

**The Ohio State University
First-Year Seminar Program
Course Proposal**

Course Information

1. Attach a syllabus that includes the following (sample syllabi can be found at <http://firstyearseminars.osu.edu>):
- the course goals
 - a brief description of the content
 - the distribution of meeting times
 - a weekly topical outline
 - a listing of assignments
 - grade assessment information (A-E or S/U)
 - required textbooks and/or reading list
 - the academic misconduct and disability services statements (sample statements can be found at <http://ascas.osu.edu/curriculum/asc-syllabus-elements>)

Instructor Information

2. Attach a brief biographical paragraph that includes the current research interests, teaching awards and honors, and undergraduate courses taught by the participating instructor(s). The paragraph will be included in materials for first-year students.

Alan B. Farmer, English Department

Proposer's Name and Primary Academic Unit (please print)

King Lear: Royal Families and Divine Justice

Proposer's Title

farmer.109@osu.edu

Proposer's e-mail Address

February 27, 2019

Submission Date

Robyn Warhol 

Approval of Department Chair of Academic Unit (please print)

Please return this form and any attachments to First-Year Seminar Program, 100 Denney Hall, 164 Annie & John Glenn Avenue, ATTN: Todd Bitters or e-mailed to bitters.4@osu.edu.

Biographical Statement: Alan B. Farmer

I have been a professor at Ohio State in the English Department since 2005. I regularly teach courses on Shakespeare, Renaissance drama, Renaissance poetry, and Shakespeare and Film. Another favorite course is my “Literary Locations: Venice,” which culminates in a ten-day trip to Venice, Italy. Besides literature, I research the history of the book in early modern England, which includes studying plays not only as texts to be performed but also as printed books intended to be sold and read. This focus on the history of the book ties in with my broader interests in popularity and popular culture, and in the intersection of literature, art, and economics. My current research project is for a book entitled *Print, Plays, and Popularity in Shakespeare’s England*, and once that is completed, I plan to return to another project with the title *Playbooks, Newsbooks, and the Politics of the Thirty Years’ War in England*. I have won numerous teaching awards at Ohio State, including English Department Undergraduate Professor of the Year (four times), the Paul W. Brown Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching, the Faculty and Staff Recognition Award from Sphinx and Mortar Board, the Distinguished Faculty Award from the Penhellenic Association and Alpha Phi, and the Faculty Recognition Award from the Order of Omega.

Undergraduate Courses Taught:

History of the Book (Medieval and Renaissance Studies 611, 5611)

Special Topics in Renaissance Literature and Culture: “Popularity and Popular Culture in Renaissance England” (English 4523)

Renaissance Poetry: “Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Fall in Renaissance Literature” (English 4522)

Renaissance Drama: “The Infamous Christopher Marlowe” (English 4521)

Shakespeare (English 520.01, English 4520.01)

Special Topics in Shakespeare: “Shakespeare and the Book” (English 4520.02)

Special Topics in Shakespeare: “Shakespeare’s *Henriad*” (English 4520.02)

Special Topics in Shakespeare: “Shakespeare’s Major Tragedies” (English 520.02)

Shakespeare and Film (English 378, English 578, English 3378)

Literary Locations: Venice (English 595, English 4400)

Introduction to the Study of Literature (English 2298, English 3398)

Critical Writing, Honors (English 398H)

Writing for English Majors (English 398)

Introduction to Shakespeare, Honors (English 220H, English 2220H)

Introduction to Shakespeare (English 220, English 2220)

King Lear: Royal Families and Divine Justice

Arts and Sciences 1137
Autumn 2019
Course time: tbd
Office Hours: tbd

Prof. Alan B. Farmer
email: farmer.109@osu.edu
Office 409 Denney Hall
phone: 614-214-7477

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, arguably his greatest and most devastating tragedy. This play raises challenging questions about the nature of kingship, about the relationships between fathers and children, and about suffering and divine justice. In studying *King Lear*, we will examine some of the historical and dramatic sources Shakespeare used in writing the play, look at the two different versions of the play that Shakespeare seems to have written, and consider its later adaptation in Akira Kurosawa's film *Ran* (1985), itself a masterpiece of cinematic art and a stunning interpretation of *King Lear*. Students will thus not only have the opportunity to think about this play in different media (theater, print, film), but also to immerse themselves in the complex issues of politics, family, and religion that it explores.

REQUIRED BOOK

I have ordered the following edition from the campus Barnes & Noble:
William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Arden) (ISBN 978-1903436592)

CARMENCANVAS READINGS

There will be several readings posted on CarmenCanvas. Some will be required, others only recommended. **You must print out, read, take notes on, and bring to class the required readings.** The recommended readings are intended to help you understand particular aspects of the play as well as interesting issues in Shakespeare's drama (they're interesting, so give them a try!).

ACCESSING AND VIEWING *RAN*

- **OSU Secured Media Library** <drm.osu.edu/media>: *Ran* is available for high-definition digital streaming through the OSU Secured Media Library. This will probably be the easiest way to watch the film, but I encourage you not to leave it to the last minute. The Secured Media Library's servers can be unexpectedly offline.
- **Thompson Library Course Reserves**: A DVD copy will be on reserve at Thompson Library; you can check it out for twenty-four hours at a time.
- **Netflix**: *Ran* is available as a DVD through Netflix. If you have a subscription, you can plan ahead and have it delivered to you. It may also be available through Netflix streaming and/or through Amazon Prime.
- **Screening**: A student in the class can reserve a room on campus with video projection capabilities, check out the DVD from Thompson Library reserves, and hold an informal screening with others in the class. This could be a fun, communal experience, and I'd be happy to help out in any way I can (such as by reserving a room on your behalf, if necessary).
- **Purchase**: You can purchase the DVD of *Ran*, which costs about \$15 (used) to around \$35 (new).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Lateness: You are expected to attend each class, but if you must miss one, advance notice is always appreciated (preferably by email). Missing more than **two** classes will be grounds for a final grade of "Unsatisfactory" There are no "excused" or "unexcused" absences. An absence is an absence, and all absences count the same way. *When absent, you are still responsible for the work that*

day and should consult with one of your classmates about what was covered in class. Regarding lateness: please arrive on time; excessive tardiness will count as an absence.

Class Participation and Preparation: This course depends on your engagement, in both listening and talking. In general, this means coming to every class with questions, comments, and insights—both big and small—about that day’s reading. In particular, you must bring to every class a physical copy of that day’s reading and any required readings posted on CarmenCanvas. You should also actively read the play in advance of class so that you can fruitfully participate in class discussions. “Active reading” means taking notes as you read, either in the margins of your books or on post-it notes you keep in them. When you read drama, it is a good idea to write brief summaries of one to two sentences after every scene so that you can keep track of the plot and characters. When you read critical works, you should be able to summarize their main arguments, and you should mark key passages so that you can find them later. If you do not understand something, make a note of it so you can bring it up in class discussion.

Quizzes: There will be several short quizzes, typically each day we begin discussing a new work or a new act of *King Lear*. Quizzes will usually be given at the beginning of class, and no makeups will be available. A missed quiz will receive a score of “Zero,” but your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. These quizzes should be straightforward to answer so long as you’ve done the preparatory reading beforehand.

Two Essays: The first essay will be a critical analysis of an issue in *King Lear* (800 to 1,000 words). The second essay will be an analysis of an issue in *Ran*, Akira Kurosawa’s film adaptation of *King Lear* (800 to 1,000 words).

How to Submit Your Essays: On the day an essay is due, a **hard copy** should be turned in at the beginning of class and an **electronic copy** uploaded to CarmenCanvas before class.

How to Format Your Essays: Both essays should have a **title** and should be **typed** (using a **12-point font** and at least **one-inch margins**), **double-spaced**, **page-numbered**, **stapled**, and include a list of **Works Cited**. Sources should be cited using MLA or *Chicago Manual of Style* standards. On the top of the first page, please include the following information (there is no need for report covers or folders):

Your Name
ASC 1137
Prof. Alan B. Farmer

Date
Word Count: #,###

A Witty, Informative Title

Late Papers: If your paper is not submitted in class, it will be graded down 1/6 of a grade for each calendar day it is late (for instance, from B+ to B+/B). I therefore encourage you to avoid handing in a late paper since it could lower your grade to an “Unsatisfactory” level. If you must turn in a later paper, though, you can upload it to CarmenCanvas in order to stop the “late clock,” but you must also hand in a hard copy to me, typically by delivering it to the front desk in 421 Denney Hall. **Both course essays must be completed in order to pass the course, and they must be submitted within two weeks of their due dates.** If your essays are not submitted within those two weeks, they will earn a grade of “Zero,” and you will be in real danger of failing the course.

Writing Center: The Ohio State Writing Center is a great resource I encourage you to use. It offers free help with writing at any stage of the writing process for any member of the university community. During sessions, consultants can work with you on anything from research papers to lab reports, from dissertations to résumés, from proposals to application materials. Appointments are available in-person at 4120 Smith Lab, as well as for online sessions. The Writing Center also offers daily walk-in hours—

no appointment necessary—in Thompson Library. You do not have to bring in a piece of writing in order to schedule a writing center appointment; many students report that some of their most productive sessions entail simply talking through ideas. Please visit 4120 Smith Lab, or visit <stw.osu.edu/writing-center>, or call 688-4291 to make an appointment.

Grading Formula: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Attendance and Class Participation: 25%

Essay 1: 25%

Quizzes: 25%

Essay 2: 25%

*Both essays must be completed in order to pass the course. Not doing so will result in a final grade of an “E.”

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

I take plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism is the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own: it includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. Instructors shall report *all* instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct at <studentconduct.osu.edu>.

Student Life Disability Services: The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I have been a professor at Ohio State in the English Department since 2005. I regularly teach courses on Shakespeare, Renaissance drama, Renaissance poetry, and Shakespeare and Film. Another favorite course is my “Literary Locations: Venice,” which culminates in a ten-day trip to Venice, Italy. Besides literature, I also research the history of the book in early modern England, which includes studying plays not only as texts to be performed but also as printed books intended to be sold and then read. This focus on the history of the book ties in with my broader interests in popularity and popular culture, and in the intersection of literature, art, and economics.

COURSE SCHEDULE

We will try to stick to this schedule, but it might have to be adjusted depending on how our discussions develop.

WEEK 1

Date Introduction: Course overview

WEEK 2

Date Anonymous, *King Lear* (c.1589) (quiz)
Fuchs, “EF’s Visit To a Small Planet” (Carmen)

WEEK 3

Date Anonymous, *King Lear*
Holinshed, “The Second Book of the Historie of England” (Carmen)

WEEK 4

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 1 (1605) (quiz)
Read the entire play, but we will focus only on Act 1

WEEK 5

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 1
RECOMMENDED: Greenblatt, “General Introduction,” 31–42 (Carmen)

WEEK 6

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 2 (quiz)

WEEK 7

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 3 (quiz)

WEEK 8

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 3
ESSAY 1 DUE

WEEK 9

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 4 (quiz)

WEEK 10

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 5 (quiz)
Warren, “Quarto and Folio *King Lear*” (Carmen)

WEEK 11

Date Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 5
Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, ch. 5 (Carmen)

WEEK 12

Date Kurosawa, dir., *Ran* (1985) (quiz)
Walker, “Getting Back to Shakespeare” (Carmen)
RECOMMENDED: Kolker, *Film, Form, and Culture*, 26–65 (Carmen)

WEEK 13

Date Kurosawa, dir., *Ran* (1985)

WEEK 14

Date Kurosawa, dir., *Ran* (1985)
ESSAY 2 DUE

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992.
- Anon. *King Lear*. Ed. Tiffany Stern. Globe Quartos. New York: Theatre Arts Books/Routledge, 2002.
- Fuchs, Elinor. “EF’s Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play.” *Theater* 34.2 (2004): 5–9.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. “General Introduction.” *The Norton Shakespeare*. Gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 2016. 1–79.
- Holinshed, Raphael. “The Second Book of the Historie of England.” In *King Lear*. By William Shakespeare. Ed. Claire McEachern. Longman Cultural Editions. New York: Longman, 2004. 144–47.
- Kolker, Robert. *Film, Form, and Culture*. 2nd ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.
- Kurosawa, Akira, dir. *Ran*. 1985; New York: Criterion Collection, 2005. DVD.
- Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Arden Shakespeare. Ed. R. A. Foakes. 1997; London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Walker, Elsie. “Getting Back to Shakespeare: Whose Film is it Anyway?” *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*. Ed. Diana E. Henderson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. 8–30.
- Warren, Michael. “Quarto and Folio *King Lear* and the Interpretation of Albany and Edgar.” *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's King Lear*. Ed. Jay L. Halio. New York: G. K. Hall, 1996. 35–47.