

Seminar presentation sheet

Academic year	2016/17
Seminar n°	5
Seminar title	THE CRISIS OF DEATH. PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND DYING IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME AND TODAY
Teacher(s) (Name, SURNAME)	Agnieszka ROMANOWSKA
University	Jagiellonian University Kraków
E-mail	a.romanowska-kowalska@uj.edu.pl
Teacher(s)' presentation	Agnieszka Romanowska teaches history of English literature and culture. Her main field of research is literary and theatrical reception of Shakespeare in Poland and literary translation. She has published on the theatricality of Shakespeare's dramatic text, Polish poet-translators and history of Polish reception of Shakespeare.
Seminar presentation	While in early modern Europe the brutal commonness of death and dying was experienced on a daily basis, it is often claimed that with the development of medicine and technology mortality has become one of the modern taboos. Public executions, admonitory displays of dead bodies or mass graves of plague victims seem to be as remote from us as <i>ars moriendi</i> and ritualization of dying. Are they? With unprecedented acts of violence disseminated via modern media or a global spread of deadly viruses we are nowadays confronted with the omnipresence of death more acutely than we would like to admit. Death is treated in this seminar both as a critical situation and as one of the faces of today's crisis. The participants will explore individual and communal aspects of death in early modern culture and today, examine how death and dying is depicted in a selection of Shakespeare's plays, and scrutinise how death is treated in Shakespearean productions for stage and screen and how Shakespeare is used in the discourse on death in today's culture.
Prerequisites to follow the seminar	Readings assigned during the PreFaces moodle work; contributing to the pre-Szeged moodle activities moderated by the teacher; meetings with local NGOs and institutions of culture to explore their ways of dealing with death as an element of the modern crisis.

<p>Seminar objectives /skills to be developed by the students</p>	<p>At the end of the seminar, the student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have knowledge about the attitudes to death and dying in early modern culture; • have knowledge about how death was depicted in early modern literary texts, especially Shakespeare's plays and selected poetry of the period; • have knowledge about how Shakespearean depiction of death and dying is interpreted nowadays on stage and screen in various countries in Europe; • have enhanced their knowledge on how modern political and social crises are reflected in culture; • be able to comment on Shakespeare's plays using the tools of drama theory, esp. the concept of theatrical potential; • be able to comment on today's reception of Shakespeare's plays on the basis of theatrical/film reviews and commentaries; • be able to present creative interpretations of Shakespearean productions with reference to today's international crisis
<p>Session 1 – Presentation / plan</p>	<p>Focus: Death in Shakespeare's time and culture and today. Pre-Szeged moodle activity: brainstorm collection of examples; readings assigned by the teacher; preparation of short reports on the basis of the readings. Research questions for the seminar discussion: Aspects of death and dying in early modern times; The topic of death and dying in the literature of the period. Death as a face of modern crisis – role of the media. Similarities and differences in individual and communal attitudes to death in Shakespeare's time and today.</p>
<p>Session 2 – Presentation / plan</p>	<p>Focus: Death and dying in Shakespeare's plays. Pre-Szeged moodle activity: brainstorm collection of examples; preparation of short discussions of the chosen episodes Research questions for the seminar discussion: Death and dying in Shakespeare's culture as reflected in the depiction of death in his plays and selected poetry of the period. Dramatic tools and conventions and the depiction of death in Shakespeare's plays and theatre. Theatrical potential of Shakespeare's death scenes. Death on page, stage and screen.</p>
<p>Session 3 – Presentation / plan</p>	<p>Focus: Death as a face of crisis as reflected on stage and screen today (esp. Shakespeare or Shakespeare related productions). Pre-Szeged moodle activity: short reports prepared by the students on how local theatre and other cultural institutions respond to today's crises. Research questions for the seminar discussion: Death and dying in modern productions and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Crisis-related topics in today's culture.</p>



Bibliography/ Webography:

JAMES CALDERWOOD, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1987) Introduction 1. & 2.

PATRICIA CARLIN, *Shakespeare's Mortal Men. Overcoming death in history, comedy, and tragedy* (Peter Lang, 1993) Chapter 4.

MIA KORPIOLA and ANU LAHTINEN (eds.), *Cultures of Death and Dying in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. An Introduction* (Collegium. Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 18, 2015) 1-31.

FIONA MARTIN, "*Morbid Exhilarations*": *Dying Words in Early Modern English Drama*. Dissertation. Available on: <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/5192/thesis.pdf> (Accessed on 15.12. 2016).

MICHAEL NEILL, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity* (Clarendon Press, 1997), Introduction.

SARAH N. REDMOND, *Staging Executions: The Theater of Punishment in Early Modern England*, Dissertation. Available on: <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:176386/datastream/PDF/view> (Accessed on 20.12.2016).