



**Course Syllabus:**  
**Introduction to Reading & Writing about Culture**  
**Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**ENGL 1153-X20 ONLINE Spring 2025**

**Contact Information**

Instructor: Dr. Peter Fields

Office: BeaWood 230 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of PY towards the dormitories)

Student Office hours: MW 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM; TR 2:15 PM – 4:15 PM & by appointment.

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**Course Description**

This course will provide students an opportunity to develop critical reading and cultural analysis skills in order to achieve deeper understanding of a variety of texts and artifacts. Students will explore the various factors informing the production of texts and learn how to conduct research in order to gain experience exploring different perspectives on select works and themes. The course will include several opportunities for students to articulate their interpretations and insights in essay assignments, which will be assessed for clarity, insight, and understanding.

**Course Goals**

- Read short stories, poetry, and plays and engage in close reading workshops.
- Apply literary analysis by answering questions in InQuizitive exercises.
- Engage in a writing process about short stories, poetry, and plays and demonstrates proficient use of standard written English in two comparative literary essays and a comparative literary research project.
- Utilize supporting sources from Moffett-supported databases and follow MLA in-body citing and Works Cited in two comparative literary essays and a comparative literary research project.
- Grading rubric for essays is adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) rubric for social, personal responsibility, critical thinking skills, and communications skills, including documentation and syntax and mechanics.

**THECB Core Course Objectives and Assessments**

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - To assess the student's critical thinking skills, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- Communication Skills
  - To assess the student's written communication skills, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- Personal Responsibility
  - To assess ethical use of sources as a measure of personal responsibility, the Research Project rubric will be applied to the Literary Research Project.
- Teamwork
  - To assess the student's teamwork, the Peer Review Teamwork rubric will be used to assess each student's preparation for and participation in peer review workshops.

## Textbook & Instructional Materials

Mays, Kelly ed. *The Norton Introduction to Literature* ebook. Norton, 2025. Inclusive Access.

### Links to Ebook Readings

In D2L on the navigation bar, click on Content. Then click on **The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Fifteenth Edition: Links to Ebook Readings**. Finally, click on **Contents of The Norton Introduction to Literature, Fifteenth Edition**. You will see what looks like a normal table of contents. But each title and page number is actually a link. Click on the title you need to read.

### Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty may take the form cheating, collusion, or plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not produced by the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#). All assignments submitted to the D2L drop box are subject to Turnitin which also has the capability to detect AI. Plagiarism will result in an F (a "0" – no points) for the assignment, which may result in an F for the semester. Offenders may be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and/or the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Use of AI at any stage of writing in our course is prohibited. Students who need preliminary feedback prior to a due date should consider the option of GETTING EARLY HELP, which is an opportunity to get input from the instructor who will address your punctuation, word choice, phrasing, and indicate whether you are meeting the criteria of the writing assignment. Students who wish to exercise the option of GETTING EARLY HELP should not wait until the day before the due date.

### Moffett Library

Moffett Library not only provides resources in its bookstacks. It also provides relevant supporting sources on its databases. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

### Grading

The percentage/letter grading scale is as follows: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0%. Grades, including the semester grade (i.e., the final calculated grade), are NOT rounded up. Therefore, a 79.9, whether for a specific assignment or the final calculated grade, is a C, not a B. A 69.9 is a D, not a C. A 59.9 is an F, not a D. An 89.9 is a B, not an A. D2L gradebook does the final calculated grade. There is no individual extra credit in this course to put someone over the top.

Table 1: Percentages allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Description	Percentage
Comparative Literary Essay 1	Approx 2400 words (about 8 paragraphs)	30%
Comparative Literary Essay 2	Approximately 2400 words (about 8 paragraphs)	30%
Comparative Literary Research Project	Approximately 2400 words (about 8 paragraphs) and cites supporting sources in Moffett Library databases.	30%
Close Reading Workshops	In D2L see Norton Course Materials	5%
InQuizitive Exercises	In D2L see Norton Course Materials	5%
Total		100%

### Mid-Term Grades

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through Navigate. The grades are based on Comparative Literary Essay 1 and do not include Close Reading Workshops and InQuizitive Exercises. I will submit a grade for all students, not just those in danger of

failing the course. Midterm grades will not be reported on your transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students who earn below a C for Comparative Literary Essay 1 might consider getting preliminary feedback on their writing before they submit their Comparative Literary Essay 2 and Comparative Literary Research Project to the drop box. In Content, click on the module for GETTING EARLY HELP. Do so early enough so you can revise according to my suggestions. Don't wait until the day before or day of the due date. I am always happy to answer questions by email, but I also encourage you to call me if you don't understand something. I am sure to get your call because Outlook records it just like an email. Give me a time frame for calling you back. If you are on campus, we can meet in person. We can also make a ZOOM appointment.

### **Close Reading Workshops and InQuizitive Exercises**

In Content, click on the module for Norton Course Materials. Students receive credit for the InQuizitive exercises (5 percent of semester grade) and the Close Reading Workshops (5 percent of semester grade) simply by doing them. If they do all of them, that's a 100 for a total of 10 percent of the semester grade. But the score is less if students do not do all of them. These exercises and workshops are NOT extra credit. If students do not do any of them, that's an F, a "0" (no points whatsoever), for 10 percent of the semester grade.

### **Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance**

Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning Center provides free drop-in tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Check the [TASP webpage](#) for times.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

### **Final Exam**

We do not have a final exam.

### **Extra Credit**

There is no individual extra credit in this course.

### **Late Work**

Late assignments (defined as work not submitted by the date and time posted in D2L) will be accepted, but they are penalized 10 points out of 100. An assignment is penalized for lateness even if it is late by less than a minute. All late work—not only essays but also Close Reading Workshops and InQuizitive exercises—must be submitted to their drop boxes before 11:59 PM Monday May 12.

### **Submission Format and Policy**

All formal assignments must be typed, double-spaced, formatted, and sources documented according to MLA style. Our anthology uses MLA for its Sample Writing models. Ch. 33 reviews MLA quotation, citation, and documentation. In Content in D2L, click on Norton Course Materials. You will see a link for MLA Citations Booklet. Purdue Owl online is also a good resource for in-body citing and Works Cited.

All essays must be submitted to the drop box in D2L in order to count and be graded, including essays that students revised after getting early help from the instructor.

By enrolling in this class, students expressly grant MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created by students for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes. Please note that the D2L Dropbox folder will automatically run papers through Turnitin.com. Turnitin provides both an Originality Report and an AI Report.

\*Note: Students may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless they obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

### **Important Dates**

Last day for term schedule changes/late registration: **January 24**

Deadline to file for graduation: **February 17**

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" **April 30**. Check the date on the [Academic Calendar](#).

For more information, refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Students are expected to be familiar with this platform as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. Students can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU homepage or the portal. For assistance, submit a help ticket [here](#).

### **Attendance**

This is an online course. The instructor checks attendance (especially prior to the first essay due date) through login history in Class Progress in D2L. Students are well-advised to login on the first day of the semester and visit the modules and that way create login history. You are "present" if you have login history.

### **Getting Early Help—an option, not a requirement**

In CONTENT in D2L, click on the module GETTING EARLY HELP. Then click on the arrow by the relevant discussion forum. Click on View Topic. Copy and paste directly into the text box. Do not use the attachment function. I can only reply to what I see in the text box. Do not wait until the day before or the day of a due date. Getting Early Help is an OPTION, not a requirement. Students are NOT obligated in any way to let me see their writing-in-progress. Remember: getting early help is NOT the same as submitting for a grade. That revised assignment still needs to be submitted to the drop box in order to count and be graded.

### **Change of Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

### **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. Two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

## College Policies

### *Smoking/Tobacco Policy*

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

### *Alcohol and Drug Policy*

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

### *Campus Carry*

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

### *Active Shooter*

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

## Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

## Course Schedule:

On the navigation bar, click on Content. Then click on **The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Fifteenth Edition: Links to Ebook Readings**. Finally, click on **Contents of The Norton Introduction to Literature, Fifteenth Edition**. You will see a table contents. Each title and page number is a clickable link. **\*Note:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Week	Required Reading, InQuizitive Exercises, and Close Reading Workshops	Chapters, Sample Writings, & Writing Due Dates
Week 1 Jan 22-24	Course theme: death, sickness, sacrifice, and hope Do all our Close Reading Workshops and InQuizitive exercises by May 12.  How to use InQuizitive – Assignment InQuizitive: Fiction as a Genre “And of Clay Are We Created” 28 InQuizitive “A Good Man is Hard to Find” 520 InQuizitive* “Sonny’s Blues” 695 Close Reading Workshop & InQuizitive “A Pair of Tickets” 746 InQuizitive	Read the explanatory material of our chapters even if we are not reading all their stories or poems. Ch 1 Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing 16 Sample Writing: Essay on “And of Clay Are We Created” 42 Ch 2 Plot 87 Ch 8 The Author’s Work as Context: Flannery O’ Connor 516 Ch 30 The Literature Essay

Week	Required Reading, InQuizitive Exercises, and Close Reading Workshops	Chapters, Sample Writings, & Writing Due Dates
Week 2 January 27-31	<p>"The Shroud" 89</p> <p>"Blood Child" 173 InQuizitive</p> <p>"The Black Cat" 193 InQuizitive</p> <p>"Lusus Naturae" 306 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves" 311</p> <p>"The House of Asterion" 323.</p> <p>"Interpreter of Maladies" 496 InQuizitive</p> <p>"Hills Like White Elephants" 735 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"A Hunger Artist" 739 Close Reading Workshop</p>	<p>Ch 4 Character 255</p> <p>Monsters: An Album 305</p> <p>Ch 5 Setting 328</p> <p>Ch 6 Symbolism &amp; Figurative Language 399</p> <p>Sample Writing: Comparative Essay on "The Birth-Mark" and "The Thing in the Forest" 442</p>
Week 3 February 3-7	<p>"The Thing in the Forest" 59</p> <p>"Araby" 332 Workshop &amp; InQuizitive</p> <p>"Meet the President!" 389 InQuizitive</p> <p>"The Birth-Mark" 404 Close Reading Workshop &amp; InQuizitive</p> <p>"The Yellow Wallpaper" 607 Close Reading Workshop &amp; InQuizitive</p> <p>"A Jury of Her Peers" 618 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"A Rose for Emily" 728 Close Reading Workshop &amp; InQuizitive</p> <p>InQuizitive: Writing about Literature: the Literary Essay</p>	<p>Write a Comparative Literary Essay of two stories by two different authors. It is due February 21—approximately 2400 words (about 8 paragraphs). Do not write about the stories used in our book's Sample Writings.</p> <p>OPTION: Submit a draft to GET EARLY HELP. But don't wait until day before or day of the due date.</p>
Week 4 February 10 - 14	Option: You can submit an early draft to GET EARLY HELP. But don't wait until just before the due date.	<b>Comparative Literary Essay 1</b> due Friday February 14 – Valentine's Day! Submit to DROP BOX in D2L.
Week 5 February 17-21	<p>InQuizitive: Poetry as a Genre: Introduction</p> <p>InQuizitive: Poetry as a Genre: Close Reading</p> <p>"On Being Brought from Africa to America" 783 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"Poetry" 805 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"I celebrate myself, and sing myself" 816 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"The Mouse's Petition" 881, "To a Mouse" 882"</p> <p>"London" 908 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"The Red Wheelbarrow" &amp; "This Is Just to Say" 909</p> <p>"One Today" 1205, "Death, be not proud" 1219, "Daddy" 1234, "The Raven" 1236 Close Reading Workshop, and "Goblin Market" 1239</p>	<p>Ch 11 Poetry: Reading, Responding, Writing</p> <p>Ch 12 Speaker: Whose Voice do We Hear?</p> <p>Ch 14 Theme and Tone</p> <p>Ch 15 Language: Word Choice and Order</p> <p>Ch 17 Symbol</p> <p>Ch 18 The Sounds of Poetry</p>
Week 6 February 24-28	<p>"Not marble, nor the gilded monuments" 1015 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"When I consider how my light is spent" 1015 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"The World is Too Much With Us" 1017 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"We Real Cool" 1036 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"Hope is the thing with feathers—" 1081</p> <p>"After great pain, a formal feeling comes" 1081</p> <p>"I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—" 1082</p> <p>"My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—" 1082</p> <p>"Tell All the Truth but tell it Slant" 1083 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"Harlem" 1117 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"We Wear the Mask" 1221 Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>"The Second Coming" 943, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" 976, "Green Chile" 897, "The Windhover" 963.</p>	<p>Emily Dickinson: An album 1079</p> <p>Write a Comparative Literary Essay on works by two different poets. The poems should be from our reading schedule. The essay should be approximately 2400 words. Do not write about the poems used in our book's Sample Writings.</p> <p>OPTION: Submit a draft to GET EARLY HELP.</p>
Week 7 March 3-7	OPTION: You can submit a rough draft to GET EARLY HELP. But don't wait until the day before or day of the due date.	<b>Comparative Literary Essay 2</b> Due Friday March 7. Submit to DROP BOX in D2L. Now you are free to enjoy Spring Break!
March 10-14	SPRING BREAK	
Week 8 March 17-21	<p>"Trifles" 1283 InQuizitive</p> <p>"Fences" 1318 InQuizitive &amp; Close Reading Workshop</p> <p>InQuizitive: Drama as a Genre</p> <p>InQuizitive: Writing about Literature: Working with Sources and MLA Citation.</p>	<p>Ch. 24 Drama: Reading, Responding, Writing.</p> <p>Ch. 25 Elements of Drama</p> <p>See Sample Writing: Essay on <i>Trifles</i> 1304</p>
Week 9 March 24-28	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> 1427	Ch. 26 The Author's Work as Context: William Shakespeare
Week 10 March 31-April 4	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> 1427	

Week	Required Reading, InQuizitive Exercises, and Close Reading Workshops	Chapters, Sample Writings, & Writing Due Dates
Week 11 April 7-11	<i>The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice</i> 1485 InQuizitive	
Week 12 April 14-18	HOLIDAY No classes Thursday and Friday April 17-18 <i>The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice</i> 1485 InQuizitive	
Week 13 April 21-25	Purdue Owl is a good online resource for MLA formatting of in-body quotes and the Works Cited bibliography.	Ch 32 The Literature Research Essay  <b>See instructions below for Comparative Literary Research Project.</b>  OPTION: Submit draft to GET EARLY HELP. But don't wait until just before the due date.
Week 14 April 28- May 2	OPTION: Submit draft to GET EARLY HELP. But don't wait until just before the due date.	
Week 15 May 5-9		<b>Comparative Literary Research Project due Friday May 9, our last official class day.</b>
Finals Week May 12-16 3/20	We have NO exam during Finals Week.	All Close Reading Workshops and InQuizitive Exercises must be done by Monday May 12. <b>All late work must be in the drop box by Monday May 12.</b>

## Comparative Literary Research Project

Due before 11:59 PM Friday May 9.

### Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tragedy of Othello: Moor of Venice*.

Choose **two scenes** from **each** of our plays. That would be **four scenes** altogether. Paragraphs two and three would each pertain to a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; paragraphs four and five would each pertain to a scene from *Othello*.

Do not summarize the plays, Do not summarize any of the scenes. Do not summarize or outline anything in the plays.

Instead, you are focusing on specific things in each of the four scenes that stand out to you. These are specific dynamics, events, conversations, actions, and behavior that pertain to a paragraph's topic idea.

### TOPIC IDEA

Topic ideas in this essay should be phrased as a "we": e.g., for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a topic idea for paragraph two or three might be: **Shakespeare argues that love is a form of madness. If we are in love, we don't do things based on common sense. We are under the influence of something irrational.** Similarly, for *Othello*, a topic idea for paragraph three or four might be: **Shakespeare argues that love makes us insecure. Love may be what we desire most, but it may also bring out the worst in us if we give in to our fears and suspicions.**

Think of the "we" topic idea as a claim. The evidence to prove that claim is what you provide from the scene you chose. Therefore, **not** everything in that scene is relevant. You want to emphasize specific dynamics, interactions, conversations, and behavior that taken together prove, illustrate, and reinforce the topic idea.

## Quotes from the scenes you chose

Pick out a quote that is thematic in some way. It says something about love and human nature. Hold that quote until towards the end of the paragraph. Let it bookend, so to speak, the topic idea at the beginning of the paragraph. The ideal, of course, would be a quote that reflects or refines your topic idea. You can have as many quotes as you wish (or none at all). But, in truth, one good quote towards the end of the paragraph is completely sufficient.

Below are summaries of the scenes in our two plays. Choose two scenes from each play. Then review the scenes you chose in the plays, noting what specific details stand out to you and imply a topic idea.

Do not summarize the scenes you choose. That is, don't do what I did. Instead, highlight those specific things that pertain to your topic idea.

## Recommended Scenes

For *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I recommend **Act Three, scene two** for paragraph two; for paragraph three, I recommend **Act 5, scene one**. You don't have to do my recommended scenes. You can make your own choices.

For *Othello*, I recommend **Act Three, scenes one, two, and three (scenes 1 and 2 are very brief; take all three together)** for paragraph four and **Act Five, scenes one and two (take both together)** for paragraph five. Of course, you may make your own choices as to the two scenes you emphasize.

## Synopses: summaries (plot points) for each scene

Below you will find summaries of the plot points for each scene of the two plays; some scenes go together, of course. You should not attempt to duplicate these summaries anywhere in your paper. They are provided here so you can understand the plays better and make your own best decision as to which scenes (two for each play) you want to emphasize.

You want to make sure in paragraphs two, three, four, and five, that you are not summarizing (as I am here). Just focus on the specifics that pertain to the topic idea you provide at the beginning of each paragraph (i.e., paragraphs two, three, four and five).

**After the synopses, see the reminders of what we need for each paragraph of the Comparative Literary Research Project. I recommend four articles (essays) from journals in the Moffett Library database *Gale Academic OneFile*:**

I want your four articles (two for each play) for paragraphs SIX and SEVEN to come from *Gale Academic OneFile*, which is a Moffett Library database. Notice that I recommend four articles (essays). You can make your own choices, as long as they come from *Gale Academic OneFile*, but I also encourage you to use my recommended articles.

In the models for paragraphs SIX and SEVEN, I indicate how to acknowledge (in-body) the four articles for paragraphs SIX and SEVEN. Since the articles (essays) we are using from *Gale Academic OneFile* are not PDF's, we do not have parenthetical page references. It's important to state (in body) right there in your paragraphs, the name of the author, the title of the article (essay), and the title of the journal it came from instead of using a parenthetical reference after the quote.



I also role-model the use of a quote, which you are free to use. You can use the exact same quote. You need to make your own choices for quotes from the three other articles (essays).

## Works Cited

After my discussion of each paragraph, I provide a **Works Cited** model for our two plays and the four articles (essays) I recommend from *Gale Academic OneFile*.

If you use my recommended articles, you should simply copy and paste my Works Cited to your document.

## Synopses: Scenes to choose from in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

- **Act One, scene one:** Egeus hauls his daughter Hermia before Duke Theseus, who is preoccupied with plans for his wedding to Hippolyta, the former Queen of the Amazons. He defeated her in battle, and now she agrees to be his wife. Egeus insists on the letter of the law: Hermia must give up Lysander and marry her father's preference, Demetrius, who heretofore was well-known to be the betrothed of Helena, who is now beside herself in grief, thinking Demetrius is truly in love with Hermia. Hermia and Helena used to be super-close friends. Hermia is hostile to her father. She is not impressed by the Athenian law (apparently never enforced until now) that the father can have his daughter put to death for marrying against his will. Duke Theseus gives Hermia another option: she can swear off men and take vows as a sister of a convent dedicated to the virgin goddess Diana (also known as Phoebe and represented by the moon). Lysander is philosophical. He goes on and on about how love has always been fraught with obstacles. But Lysander proposes the two sneak off to his rich aunt's home, which is beyond Athenian law, and get married there. Hermia out of habit tells Helena who in turn decides to tell Demetrius.
- **Act One, scene two:** Meanwhile, Peter Quince presides over a group of "mechanicals" (also called handicraft men) who are planning to enter their play in the competition to appear before Duke Theseus on his wedding day. The play is the story of Pyramus and Thisbe from book four of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Notice that Bottom wants all the speaking parts. Flute, despite his beard coming in, must play Thisbe, the young woman in love with Pyramus. We get the feeling Flute is the youngest member of the troop. Bottom cannot decide what beard for him to wear. Quince tells them to meet in the woods the next night to rehearse.
- **Act Two, scene one:** Puck (Robin), the companion of King Oberon of the Fairies, encounters a fairy from the entourage of Queen Titania of the Fairies. Puck brags about the mischief he commits as a way of life. He masquerades as a stool and then moves, making people fall on their butts. He even lurks in people's drinks and makes them pour it down their necks. He loves to play jokes on human beings for his own amusement. Oberon appears and demands the human boy whom Titania has made part of her retinue. Queen Titania does not comply. The boy is the child of a votaress of her order--that is, a woman who served in a cult dedicated to the Queen of the Fairies--who died in childbirth. Titania and this woman used to be close friends. A specific detail might be the sails that filled with wind. Titania would say they looked like her pregnant friend. The story is tragic. But Oberon commissions Puck to find a purple flower. This flower--Love-in-Idleness--was struck by Cupid's arrow. Cupid had been aiming at the Virgin Queen (Queen Elizabeth I) but she eluded the arrow and it made the flower bleed. Now its juice can be a love potion. Oberon then hears the hurtful, frightening things Demetrius says in an attempt to frighten away Helena who has followed him into the forest. Demetrius makes terrible threats. But Helena says she is like a spaniel dog. He can punish her all he likes, but she will still follow him. Oberon has compassion for Helena. Puck is supposed to administer the love potion to the eyes of Demetrius so that the next person he sees is Helena; Oberon, for his part, will anoint the eyes of his sleeping Queen and conjure a spell that guarantees Titania will fall in love with a hideous monstrosity. Thus distracted, she won't stop Oberon from taking the boy from her to be one of his henchmen in his entourage.

- **Act Two, scene two:** Puck (Robin) comes upon Hermia and Lysander. He notices that they are lying apart, not physically close. Oberon told him he would know Demetrius by his Athenian garments; unfortunately, Lysander is also wearing Athenian garments. Puck decides Hermia must be Helena and Lysander must be Demetrius. They are lying far apart, Puck reasons, because Demetrius despises Helena. Puck anoints Lysander's eyes who awakes as Helena bends over him. He looks directly into her chest and declares he can see her heart, which changes everything. Henceforth, he will not waste any more time with Hermia. He decides that his judgement was naive and foolish when he loved Hermia. Now he is dedicated to Helena who is obviously far more beautiful. Helena, for her part, decides that Lysander is intentionally mocking her. Meanwhile, Hermia awakes from a nightmare of a poisonous viper on her chest.
- **Act Three, scene one:** The handicraft men--the "mechanicals"--meet in the woods the same night as Hermia's attempted elopement with Lysander. They are very inexperienced actors and fear that they will incur disfavor if they perform anything that is violent or threatening. Bottom fears drawing his sword. Snout wonders if Snug the Joiner will frighten the women in the audience with his roaring as a lion. Plus they have the problem of representing the moon and the wall that separates the two lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe. Quince decides that Snout will have to play the part of the wall. He also decides that someone will have to carry a lantern and play the role of the moon. As Bottom and Flute begin their rehearsal, Puck (Robin) lurks nearby. He decides to have some fun with Bottom who is a ham and attention-hungry. Puck transforms Bottom's head into that of a donkey--literally, an ass's head. Puck then becomes a horse, dog, pig, bear, and even a flame to chase each of the mechanicals away, leaving Bottom to himself who begins to sing to prove he is not afraid. At that moment, Titania awakes to his song. She is instantly in love with Bottom due to the love spell perpetrated by her husband Oberon.
- **[Recommended] Act Three, scene two:** Oberon discovers Titania doting on ass-headed Bottom and he is delighted. But he is appalled when he realizes that Demetrius is still pursuing Hermia. When Demetrius falls asleep, Oberon personally anoints the eyes of the sleeping Demetrius and conjures a spell that insures he will fall in love again with Helena with whom he had previously been engaged. Oberon and Puck then realize the situation is not yet solved. Now Lysander and Demetrius are murderous rivals, ready to fight to the death over Helena who believes everyone, including Hermia, is playing a trick on her. Hermia gets into a fierce argument with Helena. Oberon instructs Puck to impose a black fog upon Lysander and Demetrius until the two give up trying to kill each other and fall asleep. Helena and Hermia fall asleep too. Puck anoints the eyes of Lysander, conjuring a spell that insures that he will fall in love again with his former beloved, Hermia.
- **Act Four, scene one:** Titania dotes on Bottom until they both fall asleep. Oberon is satisfied. He has obtained the human child while Titania was distracted. He anoints her eyes, releasing her from the spell she had been under. She is appalled by ass-headed Bottom who is lying next to her. Puck, as ordered by Oberon, restores Bottom's head. Oberon and Titania dance together. Enter on horseback Theseus, Hippolyta, and Hermia's father, Egeus, who are hunting in the early morning. They awaken the four human lovers--Hermia, Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius--and Lysander confesses that he and Hermia had been (unsuccessfully) trying to elope. Egeus is outraged all over again, but Demetrius gets the attention of Theseus. Demetrius says he no longer wishes to marry Hermia; he wants to stick with Helena after all. Delighted, Theseus overrules Egeus and proclaims they will have a triple wedding. Bottom awakes and garbles the scripture "Eye has not seen; ear has not heard" with "eye of man hath not heard, ear of man hath not seen" (4.2.208). Bottom believes he had a dream-vision whose meaning will forever tease and baffle him.
- **Act Four, scene two:** Bottom suddenly appears among his fellow mechanicals (handicraft men), declaring that their play has become a finalist to entertain the three couples who have exchanged their vows but still have time yet before their wedding night. **[This scene is too brief to be of use unless combined with Act five, scene one).**
- **[Recommended] Act Five, scene one:** Philostrate, Master of the Revels, advises against Oberon and his guests hearing the play of Pyramus and Theseus. The handicraft men are not experienced actors. But Duke Theseus insists on it. He has too famous speeches: 5.1. 2-22, about how lovers, poets, and

madmen have something in common: they are not living in reality; they are living in their imagination; also, 5.1.89-105, that the power of a performance lies more in the receptivity of the audience than it does in the skill of the performers. Quince opens the play with a prologue recapping Ovid's story of Pyramus and Thisbe from book IV of *Metamorphoses*. Then Snout represents the wall, making a chink with his fingers for Bottom (as Pyramus) and Flute (as Thisbe) to talk through and agree to meet at Ninus's tomb. Theseus quiets the guffawing audience members who are laughing at a play meant to be a tragedy, reminding them that it is the imagination of the audience that counts (5.1.208-214), not the skill of the performers. Snug portrays the lion, reassuring the women that he is not fierce or dangerous. Starveling holds a lantern as the moon. He has a bundle of sticks and a dog as per the story of the man in the moon. Flute drops her mantle. Snug mouths it. In the story, the lion had killed an animal prior to biting the mantle, thereby imparting bloodstains to it. Along comes Bottom as Pyramus. His character assumes that a lion must have killed Thisbe and dragged her off, leaving only the blood-stained mantle. Bottom has a flamboyant field day with his faux suicide. Flute steals the show, however, as the mourning Thisbe who takes the bloody sword of Pyramus and kills herself. But then Bottom and Flute come back to life to do a dance. The play ends with Puck (Robin) appearing with a broom. Oberon, Titania, and the fairies dance. Puck describes the spectral world of the night including the graves which release the spirits of the dead. Oberon and Titania lead the dance of the fairies who bless the three newly-married couples. Puck closes with this advice: if the play was disturbing, chalk it up to a crazy summer night's dream like Nick Bottom did about his night with Titania, Queen of the Faeries.

#### Synopses: Scenes to choose from in *The Tragedy of Othello: the Moor of Venice*:

- **Act One, scene one:** Iago urges Roderigo to loudly proclaim that Othello and Desdemona have been married. Iago yells as well. They succeed in getting the attention of Brabantio, Desdemona's father, who as it turns out knew nothing of their nuptials. Iago has served Othello in battle but has risen no higher than ensign. He had hoped to be promoted to lieutenant, but Othello instead chose Michael Cassio whom Iago claims has never actually led soldiers in battle. Notice how Iago plays up the racial difference between Othello and Desdemona. At first, Brabantio assumes Roderigo is sour grapes because Brabantio had never allowed Roderigo to woo Desdemona. But when he understands his daughter has married the moor Othello, he is finally outraged. Iago conveniently steps away before Brabantio knows he is involved, leaving Roderigo to lead the father to where Othello and Desdemona are staying.
- **Act One, scene two:** Cassio appears at the inn just before Roderigo and Brabantio arrive. Cassio represents the duke and senators of Venice who need Othello to once more be the general of their army and navy against the Turks, who they believe are now arriving in a fleet at the island of Cyprus, which Venice controls but the Ottoman Turks would love to take over. **[This scene by itself is not significant; it might be combined with scene three that follows.]**
- **Act One, scene three:** We are now in the council room of the Duke of Venice where he consults with his senators and officers. After conferring all military authority on Othello, the Duke and the senators turn their attention to Senator Brabantio who claims that Othello used some kind of witchcraft or spell on Desdemona who would never of her own freewill have accepted the suit of a Moor. Of course, as we find out from Othello, there was no witchcraft or spell needed. The culprit was Brabantio himself who, grateful for, and admiring of, General Othello's victories on behalf of the Venetian state and its colonies (like Cyprus), gave Othello a standing invitation to visit his home with Michael Cassio; Brabantio eagerly attended Othello, hanging on to his exciting stories of various battles and exploits. Unbeknownst to Brabantio, his daughter Desdemona was overhearing the same stories and over time became enamored of the Moor, feeling sorry for his ordeals and struggles. When Desdemona herself appears before the Duke and senators and declares her love for the Moor, Brabantio gives up his complaint but disowns Desdemona. At a loss, Desdemona petitions the Duke to let her accompany her new husband to Cyprus, and the Duke and senate agree. Brabantio gets the last word, ominously telling Othello that just as his daughter had deceived her father, she might also deceive her husband. The scene concludes with Iago insisting that Roderigo raise money. Iago leads Roderigo to believe that Desdemona can somehow be

convinced to have an affair with him. We realize that Iago is manipulating Roderigo and taking his money. We also learn that Iago is convinced that his wife, Emilia, had an affair with Othello. He forms a plan to take over Cassio's position by convincing Othello that Desdemona has been having an affair with Cassio who had accompanied Othello during his visits to Brabantio.

- **Act Two, scene one:** Good news for the city state of Venice! The Turkish fleet was destroyed in a storm before it could arrive at Cyprus, the colony of Venice. When Othello's ship arrives in the harbor, Desdemona descends the gangplank before her husband. Michael Cassio fulsomely welcomes her and praises her, taking her hand and then kissing his fingers as if he were kissing her, a well-known form of courtesy. Iago watches this gesture and sees that his plan just may work. Desdemona already knows and deeply appreciates Michael Cassio. Cassio had accompanied Othello to her father's home and often acted as a go-between for Othello and Desdemona (hence Othello's choice of Cassio for his lieutenant). Iago thinks he can make Othello believe that Desdemona is too young for him; that she would more naturally be attracted to the younger, dashing Cassio. He practices by trying to convince Roderigo that Desdemona inevitably must fall to the charms of Cassio. Iago points out the "lechery" he sensed in Cassio kissing his own fingers. We also learn in this scene that Iago believes BOTH Cassio and Othello have slept with his wife Emilia.
- **Act Two, scenes two and three (two is very short):** The Herald proclaims a holiday authorized by General Othello to celebrate the demise of the Turkish fleet in the storm. Iago sees an opportunity: he knows Cassio is not a good drinker--that he becomes drunk very easily and acts out. Cassio knows his own shortcoming and tries to resist drinking with Iago, but Iago insists on it until Cassio is no longer in control of himself. Roderigo then on cue provokes an incident that leads to the wounding of Montano, governor of Cyprus. Othello is disappointed and fires Cassio from his position as lieutenant. Cassio bemoans the loss of his reputation. Iago urges Cassio to seek out Desdemona who would naturally--given her gratitude for Cassio's intermediary role once upon a time with Othello--return the favor by interceding for him to Othello to restore his position. But, of course, Iago can use that intercession on Cassio's behalf to insinuate to Othello that his new bride must be having an affair with Cassio. Notice the speech Iago gives the audience (2.3.309-335). Here he declares himself the worst kind of devil. Yes, he certainly seems to be giving Cassio good advice. All things being equal, certainly Othello would hearken to the intercession of his new bride. But Iago is not doing anyone a favor. Even as Desdemona works on Othello to forgive Cassio, Iago intends to insinuate to Othello that she does this because she is in love with Cassio.
- **[Recommended] Act Three, scenes one, two, three (take them together):** We meet Emilia, Iago's wife. She is a servant to Desdemona. She tells Cassio some good advice: in truth, if Cassio just lays low, Othello will come around. There's no need to enlist Desdemona. But Cassio cannot resist making his case to Desdemona. Just as Iago anticipated, Desdemona become an eager advocate for restoring Cassio as soon as possible to the good graces of her husband. She vows never to let the matter rest. Of course, she has no idea that Iago will use this cajoling and nagging on behalf of Cassio to plant suspicion in Othello's mind. Desdemona wastes no time in reminding Othello of the debt they both owe to Cassio when Othello was "wooing" (3.3.69) her. He says he will favorably receive Cassio whenever he appeals to him. But Desdemona won't relent even as Othello asks to be left alone about the matter. When she finally does leave him alone, Iago immediately steps in and insinuates the worst, skilfully making Othello imagine the worst. Iago even warns Othello not to give in to his imagination. Iago admits that his own suspicions don't amount to evidence. Further, Iago warns Othello that jealousy is a "the green-eyed monster" (3.3.164) that consumes, tortures, and damns its victim. But when Othello insists that he won't go down that self-destructive path, Iago apologizes for "too much loving" (3.3.211) the Moor. He cannot help but give the Moor a piece of treacherous advice: slow down acting on Desdemona's request. Don't do anything right away. Use the occasion of her request to test her. As the Moor agonizes over Iago's words, his head begins to pound. Desdemona and Emilia arrive. Desdemona takes out the handkerchief Othello gave her as a wedding gift. He does not recognize it and pushes it away. She was attempting to wrap his head in it to relieve the headache but he insists that it is not long enough. He tells Desdemona to forget about the handkerchief. It ends up on the floor. Emilia picks it up, remembering that Iago had

often asked her to procure this particular handkerchief. Iago takes it from her. He plans to drop it in Cassio's quarters. This handkerchief is enough, he surmises, to make a jealous man believe the worst. Othello then confides to Iago that he feels totally undone by his insinuations that Desdemona is not faithful. He then turns on Iago, insisting that Iago either prove his suspicions or "woe upon thy life" (3.3.363). He needs a "living reason" (3.3.406) to believe him or else he might kill Iago. Iago then invents a story from whole cloth: that he was sleeping in the same quarters as Cassio who talked and moved in his sleep. Lying beside Iago, Cassio turned to him and kissed him as if Iago were Desdemona and laid his leg over Iago's leg. The story is outrageously an obvious and desperate fable. But Othello is horrified by it nonetheless. Then Iago speaks of the handkerchief. He says he saw it in Cassio's hand. That's the last straw. Along with all the "other proofs" (3.3.437), Iago insists that he has proven his case against Desdemona. But there are no other proofs. Iago has not "proven" anything. But Othello nevertheless falls to his knees in despair. He vows vengeance against both his wife and Cassio. Iago kneels beside Othello and pledges to help him achieve his vengeance.

- Act Three, scene four:** Here Desdemona comes to the barracks looking for Cassio who is not available. She leaves a message with the "clown" that she has made Cassio's case to her husband. Suddenly, there is Othello, who takes her hand. He holds it. She is nervous and perhaps trembling. He observes that her hand is sweating--that it's wet with perspiration. He remarks on the warmth in the hand--the heat of it. He implies that her hand is the hand of someone who is sexually promiscuous--demonically promiscuous. He then asks for her handkerchief. When he sees that it's not the handkerchief he gave her as a wedding gift, he asks her what happened to it. He does not recall that she had used it to dab his head while he had a migraine. He had shrugged the handkerchief away and she dropped it. At the time, he told her not to bother about it. Presently, Emilia discovered it on the floor and handed it over to Iago who deposited it in Cassio's quarters. Othello believes Desdemona gave the special handkerchief to Cassio because they are having an affair. Othello tells her how special the handkerchief was to him (see 3.4.52-72). As he talks about the handkerchief's special properties--how unique it was--Desdemona becomes flustered and nervous and blurts out: "Then would to heaven that I had never seen it!" (3.4.74). Othello has a snide expression on his face as if he had found her out in a lie and subterfuge. He assumes that she is flustered because of her guilt--her guilt from having an affair. Othello does not realize that his own behavior--his hostility towards her--is the source of Desdemona's anxiety. She is frightened of him. She brings up Cassio's cause, and the subject only makes Othello scarier. He angrily keeps insisting that she produce the special handkerchief. Emilia, notably, fails to confess what she did with the handkerchief. Instead, she opines that husbands consume their wives and then belch from reflux. Cassio shows up walking with Iago. Desdemona counsels Cassio to have patience. She cannot understand why Othello is acting so strangely--so strangely hostile and angry towards her. Iago pretends to marvel. In battle, Othello was always calm and collected to a fault even when cannons shot up his front line--and even when the cannons killed his brother. She decides that Othello must be worried about something related to his duties for the state of Venice. Emilia, however, wonders if Othello is a jealous type. Jealous people don't need a good reason to be jealous: "But jealous for they're jealous: it is a monster / Begot upon itself, born on itself" (3.4.152-153). After Desdemona and Emilia leave Cassio's quarters, Cassio returns. Bianca, a woman in love with Cassio, stops by; he asks her to make a copy of the handkerchief he found in his quarters.
- Act Four, scene one:** Outside Cassio's quarters--the military citadel in Cyprus--Othello meets with Iago. Iago pretends to downplay Desdemona's indiscretions as totally understandable. But he also keeps mentioning the handkerchief, which he has dropped here in Cassio's quarters. Othello is frustrated. He compares the handkerchief to a raven hovering over his house; it betokens nothing good. Iago insinuates that Cassio has confided in him that he has been lying in bed with Desdemona. Othello then reasons that his fear must have a logical basis; therefore, Desdemona must have done something wrong. This rationalization does not make sense of course: i.e., Othello believes that she must be guilty if he suspects that she is guilty because why else would he suspect that she was guilty unless she was acting guilty and therefore must necessarily be guilty? He tortures himself into a kind of fugue state; he seems lost in his head. He has a momentary lapse of reason. Cassio comes by but Iago warns him away.

Othello presently regains his right mind and Iago speaks from what seems to be his own experience--how he actually feels about himself and Emilia. He says that he knows that he himself (Iago) is a cuckold: a husband cheated upon by his wife; therefore, it is logical that his wife--Emilia--must have cheated on him. Again, the rationalization does not make sense; this time it's Iago sharing how his own paranoia works. He is afraid his wife has cheated on him; therefore, she must have cheated on him because why would he feel so afraid? So angry? Iago tells Othello to hide in the shadows and listen while Iago asks Cassio about Desdemona. Othello is close enough to hear the gist of what is said but not close enough to realize that Cassio is not really talking about Desdemona. Cassio is talking about Bianca. Suddenly, Bianca shows up and gives back the handkerchief. It is the same one Iago dropped in Cassio's quarters--the handkerchief dropped by Desdemona and retrieved by Emilia who in turn gave it to her husband. It is the special handkerchief that belonged to Othello's mother. Othello is now convinced more than ever of Desdemona's guilt. He wants to poison her, but Iago counsels Othello to strangle her on their wedding bed. Here is their plan: Iago volunteers to kill Cassio; Othello will kill Desdemona herself. At that moment, Lodovico, a noble Venetian, arrives with a letter from the Duke and the senators in Venice. Venice is reassigning authority in Cyprus to Michael Cassio who will be the Lord Governor and recalling Othello home. Lodovico tells Desdemona the message while Othello reads it; she is relieved. Now she and her husband can finally go home and get away from whatever is robbing Othello of his peace of mind. Othello overhears that she's glad and assumes that she must be glad for Cassio's promotion at his expense. He slaps her. Lodovico is dumbstruck by this inexplicable cruelty. Desdemona is reduced to tears and walks away. Lodovico insists that Othello call her back. A bizarre conversation ensues where half of Othello's sentence is to Lodovico; the other half is angrily directed at Desdemona. This violent madness makes Lodovico marvel. Is Othello out of his mind?

- **Act Four, scene two:** Othello is now permanently unhinged. He glowers over Desdemona, confronting her, making her swear she is innocent of adultery. She swears by heaven that she is innocent. But he does not believe her. He realizes that he is completely unable to bear his doubts. He could handle anything else. But he cannot handle being betrayed by the woman he loves. He has no defense for it. He then storms off. Emilia helps Desdemona get ready for bed. Desdemona tells her to put the wedding sheets on the bed. She senses that she might not live through the night. Emilia is certain someone has planted a seed in Othello's brain. By this point, Iago has entered the scene. She turns to him and says in an aside that only Iago can hear that she knows what he's thinking: she knows that Iago believes that she--Emilia--had an affair with Othello. Someone planted that suspicion in Iago's brain just as someone must have done the same to Othello. Emilia does not seem to realize the obvious: that because Iago thought he had been cuckolded (cheated upon) by Emilia with Othello that the obvious suspect for planting suspicions in Othello's mind about Desdemona would be of course none other than her husband. In a dramatic moment, we see Desdemona go on her knees before Iago, begging him for advice as to how she might convince her husband of her innocence. She begs him to intercede with Othello on her behalf. Suddenly, Roderigo shows up outside. He complains to Iago because he gave his family's jewelry to Iago who was supposed to have given it to Desdemona. The jewelry represents a fabulous sum of riches. The jewelry could have corrupted a nun, he sighs. Iago sees another opportunity. He asks Roderigo to kill Cassio. He has nothing to lose in this request because even if Cassio kills Roderigo instead, Iago can hang on to Roderigo's jewelry, which of course he had kept for himself. Desdemona knows nothing about Roderigo.
- **Act Four, scene three:** As Emilia helps Desdemona change into a nightgown, Desdemona realizes that the newly washed wedding sheets might serve as her burial shroud. She recalls a song her mother's maid used to sing, "The Willow Song." The song is probably well-known to the audience. But she adds a line of her own: "Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve--" (4.3.48). As she dons her nightgown, Desdemona asks Emilia if she knows of wives who cheat on their husbands. Emilia then speaks evasively. Is Emilia confessing that she has indeed committed adultery? Desdemona wonders how a wife could cheat in "heavenly light" (4.3.63). Emilia says that wives don't cheat in heaven's light; they cheat in the dark of course. Emilia says that women are just like men, wives just like their husbands. They follow

their husband's example, even for the worst. In any case, Emilia mysteriously insists that adultery can be undone.

- **[Recommended] Act Five, scenes one & two (taken together):** Roderigo and Iago lie in wait for Cassio. Roderigo tries to thrust his sword through Cassio but fails to penetrate his coat. Cassio stabs Roderigo, who collapses in agony. But Iago stabs Cassio. Cassio is now sorely wounded. But he did not see Iago do this. Iago then pretends he has just now entered the scene. He has a torch. Lodovico and his friend Graziano (both Venetians) arrive on the scene. In the confusion, Iago sees his opportunity and stabs the already wounded Roderigo. Iago then tries to pin blame on Bianca for Cassio's injuries. Meanwhile, Othello had heard Cassio's cries and assumed that Iago had kept his word and killed Cassio for Othello's sake. If so, Iago's killing of Cassio was Othello's signal to finish his vengeance by strangling his wife. He carries a torch into his bedroom--or a lantern--and muses upon it. If he were to put out that light, he could restore it. If he puts out the light of his wife there is no second opportunity. He will not be able to undo it. She is sleeping. He kisses her, telling himself that these are his absolutely last kisses of her. When she awakes, he tells her to pray to God and get right with heaven. She realizes that he intends to kill her. She again declares her innocence but he brings up the stupid handkerchief again--it's the smoking gun in his mind. He is certain the handkerchief in Cassio's possession proves that Desdemona committed adultery with him. When she insists that Othello confront Cassio about his suspicions, Othello tells her that Cassio is probably dead. Iago had agreed to kill him for Othello. Then Desdemona realizes she has no chance. He smothers her. The stage directions do not specify how he smothers her. Of course, the simplest way would be with a pillow. But he notices that his efforts are not final. She continues to stir even as Emilia is yelling outside the bedroom door. Othello keeps trying to smother Desdemona for good, but she manages to speak even as Emilia bursts into the room and opens the bed curtains. When Emilia asks Desdemona who has done this to her, Desdemona refuses to blame Othello. She claims that she has killed herself--and then dies. Othello confesses that he killed her--killed her because Iago had told him about her affair with Cassio. Then Montano, Graziano, and Iago arrive, and Emilia accuses her husband of lying to Othello. Othello, meanwhile, collapses onto the bed in despair over what he's done. He tells Graziano, brother to Desdemona's father who has recently passed away, that Iago showed him proof of Desdemona's guilt--the handkerchief. Emilia is thunderstruck. The handkerchief! Now she knows why Iago wanted it. She tells Othello that Iago had been trying to get hold of that handkerchief. He had told Emilia to steal it if she had to. Othello now is truly in despair as he realizes that he has been duped into killing his wife. He realizes that he has been lied to by Iago. Iago, for his part, stabs Emilia. She is fatally wounded and asks to lie in state by Desdemona. Graziano complies, laying Emilia beside Desdemona on the wedding sheets. Montano takes Othello's sword from him and tells Graziano to guard Othello. Montano chases after Iago to arrest him. Emilia remembers the Willow song--how it foreshadowed Desdemona's demise. Meanwhile, Othello produces another sword. In comes wounded Cassio borne on a chair by servants. Lodovico and Montano have Iago in hand. Iago checks to see if Iago's feet are cloven like a devil--and then stabs him. But Iago is not killed. Othello is disarmed again. He asks Cassio how he came by that handkerchief. Cassio says he found it in his quarters. Iago, says Cassio, has already confessed that he is the one who dropped it there. Cassio and Lodovico speak of letters found on Roderigo that explain what Iago was trying to do. Before Roderigo died, he told Cassio that Iago was behind everything. Othello then tells the story of killing a Turk who had beaten a Venetian. He killed him just like this: and he stabs himself. Apparently, he had yet a third weapon. As Othello slowly crumples over the bed, he kisses Desdemona one last time. At this point, he is at least the third person to die upon his wedding bed.

### Specific details & Quotes from Shakespeare

For paragraphs **two, three, four, and five**, you start with the "we" topic idea. That's your *only* generality. The rest of the paragraph should be specific dynamics, situations, and details in your own words. You don't need a lot of quotes. One per paragraph would be sufficient. Everything in your words should come before the quote.

Then provide the quote to wrap up your paragraph: e.g., "Oh, hell!" said Hermia in frustration. "To choose love by another's eyes" (1.1.140). Notice that you can provide your own attribution.

By the way, the (1.1.140) means act one, scene one, and line 140.

For quotes which are longer, use forward slashes: "Oh, spite! Oh, hell! I see you all are bent / To set against me for your merriment" (3.2.145-146).

For four lines or longer, set it off like it's own paragraph, 10 spaces on the left:

If you were civil and knew courtesy,  
  
You would not do me thus much injury.  
  
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,  
  
But you must join in souls to mock me too? (3.2.147-150)

### **Gale Academic One File: Paragraphs Six and Seven**

**Paragraphs SIX and SEVEN** require use of articles or essays as full text from the Moffett Library database: **Gale Academic One File**. We need two articles (essays) from this database for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and two articles (essays) for *The Tragedy of Othello*. They need to be from peer-reviewed journals, not book reviews.

I recommend (below) these four sources from Moffett Library's **Gale Academic One File**. You can choose differently as long as your choices are also articles (essays) from **Gale Academic One File** (not book reviews) and applicable to our two Shakespeare plays in our book. Given how close we are getting to the deadline, I strongly encourage you simply to use my suggestions below. You are welcome to use the quote in the model below.

Alicia Andrzejewski. "'For her sake': Queer Pregnancy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." *Shakespeare Studies*. Article.

Jennifer Clement. "'The Imperial Vot'ress': Divinity, Femininity, and Elizabeth I in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*. Critical Essay.

Andrew Hadfield, "Race in 'Othello': The 'History and Description of Africa' and the Black Legend." *Notes and Queries*. Article.

Helen Acton, "Freedom captured by the green-eyed monster: some existential perspectives on romantic jealousy." *Existential Analysis*. Essay. [Though meant to examine jealousy in a psychological setting, do you see a connection to Shakespeare's *Othello*?]

**Paragraph six** addresses two sources for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **Paragraph six** needs one quote from each source (e.g., Andrzejewski and Clement). The quote should be a complete sentence--a complete thought. **Paragraph six** should start with a universal **"we" thematic topic idea**. Then I should see your analysis--your interpretation--of the quote from the source. **The quote follows your interpretation. Then I should see your analysis/interpretation for the second quote, followed by the quote itself. The meaning comes first in your words; then you provide the quote.**



**Paragraph seven** addresses two sources for *The Tragedy of Othello*. **Paragraph seven** needs one quote from each source (e.g., Hadfield and Acton). The quote should be at least one sentence--a complete thought. **Paragraph seven** should start with a universal **"We" thematic topic idea**. Then I should see your analysis--your interpretation--of the quote from the source. The quote follows your interpretation. **Then I should see your analysis/interpretation for the second quote, followed by the quote itself. The meaning comes first in your words; then you provide the quote.**

**Quoting from sources in database - Model paragraph SIX or SEVEN for use of sources in *Gale Academic OneFile*:**

The sources in Gale are not PDFs, so we do not know the pagination. For that reason, we are not going to have parenthetical page numbers in paragraphs SIX and SEVEN. **Instead of parenthetical references, we will identify the author and title of the article and the journal in which it appears; this is called in-body attribution; provide this attribution before your analysis; end your analysis with the quote:**

**Topic Idea pertaining to both articles in this paragraph:** Shakespeare suggests that we are never truly secure in ourselves. Our public reputation is fragile and love may undermine our self-confidence, making us paranoid, jealous, and possessive of those we care about most. Andrew Hadfield, in his article "Race in 'Othello': the 'History and Description of Africa' and the Black Legend" for the journal *Notes and Queries*, suggests that Shakespeare had in mind a real person, John Leo Africanus, the author of *A Geographical Description of Africa*, translated by John Pory. **[You would provide here your analysis of an idea from Hadfield. Make sure you have expressed the meaning and interpretation of the quote that follows your discussion and wraps up the use of Hadfield as a source:]** "As Pory's preface to the reader emphasizes, John Leo (Africanus) himself was a highly educated Moor, possibly born in Granada, who had been converted to Christianity, having been kidnapped by Italian pirates and presented to the Pope. He had travelled extensively in his native continent and endured a number of dangers in the compilation of his invaluable work." According to Helen Acton in her article "Freedom captured by the green-eyed monster: some existential perspectives on romantic jealousy" for the journal *Existential Analysis*, her study of psychiatric patients reveals that a lover's jealousy is an attempt to own the beloved. **[Now provide your explanation of an idea in Acton. Make sure your interpretation and meaning of the quote comes before the quote from Acton:]** "Here would be the quote you selected from Acton's article." **[We don't have parenthetical page numbers because the articles are not PDF's, which is why the "According to" attribution is so mandatory.]**

**You are welcome to use the above quote.** The main idea of Hadfield's article is that Iago is probably Spanish in origin. He would resent Othello the Moor because for many generations the Moors occupied and dominated Spain. The resentment might run very deep.

**Paragraphs Two, Three, four and Five:**

**Paragraphs two and three** address and quote from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (one quote per paragraph is sufficient). This quote should be one to three lines from Shakespeare's play. It can be longer. **Each paragraph should start with a universal, thematic "we" topic idea - e.g., for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Shakespeare argues that love makes a fool of us. We cannot think of anything other than the beloved figure. Love is a little bit like losing our minds. Phrase it as "we, us, our."** After the topic idea, I should only see specific details in your words that pertain to the episode or scenario you have chosen to emphasize from the play. The quote from the play comes towards the end. **REMEMBER: you are *not* summarizing the play. You are *not* summarizing an act or a whole scene. Focus on specific details--those dynamics, actions, behaviors, conversations--that pertain to your topic idea. Hold off on the quote until near the end of the paragraph.**

**Paragraphs four and five** address and quote from *The Tragedy of Othello* (one quote per paragraph is sufficient). This quote should be one to three lines from Shakespeare's play. It can be longer. Each paragraph should start with a universal "we" thematic topic idea: **e.g., for *Othello*: Shakespeare argues that love can easily give way to something ugly. Love can make us jealous and possessive. In a word, love makes us insecure.** After the topic idea, I only see specific details in your words that pertain to the episode or scenario you have chosen to emphasize from the play. The quote from the play comes towards the end. **REMEMBER: you are not summarizing the play.** You are not summarizing an act. You are not summarizing a whole scene. **Emphasize those specific details, dynamics, moments, actions, and conversations that are relevant to your topic idea. Hold any quote until the end of the paragraph.**

### Paragraphs One and Eight

**Paragraph One:** The introduction previews at least some of your topic ideas (e.g., for paragraphs two, three, four, and five). It should say something specific--as in a specific detail--for each of the two Shakespeare plays. That's two specific things we will see again in paragraphs two, three, four, or five. Paragraph one should close with a thesis that compares the two plays: how they are similar and/or how they differ. NOTE: Paragraph one should NOT preview anything for paragraphs six and seven.

**Paragraph Eight:** This paragraph begins with a "we" topic idea that would pertain to **both** plays: e.g., **Shakespeare seems to be saying that love is like losing our minds. It does not always bring out the best in us.** Paragraph eight re-examines something specific from paragraphs two, three, four, or five. It could be two specific things: one for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and one thing from *Othello*. This paragraph is NOT a review of the essay. It can be a BRIEF paragraph (e.g., five or six sentences).

**WORKS CITED: For paragraphs SIX and Seven, if you used my suggested articles from *Gale Academic OneFile* in the Moffett Library databases, all you have to do is just copy and paste the Works Cited below as your own. Done!**

### Works Cited

Acton, Helen. "Freedom captured by the green-eyed monster: some existential perspectives on romantic jealousy." *Existential Analysis*, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 2010, pp. 112+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A288874130/AONE?u=txshracd2529&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=9b8c0b61. Accessed 7 Apr. 2025.

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Hadfield, Andrew. "Race in 'Othello': the 'History and Description of Africa' and the Black Legend." *Notes and Queries*, vol. 45, no. 3, Sept. 1998, pp. 336+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/A21274060/AONE?u=txshracd2529&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=671cab7c](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A21274060/AONE?u=txshracd2529&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=671cab7c). Accessed 7 Apr. 2025.

Mays, Kelly J., editor. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. 15<sup>th</sup> edition. E-Book. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2025.

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