

Seminar presentation sheet

Academic year	2017/18
Seminar n°	12
Seminar title	PLAY, CRISIS AND THE STATE: SHAKESPEARE'S 'GENTLER GAMESTERS' AND ISER'S PLAY THEORY
Teacher(s) (Name, SURNAME)	Mirka HOROVA
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Teacher(s)' presentation	Mirka Horova is Senior Lecturer in English Literature. Her research centres on British Romanticism and its legacies, and play theory; her other research interests include English Renaissance to Restoration poetics, Scandinavian literature, and the depiction of water in poetry.
Seminar presentation	The aim of this seminar is to approach <i>Richard II</i> in terms of Wolfgang Iser's concept of literary play (thematic & formal, and its aesthetic and ethical implications), thereby exploring the possibilities of understanding politics and history this ludic reading opens up, and to discuss the findings against the current crisis of 'post-truth' politics (Oxford Dictionaries' 'Word of the Year' in 2016).
Prerequisites to follow the seminar	The students will have read <i>Richard II</i> and all the provided excerpts from Iser; ideally, they will have also familiarized themselves with the other secondary material provided.
Seminar objectives /skills to be developed by the students	Students will have become familiar with wider implications of Shakespeare's depiction of history in terms of ethics and politics, and they will have explored the many possibilities of approaching a text and thinking about the dynamics of fiction and so-called reality in terms of the open system of Iser's play theory. Paraphrasing Henry V (famously adopted by Sherlock Holmes), they will be able to detect and explore the political games that are afoot.
Session 1 – Presentation / plan	Iser's categories of literary play: <i>agon</i> , <i>alea</i> , <i>ilinx</i> and <i>mimicry</i> .
Session 2 – Presentation / plan	<i>Richard II</i> and the categories of textual and performative play. Discussion of selected scenes, including the 'deposition scene'. Agonistic politics and crisis management.

Session 3 – Presentation / plan	'Post-truth' politics, ludic potential and the problematics of ethical engagement. History and play.
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Bibliography:

WOLFGANG ISER, *Staging Politics: The Lasting Impact of Shakespeare's Histories*, trans. D.H. Wilson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 102-114.

WOLFGANG ISER, 'Text Play', in *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 247-280.

REBECCA LEMON, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and Elizabethan Politics', in Jeremy Lopez (ed.), *Richard II: New Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2012) 245-255.

GENEVIEVE LOVE, 'Going back to that well: *Richard II*'s "deposition scene"', in Jeremy Lopez (ed.), *Richard II: New Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2012) 265-276.

ROBERT ORNSTEIN, 'A Kingdom for a Stage', in Jeanne T. Newlin (ed.) *Richard II: Critical Essays* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1984) 45-72.

Webography:

General Historical and Cultural Context of *Richard II* and Shakespeare's *Richard II*:

The Institute of Historical Research and Royal Holloway, University of London, 2007. 'Richard II's treasure: the riches of a medieval king'. Available at: <https://www.history.ac.uk/richardII/onstage.html> [online]. (Accessed 10.12.2016).

Links to selected RSC productions of *Richard II*, excerpts:

2003, Mark Rylance as Richard II, (III, ii)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfVcqsWZmDw>

2012, Ben Whishaw as Richard II, (III, ii)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI0YhGQ-22k>

2013, David Tennant as Richard II, (III, ii)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhWgTSQdRmo>