ENGL 360-A01 “Shakespeare on Screen”

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Course description:

From the silent era to experiments in virtual reality, like Hamlet 360°, filmmakers have adapted Shakespeare for the screen. This course offers a survey of Shakespeare on film, focused on five plays: Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Henry V, and The Tempest. The films will range from classics like Olivier’s Hamlet to cross-cultural adaptations, such as Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood and Kozintsev’s Lear, and radical reimaginations of plays like Greenaway’s Prospero’s Books and the animated Shakespeare series. In examining the plays and their cinematic versions, we will discuss theories of adaptation, problems of historical fidelity, changing ideas of acting and staging, the convergence of theatrical and cinematic history, and the multicultural appeal of Shakespeare. To enrich our discussion, we will also build a basic vocabulary of scholarly film analysis, including auteur theory, camera movement, epic film, filmic space, framing, mise-en-scène, pastiche, and point-of-view.

Proposed assignments:

Scene Analysis, 30%

Essay (discussing a minimum of two films), 40%

Final Exam, 30%
Proposed reading list:

Hamlet; King Lear; Macbeth; Henry V; The Tempest

Viewing film versions of each play will be required for all assignments.