

PS Shakespeare & the Politics of Postcolonial Adaptation

Syllabus

Let's get this out of the way: Like the preceding terms, winter term 2021/22 will be yet another experiment in pandemic pedagogics – albeit one where you will get to be on campus again (fingers crossed!). It is also my first term at the University of Passau, so please bear with me! I look forward to experimenting with different forms of (online) teaching, but I will need your help. Please keep in touch, take part in the Zoom classes, and use the forum and Perusall for asynchronous coursework (see schedule). Most importantly, please let me (and the other course members) know if something does not work for you or if you have different ideas about how to do things. Let's do this together!

class:

- **Tuesday, 12:15-13:45** [online]

As Zoom is not the perfect medium for everyone (and some of you might struggle with technical issues) the seminar will combine synchronous Zoom classes with a number of asynchronous sessions (see schedule & tasks below).

contact:

- [office: PHIL 270, Innstraße 25]
- **e-mail:**
- **office hours:** Wednesday, 14:00-15:00 (and on appointment) on Zoom – please send me an e-mail for the Zoom link.
- **twitter:** @susannegruss

resources:

- **StudIP:**

literature:

- Please **buy** the following texts:
William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603) [if possible buy the Arden edition]
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1610/11) [if possible buy the Arden edition]
Djanet Sears, *Harlem Duet* (1997)
Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest* (transl. Philip Crispin, 1969)
- Streaming access to *Omkara* (2006) and *The Tempest* (2010) is available via amazon Prime UK.
- All **other texts** that are mandatory reading are available on StudIP.
- Please check the **bibliography** for further references (full bibliographical details, further reading).

course description:

Murder and blank verse! The 'bard' and racism! Othello and Bollywood! Caliban writes back! Sounds exciting? Then this seminar might be just right for you! In this class we will explore two of Shakespeare's plays (his tragedy *Othello* and his late play *The Tempest*) as well as twentieth- and twenty-first-century adaptations of these texts. We will approach Shakespeare's plays (and the playwright's canonical status) from the point of view of postcolonial studies by discussing postcolonial analyses of his plays – racist stereotyping in *Othello* and (the language of) colonisation in *The Tempest*, to name but two examples. Our next step will be an analysis of the politics of postcolonial adaptations in a play (D. Sears's *Harlem Duet*, A. Césaire's *A Tempest*) and a film (V. Bhardwaj's *Omkara*, J. Taymor's *The Tempest*) respectively.



e-mail and Zoom etiquette:**- e-mail:**

Please give me some time to answer your **e-mails** (up to 4 days). I will not write e-mails after 8pm or on weekends.

As I teach five different classes, it would be very helpful if the class you are taking with me appeared somewhere in the body of your e-mail.

- Zoom:

Please **mute yourself** if you are not talking. If you feel uncomfortable talking into the camera (or if you have connection issues), feel free to use the **chat** to contribute to class discussions.

I obviously will not (and cannot) force anyone to turn on their **camera** when we zoom but would still kindly ask you to do so. Yes, staring at yourself onscreen can be cringeworthy, but if we want to use Zoom to create a **seminar experience**, being able to see each other's faces and nonverbal communication just makes everything so much easier for me (and you). Imagine trying to keep a discussion going while staring into a void of black rectangles.

Most of us will zoom from our **private spaces** – this means that my kids might make an appearance at some point (sorry). Zoom bombing family members, flatmates or pets are always welcome! Added bonus: you get to eat and drink during classes (as long as you have muted yourself, see above).

Our Zoom meetings should be a **safe space** for everyone. Recording (parts of) sessions or taking (and posting) screenshots is an absolute no-go. All material shared onscreen will be made available to you on StudIP.

- I am not exempt from the occasional **technical blip – please be patient if I freeze and simply wait for a couple of minutes.**

Like the terminator, I will be back, promised.

- Be kind (to yourself, to each other, and to me).**course performance & requirements:**




- Apart from preparing the **compulsory reading**, please stick to the tasks detailed in the course schedule below.
- I expect you to take part in class **regularly** and **actively**, both in synchronous and asynchronous sessions (I will also track your activity in the forum and on Perusall). Communication is key, so talk to me if you are struggling.
- Instead of an oral presentation, each of you will write one brief **response paper** (ca. 1.000 words) on one of the articles we will discuss during asynchronous sessions / reading weeks. Use this task as an **exercise in academic writing**: describe the main thesis of the article in question, the development of its argument, and your own takeaways.
- For **asynchronous sessions**, I have indicated the tasks I expect you to cover over the week in the schedule below. This should not take more time than the 90-minute course slot (plus the time you would normally take to read/prepare for class).



term paper:

- If you need to write a term paper for this course, please stick to the department's style sheet, attend the Zoom session on term papers, and do the tasks in the asynchronous session.
- Developing a topic **independently** and coming up with a suitable **thesis** is part of your assignment. Please talk to me/chat with me as soon as possible – I will not accept & grade your term paper if I have not talked to you about your topic.



Schedule

 mandatory reading / study
 to write
 background reading (optional)

- 01** 19.10.21 *organisation*
- tools (Flinga, Padlet, Perusall)
 What does ‘postcolonial Shakespeare’ mean?
- to read / to do:
 /
- tasks:
- Have a quick look at the forum **before we start** and introduce yourself (including your pronouns) – if you want to, you can also upload a selfie and/or a picture of your workspace. And if you have a pet, upload a pic for us (pretty please).
 - prep for class**: Think about **the status of Shakespeare** & why adapting his works from a **postcolonial angle** might be particularly relevant.
 - after class**: Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism**, and **open questions**. Please do so each week – I will get back to your open questions at the beginning of each session.
- 02** 26.10.21 *introduction*
- Shakespeare – the stage – early modern race
- to read / to do:
- F. Karim-Cooper, “The Materials of Race: Staging the Black and White Binary in the Early Modern Theatre” (17-29) 
 - write & hand in a **response paper** on Karim-Cooper (you need to write 1 for the seminar) 
- tasks:
- Before** today’s session, please read & comment on **Karim-Cooper’s article** (Perusall, link in today’s session on StudIP). We will then discuss any problems you might have had with Perusall in today’s class.
 - prep for class**: As a starting point for today’s discussion, think about how we **construct** and **talk about race** today.
 - after class**: Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism**, and **open questions**.



03 02.11.21 *William Shakespeare, Othello (1603) 1*

introduction – genre

to read / to do:

- read the play! 📖
- E. Smith, “Othello” (209-222) 🎧

tasks:

- reading prompt:** How does Shakespeare depict *Othello*’s **racial otherness**?
- prep for class:** What did you know about **Othello** before this seminar?
- after class:** Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.

04 09.11.21 *William Shakespeare, Othello (1603) 2*

asynch. the Moor & early modern race

to read / to do:

- E. Smith, “Othello” (podcast) 📖
- M. Dimmock, “Experimental *Othello*” (93-107) 📖
- write & hand in a **response paper** on Dimmock (you need to write 1 for the seminar) ✍️

tasks:

- Listen** to Smith’s **podcast** (link in today’s session on StudIP) and **take notes** while doing so.
- Read & comment** on **Dimmock’s article** (Perusall).
- Use the **forum** thread “**Discussion questions**” for next week – we will focus on close readings of the play, so tell us which aspects or passages of the play you would like to look at in detail!
- after class** (i.e., once you have finished the tasks for this week): Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.

05 16.11.21 *William Shakespeare, Othello (1603) 3*

close readings: race & gender

to read / to do:

- /

tasks:

- prep for class:** Have a look at the forum thread “Discussion questions”, look up the passages, & start to think about how you would analyse them.
- after class:** Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.



06 23.11.21 *William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1610/11) 1*

introduction – genre

to read / to do:

- read the play! 📖
- E. Smith, “*The Tempest*” (303-319) 🎧

tasks:

- reading prompt:** How does Shakespeare depict **colonisation** and **racial otherness** in *The Tempest*?
- prep for class:** What did you know about *The Tempest* before this seminar?
- after class:** Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions.**

07 30.11.21 *William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1610/11) 2*

asynch.

Learning to curse? Prospero as a coloniser

to read / to do:

- E. Smith, “*The Tempest*” (podcast) 📖
- S. Greenblatt, “Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century” (16-39) 📖
- write & hand in a **response paper** on Greenblatt (you need to write 1 for the seminar) ✍️

tasks:

- Listen** to Smith’s **podcast** (link in today’s session on StudIP) and **take notes** while doing so.
- Read & comment** on **Greenblatt’s article (Perusall).**
- Use the **forum** thread “**Discussion questions**” for next week – we will focus on close readings of the play, so tell us which aspects or passages of the play you would like to look at in detail!
- after class** (i.e., once you have finished the tasks for this week): Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions.**

08 07.12.21 *William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1610/11) 31*

close readings: race & colonisation

term papers 1 – to dos & no gos

to read / to do:

- /





tasks:

- prep for class 1:** Have a look at the forum thread “Discussion questions”, look up the passages, & start to think about how you would analyse them.
- prep for class 2:** Think about any **specific question** you might have about **academic writing.**
- after class:** Use the forum thread “**Feedback**” to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions.**



09 14.12.21 *Shakespeare & postcolonial adaptation*
asynch. anti-racist Shakespeare

to read / to do:


- Shakespeare's Globe, "Anti-Racist Shakespeare: *The Tempest*" (YouTube) 
- S. Young, "How Have Post-Colonial Approaches Enriched Shakespeare's Works?" 
- A. Loomba, "Introduction: Race and Colonialism in the Study of Shakespeare" (1-21) 
- write & hand in a **response paper** on Young (you need to write 1 for the seminar) 

tasks:

- Watch** the Globe **webinar** (link in today's session on StudIP) and **take notes** while doing so.
- Read & comment** on **Young's article** (Perusall).
- If you have some time to spare, read Loomba's introduction on Shakespeare and post-colonial criticism.
- after class** (i.e., once you have finished the tasks for this week): Use the forum thread "**Feedback**" to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.

10 21.12.21 *dramatic adaptation 1*
Aimé Césaire, *Une Tempête/A Tempest* (1969)

to read / to do:

- read the play! 


tasks:

- reading prompt**: How does Aimé Césaire **adapt** and **criticise** Shakespeare's *Tempest*?
- after class**: Use the forum thread "**Feedback**" to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.

28.12.21 *Christmas Break*
04.01.22 (no class)

11 11.01.22 *dramatic adaptation 2*
Djanet Sears, *Harlem Duet* (1996)

to read / to do:

- read the play! 

tasks:

- reading prompt**: How does Djanet Sears's *Othello-prequel* talk back to / revise Shakespeare's play?
- after class**: Use the forum thread "**Feedback**" to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.



- 12 18.01.22 *term papers*
asynch. developing a topic / a thesis / an abstract
- to read / to do:
- /
- tasks:
- prep for class:** If you have not done so already, think about a **topic** for your term paper.
 - I have uploaded a **research exercise** and a **sample abstract**. Please complete the exercise & comment on the abstract (detailed instructions on uploaded handout).
 - Use the **forum** to post questions about academic writings (problems you have encountered before, things that are not entirely clear) and engage in **discussions** with the others to try and help them with their problems.
 - after class:** Use the forum thread **“Feedback”** to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.
- 13 25.01.22 *film adaptation 1*
Vishal Bhardwaj, *Omkara* (2006)
- to read / to do:
- watch the film! 📺
 - T. Cartelli and K. Rowe, “Adaptation as a Cultural Process” *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2007. 25-44. 📖
- tasks:
- viewing prompt:** Watch Bhardwaj’s film as a **hybrid** between a (postcolonial) Shakespeare adaptation & a Bollywood film.
 - prep for class:** How do **Bollywood films** usually work? (Have you seen any?)
 - after class:** Use the forum thread **“Feedback”** to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.
- 14 01.02.22 *film adaptation 2*
Julie Taymor, *The Tempest* (2010)
- to read / to do:
- watch the film! 📺
- tasks:
- viewing prompt:** Taymor’s film has often been analysed with reference to **gender** – watch it for gender *and* postcolonial element.
 - after class:** Use the forum thread **“Feedback”** to (anonymously) post **comments, criticism, and open questions**.
- 15 08.02.22 *round-up & open questions*
- to read / to do:
- /
- tasks:
- prep for class:** Think about what you have learned in this class – do you have any open questions?



Literature

primary literature

please note: bibliographical details are for the editions of primary texts I use

Bhardwaj, Vishal. *Omkara*. Eros Entertainment, 2006. DVD Eros International Ltd., 2006.

Taymor, Julie. *The Tempest*. Touchstone & Miramax, 2010. DVD Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2011.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Eds Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999 [1610/11].

Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. Ed. E. A. J. Honigman.

Sears, Djanet. *Harlem Duet*. Toronto: Siroco Drama, 1997 [1996].

Césaire, Aimé. *A Tempest*. Transl. Richard Miller. New York: TCG Translations, 2002 [1969]

secondary literature

Cartelli, Thomas and Katherine Rowe. "Adaptation as a Cultural Process." *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2007. 25-44.

Cartelli, Thomas. "Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as Colonialist Text and Pretext." *Repositioning Shakespeare. National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 87-104.

Cartmell, Deborah. "Shakespeare, Film and Race: Screening *Othello* and *The Tempest*." *Interpreting Shakespeare on Screen*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 2000. 67-93.

Dimmock, Matthew. "Experimental *Othello*." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*. Ed. Ayanna Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 93-107.

Greenblatt, Stephen. "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century." *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. 16-39.

Habib, Imtiaz H. *Shakespeare and Race. Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2000.

Karim-Cooper, Farah. "The Materials of Race: Staging the Black and White Binary in the Early Modern Theatre." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*. Ed. Ayanna Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 17-29.

Loomba, Ania. *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Newman, Karen. "'And Wash the Ethiop White': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*." *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991. 71-93.

Rosenthal, Daniel. "*Omkara*." *100 Shakespeare Films*. Forew. Julie Taymor. London: British Film Institute, 2007. 188-191.

Rosenthal, Daniel. "*Omkara*." *100 Shakespeare Films*. Forew. Julie Taymor. London: British Film Institute, 2007. 188-191.

Shakespeare's Globe. "Anti-Racist Shakespeare: *The Tempest*." Webinar Shakespeare & Race 2021, <https://youtu.be/Rh8XKqgaSOc>.

Smith, Emma. *Approaching Shakespeare*. University of Oxford Podcasts. <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/approaching-shakespeare>.

"*Othello*." <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/othello>.

"*The Tempest*." <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/tempest-1>.

Smith, Emma. *This Is Shakespeare*. London: Pelican, 2019.

"(14) *Othello*." 209-222.

"(20) *The Tempest*." 303-319.

Thompson, Ayanna, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Young, Sandra. "How Have Post-Colonial Approaches Enriched Shakespeare's Works?" *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*. Ed. Ayanna Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 254-267.

