberate cheating and lying about the authorship of the work you hand in. In fact, one refuge of many cheaters is to say that they merely made mistakes in source handling. So by plagiarism in this course I want us all to distinguish between fraud and cheating, which is always wrong, and mistakes in learning, which are inevitable, correctable, and for many people, necessary for learning. Mistakes are welcome; deliberate fraud is not. (“Talking about Plagiarism: A Syllabus Strategy”)

THE QUALITY OF FAILURE

One of the greatest obstacles to learning is the fear of failure. Students have sometimes been taught that they need to be perfect – or as close to perfect as possible – in order to be validated, approved, and rewarded. But I think that there are things far more important than perfection: curiosity, risk taking, persistence, integrity, self-awareness, and often failure itself. I want you, in the words of Edward Burger, to make for yourselves “a mind enlivened by curiosity and the intellectual audacity to take risks and create new ideas, a mind that sees a world of unlimited possibilities.”

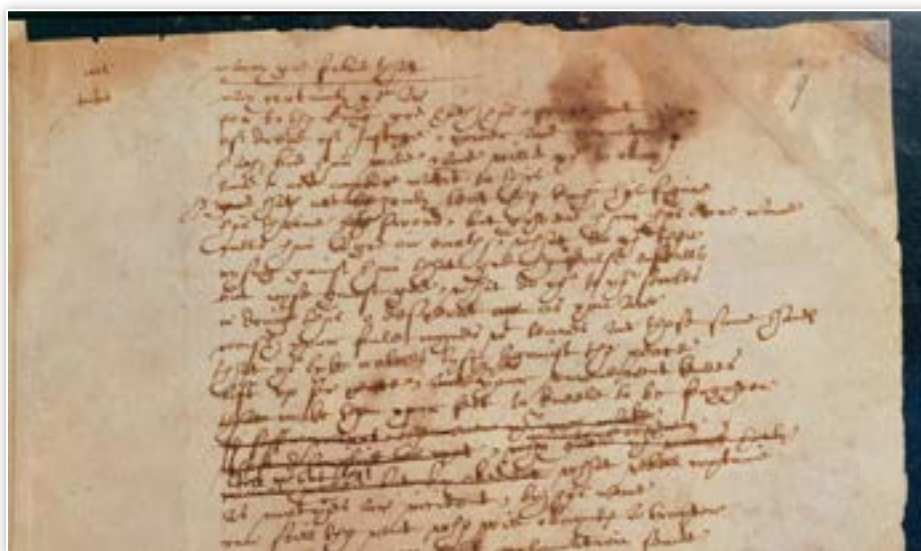
For this reason, part of the course will involve addressing how you handled failure this semester in English 185. Have you been willing to challenge yourself and take risks that might result in failure? Have you been aware of when you have failed, and refused to give up in the face of failure? Have you found ways to use your failure to create something new and interesting? Have you grown from your failures? I hope – in the spirit of Shakespeare’s and Mitchell’s own risk-taking – that you will allow yourself to take risks and learn from them.

REVISION

You have the opportunity to revise any of your three papers or your Prezi this semester. The ability to accept and act on criticism is one of the most important critical abilities you can develop. Can you hear constructive criticism with an open mind, build on lessons learned, and make revisions in response to suggestions? If so, I will assess your revised project a second time. A revision isn't just a quick fix of the obvious errors, but a "re-vision," or another look at your project, in which you address feedback. If you choose to revise, it can only help, not hurt your grade. The revision must include a cover letter, in which you explain to me what and why you revised what you did. You may send revisions as e-mail attachments, but make sure I respond and tell you I received the revision. If I do not respond within a day, I did not receive the revision.

Revisions are due one week from when you receive a grade and feedback from me. If you revise an assignment, I will average the two grades as your assignment grade.

Please note: Some scholarships and academic tracks require that you maintain a certain grade point average. My grading policies are fair, and I'm always willing to discuss concerns you have over any specific grades when I return them to you. But I will not negotiate an overall course grade based on your jeopardized scholarship (or any other social or funding pressures). I am committed to fair, ethical, and equitable grading at all times.



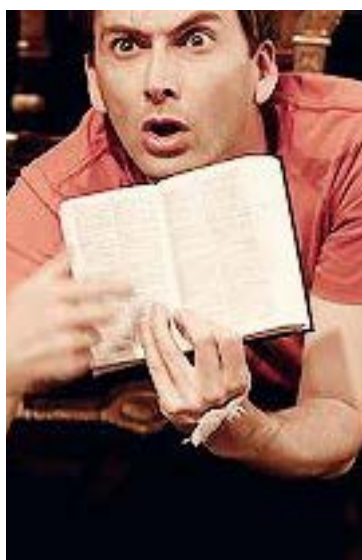
Munday, Anthony and Henry Chettle. Rev. by William Shakespeare. *Sir Thomas More*. c. 1590. British Museum. Facsimile.

DISAGREEMENTS

I think most of what I have learned that is of any consequence has come through disagreement and further exploration. I welcome your respectful disagreements with me. If we all interpret what we read and discuss in the same way, we have a problem, because no true thinking will be occurring. At the prison where I teach, the new students are very hesitant to disagree with their peers, or me, because in the prison universe, disagreements almost invariably escalate into violence. But the incarcerated students gradually learn that disagreements make the classroom environment more interesting, productive, generative, and challenging. My classroom is not Plato's Cave.

Please note that the college classroom is a place where ideas are exchanged respectfully. I look forward to an environment where this will occur, but I don't have much tolerance for distracting behavior, such as rudeness, texting, sleeping, or updating your Facebook page during class. If your participation is disruptive to the classroom discussion, if it creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment, you are subject to removal from the classroom at my discretion.

[Emory's policy on respect and consideration in the Code of Conduct](#)



David Tennant as Hamlet



David Mitchell's novels

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

In order to make the evaluation process fair to students who submitted their work on time, I will accept late assignments only if you communicate with me about it before the assignment is due. Every day an assignment is late, the grade will be lowered by a letter grade (ten points). This includes weekends and there are no exceptions.

Any assignment that is not submitted will be recorded as a 0 (“zero”) and averaged with the rest of your grades. This can damage your course average severely: For example, if you have completed five assignments with a 92 average but don’t submit a sixth assignment (which is counted as a “zero”), your overall average will be a 77.

COMMON POLICIES

Emory Oxford common policies, course completion, attendance requirements, participation in class, non-discrimination, accommodations, academic misconduct, syllabus modifications, and learning outcomes are available on the website. You will be responsible for these policies, and when you sign the Statement of Understanding, you affirm that you are familiar with these policies.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

In addition to respectful, engaged participation, I have the following classroom policies: 1) no laptops unless we are specifically using them, for example during the workshop days; 2) cell phones on silent and in your bags; 3) you should ask at least two questions or make two comments in each class. If speaking during class is extremely uncomfortable for you, you may write down your comments and/or questions and give them to me at the end of class. Alternatively, if you are very enthusiastic about speaking in class, please refrain from making more than five comments or asking more than five questions. You may write down what you were not able to say and I will read it after class. I also urge you to come to my office hours, and if they do not suit your schedule, arrange alternative office hours with me. This is to keep the entire class equitably participating during the time we have together.



Oxford College, Emory University.

THE WHOLE EAR

Now, Hamlet, hear.

‘tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,

A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of

Denmark

Is by a forged process of my death

Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,

The serpent that did sting thy father’s life

Now wears his crown. 1.5.39 - 45

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

THURSDAY AUGUST 24	INTRODUCTIONS, SYLLABUS “AWE AS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR”
TUESDAY AUGUST 29	HAVE READ <i>HAMLET</i> , ACT 1 “ON SHAKESPEARE,” JOHN MILTON (1632)
THURSDAY AUGUST 31	HAVE READ <i>HAMLET</i> , ACT 2 HAVE READ <i>THEY SAY/I SAY</i> , PREFACE AND CH. 11
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 5	HAVE READ <i>HAMLET</i> , ACTS 3-4 DATAMINING DUE
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 7	HAVE READ <i>HAMLET</i> , ACT 5 HAVE READ RICHARD DAWSON’S “LISTENING” AND “METAPHOR”
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12	HURRICANE DAY
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14	HAVE READ <i>THEY SAY/I SAY</i> , INTRODUCTION AND CH. 1 HAVE READ <i>THEY SAY/I SAY</i> , CH. 2, CH. 17 HAVE LISTENED TO JACK HITT’S “ACT V”
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 19	WRITING WORKSHOP
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21	FIRST SHORT ESSAY DUE
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 26	HAVE READ <i>BLACK SWAN GREEN</i> , CHAPTERS 1-5
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 28	HAVE READ <i>BLACK SWAN GREEN</i> , CHAPTERS 6-10
TUESDAY OCTOBER 3	HAVE READ <i>BLACK SWAN GREEN</i> , CHAPTERS 11-12 HAVE READ “SIMPLICIEY” AND “CLUTTER,” WILLIAM ZINSSER
THURSDAY OCTOBER 5	NO CLASS (DR. H IN DC): READ <i>THEY SAY/I SAY</i> , CH. 6, CH. 7
TUESDAY OCTOBER 10	FALL BREAK
THURSDAY OCTOBER 12	HAVE LISTENED TO JOHN F. KENNEDY, REMARKS AT AMHERST COLLEGE
TUESDAY OCTOBER 17	SECOND SHORT ESSAY DUE
THURSDAY OCTOBER 19	CONFERENCES
TUESDAY OCTOBER 24	HAVE READ <i>THEY SAY/I SAY</i> , CH. 3, CH. 4, CH. 12 MLA DOCUMENTATION AND CITING
THURSDAY OCTOBER 26	RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE
TUESDAY OCTOBER 31	LIBRARY WORKSHOP
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 2	THIS AMERICAN LIFE, “FIASCO” (IN CLASS)
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 7	BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 9	WORKSHOP
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 14	RESEARCH DRAFT ESSAY DUE
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 16	RESEARCH ESSAY DUE
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 21	CONFERENCES
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 23	THANKSGIVING
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 28	CONFERENCES
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 30	FINAL REVISION DUE
TUESDAY DECEMBER 5	LAST CLASS