**English drama on stage and on screen**

## Prof. Arturo Cattaneo

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to introduce students to the relation between drama (specifically, English drama) as produced and performed on stage and drama in its adaptations for the cinema. This will be achieved through a general introduction to differences in production and performance between drama on stage and on screen, and through a comparative study of one of Shakespeare’s best-known plays and its filmic versions, and one of Oscar Wilde’s best-known plays and its filmic versions. At the end of the course, students are expected to have the necessary tools to discuss drama on stage and on screen using some basic concepts, and to analyse a given case study.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The beginning of modern drama: the Elizabethan theatre. The Elizabethan theatre as modern entertainment in the making: an historical insight. Two filmic rendering of the Elizabethan theatre business: Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (1944) and John Madden’s *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Shakespeare’s great tragedies: the case of *Othello*. Shakespeare’s adaptation of the Italian source, a novella, for the stage. The racial issue in *Othello*: the original text, productions for the stage and the screen. *Orson Welles’ Othello* (1951) and Oliver Parker’s *Othello* (1995). The late Victorian revolution in the theatre. Oscar Wilde’s dominance of the London and New York stages in the 1890s. Wilde’s comedy of social manners: *The Importance of Being Ernest* (1895). Oliver Parker’s film adaptation of *The Importance of Being Ernest* (2002). Shakespeare in Hollywood: John Madden’s and Tom Stoppard’s *Shakespeare in Love* (1998).

***READING LIST [[1]](#footnote-1)***

William Shakespeare, *Othello,* Oxford World’s Classics (or any other complete English edition). [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/shakespeare/othello-9781472571762-673666.html)

Oscar Wilde, The I*mportance of Being Ernest* (any complete English edition). [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/wilde-osca/the-importance-of-being-earnest-9780199535972-188785.html)

Russel Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, Cambridge University Press, 2007 (or later editions).

Linda Seger, *The Art of Adaptation*, Henry Holt, New York, 1992.

Suggested reading list:

Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994.

*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed*.* byM.H. Abrams and S. Greenblatt*,* W.W. Norton & Company, New York-London (any edition). [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/cerca.php?s=norton%20anthology)

Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare on Toast: Getting a Taste for the Bard,* Icon Books, London, 2009.

Arturo Cattaneo, *A Short History of English Literature,* Mondadori Università, Milano, 2011 or 2019. [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/cerca.php?s=a%20short%20history%20of%20english%20literature%20cattaneo)

Armando Fumagalli*,* *L’adattamento da letteratura a cinema*, Audino, Roma, 2020. [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/cerca.php?s=adattamento%20da%20letteratura%20a%20cinema)

Mario Ruggeri, *Shakespeare sceneggiatore*, Vita & Pensiero, Milano, 2016. [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/mario-ruggeri/shakespeare-sceneggiatore-la-tecnica-di-scrittura-di-cinque-grandi-tragedie-9788834331606-237832.html)

*DVDs*

*Orson Welles’Othello* (1951).

*Othello*, Oliver Parker (1995).

*Shakespeare in Love*, John Madden (1998).

*The Importance of Being Ernest*, Oliver Parker (2002).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course has a duration of one academic year (3 hours per week). During the course, students will be invited to workshops dedicated to the topics or the historical periods under analysis. Further information will be made available on the lecturer’s webpage and on Blackboard before the beginning of the course. Beside studying the reading list mentioned above, students are invited to regularly check the lecturer’s webpage and Blackboard to download further material for the exam.

During the course, students will have the opportunity to meet some cinema and TV experts and directors and compare the different transpositions through other media, such as films and TV series.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Final assessment, to be held during the official exam sessions. It will consist in an oral exam.

During the oral assessment, students will be asked to comment on the plays and on the films indicated in the course programme. Students will be tested on their ability to analyse and contextualise the plays and films (60% of the value of the final assessment), also in relation to the culture of the historical periods under analysis (40% of the value of the final assessment).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course is specifically addressed to the students attending the curriculum “The Art and Industry of Narration”. In order to get the most out of this course and successfully complete the final assessment, students should have adequate English skills and an efficient method of study. However, the intended learning outcomes of this course will be reached progressively, with a gradual introduction of the different topics. Students with little literary background are strongly advised to consult the preparatory reading list available on the lecturerer’s webpage and on Blackboard. All students are advised to read the plays and watch the films indicated in the programme before the beginning of the course.

Students are expected to respect the Code of Ethics issued by the Catholic University and accepted during the enrolment phase.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage or on the Faculty notice board.

*Office Hours*

Prof. Arturo Cattaneo: in his office c/o the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (via Necchi, 9. Third floor). Dates and times will be posted on Blackboard and on his account online in due time.

1. I testi indicati nella bibliografia sono acquistabili presso le librerie di Ateneo; è possibile acquistarli anche presso altri rivenditori. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)