

# English 4520.02: Pandemic Shakespeare

ONLINE  
Thursday 10-11 a.m. Zoom  
Spring 2021

Prof. Elizabeth Kolkovich  
Email: [kolkovich.1@osu.edu](mailto:kolkovich.1@osu.edu)  
Phone: 419-755-4281

Office hours: Tu 11-1 or by appointment, via CarmenZoom

## Course description

This course investigates how Shakespeare's texts speak to us today. Our guiding question is this one: how can centuries-old literature help us make sense of a new global pandemic? As we analyze selected sonnets and four plays, we will explore such themes as health and wellness, isolation, divisiveness, and hope. We will investigate how the plague affected Shakespeare's career and culture, and we will try to think critically about our current circumstances. We will also take full advantage of the resources, opportunities, and interpretations made available *because* of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Course goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Read and discuss Shakespeare's works with skill and pleasure.
- Think critically about human experiences in past and present pandemics.
- More confidently express your perspective in writing for multiple audiences.
- More confidently navigate digital technologies.
- Compare early British culture to our own, as well as your own values, beliefs, and actions to those of others.

English 4520.02 fulfills the pre-1800 or pre-1900 requirement for the English major.

## How this course works

This course is 100% online. We will have live Zoom meetings on Thursdays 10-11 a.m. that will be recorded. All other coursework will be done at your own pace, with weekly deadlines to provide consistent structure. The course is divided into **weekly modules** (see schedule below). Although some modules will require more or less of your time, you might expect to spend an average of nine hours per week on this course. On Carmen, each module will walk you through the week's activities in order. A typical module involves the following tasks and deadlines:

BY MONDAY, 11:59 p.m.

1. Read the assigned text.
2. Read, watch, or listen to Prof. Kolkovich's contextual materials.
3. Collaborate online: post to Carmen Discussions or complete a small homework exercise.

BY WEDNESDAY, 11:59 p.m.

1. Read the assigned text.

2. Collaborate online: post to Carmen Discussions or complete a small homework exercise.

ON THURSDAY:

1. Attend our live Zoom meeting 10-11 a.m.
2. Write an end-of-the-week reflection and post it in Carmen Discussions by 11:59 p.m.

I prefer to break up work into small tasks, so I have divided each week's assignments into three parts. However, you are welcome to complete all of the week's assignments at once (by the end of the day Monday) if you work differently.

**Attendance and participation requirements:** If you are an active participant in this course, you will probably log into our Carmen page many times a week. The *minimum* requirements to pass the course include the following:

- **Participation in Carmen activities for attendance. AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK**  
Complete the reading and other assignments in each module. If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me as soon as possible.
- **Participation in online discussion forums and collaborative activities. AT LEAST TWICE PER WEEK**  
A typical week will require one post on Monday and one post on Wednesday.

**Live Zoom sessions:** I expect you to attend our weekly Zoom meetings unless you have an important conflict (and I leave that up to you to define). Please note the following policies:

- I ask you to turn on your video when possible. Virtual backgrounds are welcome. If you are uncomfortable turning on your video for whatever reason, please upload a still photo to use as your avatar.
- You may participate by raising your hand or typing in the chat box. I will not grade participation.
- I understand that Internet connectivity issues, illness, and other life happenings might interfere with your ability to attend these sessions. In those cases, don't worry. All of our live Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted on Carmen. If you must miss class, you can watch the recorded session later.

**How to communicate in this class:**

- **Writing style:** You will write many informal posts and messages in this course. Out of respect for your classmates and me, try to use proper grammar and spelling.
- **Tone and civility:** Please create a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online, and inside jokes can be exclusionary if everyone isn't sure what they mean.
- **Cite your sources:** Use quotations when relevant and credit your sources.

## Required texts

You are not required to *buy* books for this course. All texts are available in free, digital editions on our Carmen page. If you prefer to read the plays in hard copy (as I do), I recommend the Folger

Shakespeare or Arden editions, but you may use any scholarly edition with up-to-date footnotes. This semester, we will read:

- *King Lear*
- *Twelfth Night*
- *The Winter's Tale*
- *Richard II*

## Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu)
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

## Technical skills

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen ([carmen.osu.edu](http://carmen.osu.edu))
- Using Carmen Zoom for class meetings and professor office hours

## Equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- Earphones: helpful for class sessions but not required

## Software

- [Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus](https://ocio.osu.edu/kb04733) All Ohio State students are eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus through Microsoft's Student Advantage program. Each student can install Office on five PCs or Macs, five tablets (Windows, iPad® and Android™) and five phones. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found at <https://ocio.osu.edu/kb04733>.

## Required assignments

Assignment	Points
Participation: discussion posts and collaborative activities	30
Weekly reflections	10
Guest lecture assignment	10

Close reading essay	15
Performance analysis	15
Final project	20
Total	100

## Assignment information

The global pandemic has made people work differently and often more collaboratively—to share resources and workarounds, to help each other, and to connect in times of isolation. This course likewise involves a lot of informal writing and collaboration. Detailed prompts for all assignments can be found at our Carmen page.

**Participation:** You will participate in class by posting to our discussion board and completing collaborative activities. These activities might include social media posts, group annotations, and crowdsourced research questions. There will be 20 opportunities to participate in these ways, and each is worth 1.5 points. You will earn full credit if you follow the instructions and submit on time. Late or incomplete contributions may earn partial credit.

**Weekly reflections:** At the end of each module, you will review the week and write a paragraph about what you learned. These reflections will be posted to Carmen Discussions so we can learn from each other. The first weekly reflection is ungraded, and there are some weeks when no reflection is due.

**Guest lecture assignment:** Academics usually travel to conferences and other universities to share ideas in research talks, but that wasn't possible during most of 2020. Instead, Shakespeare professors and theater professionals around the world gave presentations virtually. I will ask each of you to watch one guest lecture from a list of choices and post about it for the class.

**Close reading essay:** Our midterm project is a 3-5-page essay or a 3-5-minute presentation in which you'll select and closely analyze a passage from one of our first two plays.

**Performance analysis:** Shakespeare is meant to be performed in addition to read. You will watch a recorded performance of one of our plays and write a 2-4-page analysis of it.

**Final project:** At the end of the semester, you will make something that applies what you've learned. Options include an original creative piece (written, sung, drawn, danced, performed, etc.), an academic guide for future readers, or an edited poem or passage.

## Late assignments

If you anticipate trouble meeting a deadline, please contact me as soon as possible. I frequently grant extensions to conscientious students. I also give an eight-hour grace period for each assignment, meaning that you can submit it without penalty up until 8 a.m. the day after it is due. If you submit a participation assignment (discussion post, Tweet, collaborative annotations, or similar activity) later

than 8 a.m. the following day without an arranged extension, your grade will be reduced by 15% for each day it is late. For more major assignments (guest lecture, close reading, and performance analysis), late papers will receive a penalty of 5% for each day it is late. I will not accept late final projects (beyond the eight-hour grace period).

## **Instructor feedback and response time**

The following list will give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

### **Preferred contact method**

If you have a question, please contact me at my Ohio State email address (kolkovich.1@osu.edu). I prefer direct email rather than Carmen message. To ensure a quicker response, please write “English 4520.02” in the subject line, followed by the email’s topic (e.g. English 4520.02: discussion post question). I prefer to be addressed as “Prof. Kolkovich” or “Dr. Kolkovich.” Something like “Dr. K” or “Professor” is fine too. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours M-F. You are welcome to email over the weekend or in the middle of the night, but please don’t expect a quick response.

### **What are “office hours”?**

My office hours are regularly scheduled periods (Tuesdays 11-1) when I am available to individual students for activities that are best conducted in real time. These may include conferences about drafts, review of expectations for past or upcoming assignments, or any academic or personal issue that affects your success as a student at Ohio State. I have access to many academic and personal resources and am happy to help you get the assistance you need. If you are unable to meet me during my scheduled office hours, email me to arrange another time. It is helpful if you offer 2-3 times you are available.

### **Class announcements**

I will send all important class-wide messages through the Announcements tool in CarmenCanvas. Please check [your notification preferences](https://go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to ensure you receive these messages. Also check your OSU email at least once a day.

### **Grading and assignment feedback**

For written assignments, you can generally expect feedback within seven days.

### **Discussion board**

I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards at least once mid-week. I won’t always respond to every message individually, but I will read all of them and join the conversation.

### **Where to get help**

- Email me if it’s a question I can answer in a short paragraph.
- Visit my office hours (or schedule an appointment) if it would involve more conversation.
- Seek feedback on written assignments at the [Writing Center](#), which provides free individual writing (and reading/analysis) consultation for students of all abilities.

## Academic integrity

I am required to report to the Committee on Academic Misconduct all instances of “academic misconduct,” including, but not limited to, dishonest practices in connection with exams and cases of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the representation of someone else’s ideas or words as your own. That “someone else” could be a book or article, a friend or classmate, or an online source. It is a serious offense that is easy to spot and never worth it. The severe penalties for plagiarism can damage a student’s academic career; they can include a zero for the paper, probable failure in the course, and possible academic censure or even expulsion. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>, and if you are ever unsure whether or how to cite something, please ask.

## Copyright disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

## Course schedule

The following schedule outlines major assignments and main texts. I have left some flexibility in the syllabus to allow exploration of what happens in Shakespeare studies *during* our semester, and deadlines are subject to change based on class needs. See our Carmen page ([carmen.osu.edu](http://carmen.osu.edu)) for full, updated descriptions of each week’s assignments. All texts are available digitally on Carmen.

### Week 1: Beginnings

M 1/11	Introductions to the course and each other.
W 1/13	Shakespeare and the plague: Smith, “What Shakespeare Teaches Us About Living With Pandemics”; Greenblatt, “What Shakespeare Actually Wrote About the Plague”; pop culture parodies; Shakespeare, Sonnet 147.
Th 1/14	Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

\*Extra credit: *Looking for Hamlet*, 1603 (a documentary created last semester by an OSU English 4520.02 class) premieres on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) on Friday, 1/15 at 8 p.m.

### Week 2: A Historical View of Pandemics

M 1/18	University holiday—no assignment.
W 1/20	Shakespeare and the plague, continued: “Writing About the Plague in Shakespeare’s England” ( <i>Shakespeare Unlimited</i> podcast, episode 154); Shakespeare, Sonnet 141; Nashe, “A Litany in Time of Plague”; short excerpts from Dekker, <i>The Wonderful Year</i> and a 1603 medical advice pamphlet.
Th 1/21	Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 3: Shakespeare's Sonnets

- M 1/25 Love in absence: Sonnets 29, 97, 98. Craik, "By Time's Fell Hand': Shakespeare and Emotional Lockdown."  
W 1/27 Death and mortality: Sonnets 64, 71, 81, 146.  
Th 1/28 Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 4: Shakespeare's Theater

- M 2/1 **Guest lecture assignment due.**  
W 2/3 *King Lear*, Act 1.  
Th 2/4 Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 5: *King Lear*, or Shakespeare's Plague Play?

- M 2/8 *King Lear*, Act 2-Scene 3.5.  
W 2/10 *King Lear*, Scene 3.6-Act 4.  
Th 2/11 Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 6: *King Lear*, or Shakespeare's Plague Play?

- M 2/15 *King Lear*, Act 5.  
W 2/17 Excerpt from Shapiro, *Year of Lear* (273-306).  
Th 2/18 Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 7: Quarantine Antics in *Twelfth Night*

- M 2/22 *Twelfth Night*, Act 1.  
W 2/24 University break—no assignment.  
Th 2/25 Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 8: Quarantine Antics in *Twelfth Night*

- M 3/1 *Twelfth Night*, Act 2.  
W 3/3 *Twelfth Night*, Act 3.  
Th 3/4 Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

### Week 9: Focus on close reading

- M 3/8 *Twelfth Night*, Acts 4-5.  
W 3/10 No reading assignment—see Carmen page for activities.  
Th 3/11 Zoom meeting (no weekly reflection due). **Close reading assignment due.**

Week 10: Hope after Darkness in *The Winter's Tale*

- M 3/15      *The Winter's Tale*, Act 1.  
W 3/17      *The Winter's Tale*, Acts 2-3.  
Th 3/18      Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

Week 11: Hope after Darkness in *The Winter's Tale*

- M 3/22      *The Winter's Tale*, Act 4.  
W 3/24      *The Winter's Tale*, Act 5.  
Th 3/25      Zoom meeting; weekly reflection due.

Week 12: Pandemic Performance

- M 3/29      Watch your chosen production.  
W 3/31      University break—no assignment.  
Th 4/1      University break—no Zoom meeting or weekly reflection due.  
F 4/2      **Performance analysis due.**

Week 13: *Richard II*, Race, and Podcasting in 2020

- M 4/5      *Richard II*: Episode 1 (Act 1-Scene 2.1, line 76); Espinosa, "A Darker Shade of Shakespeare."  
W 4/7      *Richard II*: Episode 2 (Scene 2.1, line 77 to Scene 3.2).  
Th 4/8      Zoom meeting.

Week 14: *Richard II*, Race, and Podcasting in 2020

- M 4/12      *Richard II*: Episode 3 (Scenes 3.3-4.1).  
W 4/14      *Richard II*: Episode 4 (Scene 4.1 to Act 5).  
Th 4/15      Zoom meeting.

Week 15: Pandemic Shakespeare

- M 4/19      No reading assignment—work on your final project.  
W 4/21      No reading assignment—work on your final project.  
Th 4/22      Zoom meeting.

Final exam

- Tu 4/27      **Final project and final reflection due.**



# Appendix

## GRADING SCALE

This course uses the OSU standard grading scale.

A	100%	to	93%
A-	< 93%	to	90%
B+	< 90%	to	87%
B	< 87%	to	83%
B-	< 83%	to	80%
C+	< 80%	to	77%
C	< 77%	to	73%
C-	< 73%	to	70%
D+	< 70%	to	67%
D	< 67%	to	60%
E	< 60%	to	0%

## CAMPUS POLICIES

*Due to COVID-19, please call or email before going in person to any campus offices, as the person you need may not be available in person. Thank you!*

### Masks Required in Classrooms

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>), which includes wearing a face mask in any indoor space and maintaining a safe physical distance at all times. Non-compliance will result in a warning first, and disciplinary actions will be taken for repeated offenses.

### Student COVID-related Accommodation Process

The university is committed to supporting students and program participants with COVID-19 based risk factors. Student Life Disability Services, in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Equity, will work with students who are vulnerable to complications from COVID-19 to ensure that they have the necessary resources to participate in university life as safely as possible. Ohio State students from any campus may submit a COVID-related accommodation request. Students registered with Student Life Disability Services can work directly with their assigned Access Specialist to modify their accommodations or make additional COVID-based accommodation requests.

### Disability Service Statement

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: [mgregor.40@osu.edu](mailto:mgregor.40@osu.edu); 419 755-4304.

### Academic Misconduct Statement

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. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee via the Associate Dean's Office at the Mansfield campus. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentconduct.osu.edu>).

### **Drop/Withdrawal Statement**

It is the student's responsibility to know the deadlines for dropping a course or withdrawing from the University. Term drop & withdrawal deadlines can be found at [registrar.osu.edu/registration](http://registrar.osu.edu/registration) (click on the current term under "Important Dates" and scroll down to ADD/DROP/WITHDRAW DEADLINES). There are different drop/withdrawal dates for the various shortened sessions and full semester classes. If you receive financial aid, you should always talk with a financial aid specialist prior to adjusting your schedule. If you stop attending a course but do not drop it, you risk receiving a failing grade which could negatively affect your GPA and your financial aid status. You can call 419-755-4317 to set up an appointment with an academic advisor or a financial aid specialist.

### **Retention**

The Ohio State University-Mansfield is committed to the success of students. If you are having academic or personal difficulties, you can contact Michelle McGregor, [mcmgregor.40@osu.edu](mailto:mcmgregor.40@osu.edu); 419 755-4304; or your academic advisor for specific referral resources.

### **Mental Health Services**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University at Mansfield offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the New Directions Student Assistance Program (SAP) by visiting [newdirectionsforlife.com](http://newdirectionsforlife.com) or calling 419-529-9941 (no cost to students). Local crisis services are available by calling 419-522-4357. Ohio State also has an afterhours service available by calling **614-292-5766 and choosing option 2** after hours, which includes weekends and holidays.

### **Student Conduct**

The code of student conduct is established to foster and protect the core missions of the university, to foster the scholarly and civic development of the university's students in a safe and secure learning environment, and to protect the people, properties and processes that support the university and its missions. Students who violate faculty expectations may be subject to the code of conduct. For behavioral related concerns, contact Student Life at 419-755-4317 and ask for an appointment with Dr. Donna L. Hight, Assistant Dean, Student Success. As a responsible community member, do not allow others to act inappropriately and impact the community.

### **Discrimination**

The Ohio State University at Mansfield is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination of any type. This includes students creating a hostile environment for other students. To file a complaint, contact Student Life at 419-755-4317 and ask for an appointment with the Assistant Dean, Student Success or Human Resources at 419-755-4047 and ask for an appointment who will connect you with the appropriate Columbus Offices.

### **Ohio State Mansfield Diversity Statement**

The Ohio State University at Mansfield is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity, believing that it strengthens the organization, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. The Ohio State University at Mansfield prohibits discrimination against any member of the school's community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, health status, or veteran status. In addition to birth and/or other self-defined characteristics, we honor and value the lived experiences of all students as they add to constructive conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to contact Dr. Donna L. Hight, Assistant Dean, Student Success, 419-755-4317, regarding issues, concerns, or questions related to equity and diversity.

### **Ohio State Mansfield Identity Affirmation Statement**

It is our intent to honor your name and pronouns if they differ from your legal or academic record. Please advise any instructors of this change early in the semester so that we can update class rosters with your preferred name and your correct pronouns. Additionally, please advise us of any updates to your name and/or pronouns throughout the semester so that we can correct our rosters accordingly. A formal name change request can be made through Buckeyelink.

### **Title IX and Sexual Misconduct**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find more information and the appropriate resources at [titleix.osu.edu/](http://titleix.osu.edu/).

### **HOW TO REPORT**

Reports of sexual misconduct can be made to one of the following individuals:

Donna L. Hight, Ph.D.  
Assistant Dean, Student Success  
419-755-4317  
[hight.6@osu.edu](mailto:hight.6@osu.edu)

Sgt. Jeff Hoffer  
Campus Police  
419-755-4210  
[hoffer.30@osu.edu](mailto:hoffer.30@osu.edu)

Domestic Violence Shelter of Richland County  
800-931-7233

Notice of an incident to the officials listed above, other than the Domestic Violence Shelter or a counselor, is considered official notice to the university. You can expect reports received by these individuals to be investigated and properly resolved through administrative procedures. Information will be shared only as necessary with investigators, witnesses, and the accused individual. *The Domestic Violence Shelter and the New Directions Student Assistance Program (SAP) staff are considered confidential reporting resources. Every other faculty or staff member must notify the University of reports made.*