ENGL 366C
*Shakespeare: Comedies, Problem Plays, and Romances*
Spring 2022
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ENGL 366C forms part of a year-long survey of the plays of Shakespeare that suggests his unique status: no other writer in the English canon receives as much attention. While our chief concern is to read plays in detail and to set them in cultural context, we will give some consideration to the special place of their author. Is his extraordinary status deserved and how has that status changed in recent times? This particular course explores Shakespeare’s idea of comedy which drew on many literary traditions old and new. The course is also marked by an extraordinary critical intervention suggested in its title. Notions of a “problem play” or “romance,” terms never applied to plays in Shakespeare’s time, are the inventions of later critics trying to describe the complexities of Shakespeare’s work; deciding how helpful these critical inventions have been will be an important part of our task.

**Proposed Assignments:**
Two essays (20% & 35%)
Review of a performance (15%)
Final Exam (30%)

**Proposed Texts:**
Six plays to be chosen by the instructor in consultation with the students in the first week of class.