



The Renaissance and Shakespeare

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INTENDED AUDIENCE : 1. Undergraduate students
2. The course will be of help to those looking for an introduction to the Renaissance age and to Shakespeare. The students of B.A. Hons. (Eng.) should also find this useful.

PREREQUISITES : An interest in English literature and theatre is the basic prerequisite for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE :

The course will have modules on the Renaissance in Europe and Shakespeare's life and works. The lecture on the Renaissance will look at different aspects of the age, such as the major thinkers and philosophers of the age, developments in the field of visual arts and science, and the position of women in the Renaissance. The lecture on Shakespeare's life and times talks about his birth, his schooling, his career on stage and situates the playwright in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in England. A number of major plays by Shakespeare will be discussed in detail: Othello and Macbeth among the tragedies and A Midsummer Night's Dream and Twelfth Night among the comedies. In addition there are lectures on Shakespeare's History plays and the Romances or Last Plays. The video lecture on Othello looks at the military background of the play, an aspect that is usually overshadowed by gender and race-centric arguments in contemporary critical discussions of the play. The lecture on Macbeth explores supernatural elements in the play, Scottish history and the characterisation of the protagonist. The lecture on A Midsummer Night's Dream explores the notion of a dream and relates it to the Platonic heritage. The lecture on Twelfth Night includes a discussion of the popular recent stage adaptation of the play in Hindi, Piya Behrupiya. As theatre is a performance form, two of our modules include performances of scenes from The Merchant of Venice and A Midsummer Night's Dream by Delhi University students. These are followed by panel discussions in which students share their experience of enactment and how it helped them in clarifying their ideas about the play and understand it in their own context. Apart from these, there is also a module on adapting Shakespeare on the Indian stage with a reference to the work of Habib Tanvir, Mohan Maharishi and Roysten Abel. The MOOC ends with a discussion of global Shakespeare with international Shakespeare scholars who analyse how works of Shakespeare have been appropriated and adapted by people across cultures and nations to investigate their own positions.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR :

Prof. Shormishtha Panja is a Professor in the Dept. of English, Univ. of Delhi. She is also the Director of the Institute of Lifelong Learning, Univ. of Delhi. She received her PhD from Brown University. She has taught at Stanford Univ. and IIT Delhi before joining the Univ. of Delhi. She has numerous publications on Renaissance studies and on Shakespeare. She has seven books to her credit. She has been the President of the Shakespeare Society of India.

COURSE PLAN :

Week 01 : i. The Renaissance: An Introduction;
ii. Shakespeare's Life and Times;
iii. Merchant of Venice trial scene (student performance); iv. Panel Discussion

Week 02 : i. Othello;
ii. A Midsummer Night's Dream;
iii. A Midsummer Night's Dream (Multilingual student performance);
iv. Panel Discussion

COURSE PLAN :

Week 03 : i. Shakespeare's History Plays;
ii. Macbeth;
iii. Shakespeare's Romances or The Last Plays

Week 04 : i. Twelfth Night;
ii. Shakespeare on the Indian Stage;
iii. Global Shakespeare I;
iv. Global Shakespeare II