



ROBINSON CENTER FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Undergraduate Academic Affairs

SUMMER STRETCH 2018 UNTO THE BREACH: A WORKSHOP IN SHAKESPEARE'S HENRY V

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will explore the challenges of rehearsing and performing Shakespeare's *Henry V* through improvisations, acting exercises, scansion techniques and stage combat skills. We will culminate our work with the one-hour staged and memorized version, *One Fifth the Life of Henry V*. Additional topics will include script analysis, vocal technique, the Elizabethan Age and the character of Henry himself. Who was Henry? Why was the Battle of Agincourt so pivotal? What does it take to speak some of the most famous lines in the English language? And how come pretending to get stabbed and falling down screaming is so much fun? For answers to these and other questions, join us: the game's afoot!

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Who was Henry V and why does he continue to be such a popular figure?
- How does Shakespeare's Henry V differ from the real Henry V?
- What was the historical relationship between England and France at that time?
- How does the Elizabethan age relate to Shakespeare's genius?
- What is scansion and how does it unlock the language of Shakespeare?
- What does the actor do once he knows what he is saying?
- How can we be true on stage, rather than imitative?
- How can we be true to the large characters and stunning language without showing off?
- What are the fundamentals of stage combat?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will expand their understanding of:

- History, both Shakespeare's and Henry V's
- Scansion techniques that unlock Shakespeare's language
- Truthful acting
- Stage combat

Students will develop skills for:

- Decoding, speaking and performing Shakespeare
- Working in a group toward one goal
- Heightened empathy
- Understanding the difference between being bold and showing off
- Stage combat

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- **Table work:** scansion techniques to unlock Shakespeare's meaning
- **Staging:** what it means to be "on our feet." How we move from the safety of thought to the challenge of making a statement and standing behind it.
- **Stage combat:** techniques for brawls, knife-fights, daggers, broadswords and hand-to-hand. How this physical intensity informs speaking.
- **Final presentation:** how the audience affects all the work.
- **Analysis:** how other directors and actors may change the experience of the play.

Student Assessment

Student assessment will be based on attendance, enthusiasm for the work, original ideas, discoveries and preparedness. Preparedness means being on time, remembering scripts, pencils, notebooks, independent activities (when assigned) and memorizing lines by the due date. If an actor can read and has respect for a word's meaning and pronunciation, memorization follows easily. Without that fundamental respect however, memorization is impossible. Given that we can google "truncheon" and receive not only a definition but hear a correct pronunciation, this part of an actor's homework should not prove troublesome.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Please bring the following each day:

- Scripts (ours and the full version)
- Notebooks
- Pencils
- Energy
- Memorized lines on due dates

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic(s)	In-Class Activities
Day 1	Introductions. How do we even <i>do</i> this? Intro to scansion and fights	Group exercises: Improvs Fights Scansion: "Oh for a Muse of Fire"
Day 2	How do monologues go from A to B? Intro to voice and speech	Fight warm-up and review Work on individual monologues Presentation
Day 3	Our Script	Warm-up: fights and voice Reading through our script. Individual work on sections Presentation Assignment: use scansion techniques on rest of script; list discoveries
Day 4	What an actor brings to the table or Don't ever think the director will do it for you. Beginning to stage fights On our Feet!	Present discoveries you made on your own to class. Staging fights Stage the script.
Day 5	Continue to stage. The Whole thing.	Continue to stage. Run the play.
Day 6	The Art of Rehearsal: working stop and start; taking notes More fights.	Working through the script. Assignment: Memorize half the script.
Day 7	How things fall apart with memorization, and why it's okay. For today.	Run and work memorized section. Assignment: Memorize second half of script for Friday.
Day 8	Some history: Who was Henry V? Hand-outs from historians. Assignment: Present what you learned from your hand-out	Run/work script.
Day 9	Watch Kenneth Branagh's Henry V Take notes on what is missing from our version.	Present hand-out topic Discuss: what you learned from Branagh RUN ENTIRE MEMORIZED

		SHOW.
Day 10	Continue with Fights and vocal work outs Meisner: contemporary acting	Fights, Voice work, Meisner work Assignment: Independent Activity Run show.
Day 11	Meisner, fights, vocal work Elizabethan England	Lecture. Run Show
Day 12	Techniques in script analysis	Short lecture; individual work on analysis techniques Run show
Day 13	Final review Writing exercise	Improv, fights, vocal techniques, Scansion, sections of play Writing exercise
Day 14	Opera/speed-through	Warm-ups: vocal and physical Either a speed through or the play as opera Final run
Day 15	The final and most important component: The audience Re-cap	Possibly two performances Recap