Full Name: Making Shakespeare: From the Renaissance to the Twenty-first Century

Short Name: Making Shakespeare

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Andy Murphy; andrew.murphy@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught: MT

Year: SS

Module Content:

The oldest printed copy of a Shakespeare play that still survives is an edition of *Titus Andronicus* published in 1594. A striking feature of the text is that nowhere in the text is Shakespeare's name mentioned. The author of the play is, in effect, Anonymous. In our own time, by contrast, Shakespeare probably has the highest level of recognition of any writer who has ever lived. There are theatre companies dedicated to performing his works; theatres have been constructed to match what is thought to be the likely structural layout of Shakespeare's own theatres, so that we can see the plays performed in something approximating their original stage milieu; there is a library (the Folger, in Washington DC) which aims to assemble as much Shakespeare-related material in a single location as possible; a postgraduate institution (the Shakespeare Institute, in Stratford-on-Avon) has been set up, dedicated to the academic study of his work. The aim of this module is, in essence, to tell the story of how we get from Anonymous Shakespeare to Shakespeare the World's Most Famous Writer. We will examine the cultural and social contexts through which Shakespeare's reputation and popularity were forged, beginning with the publishing and textual context of his own period. Along the way, we will look at the impact of cheap printing on theatrical performance; cultures of collecting Shakespeare editions; the emergence of the Shakespeare tourist industry; the effect of the expansion of literacy in the nineteenth century in creating a wider readership for Shakespeare; the impact of contemporary technologies on the way in which the Shakespeare text is disseminated and received in our own time.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the module students should:

1. have a thorough grasp of the history of how Shakespeare's reputation and popularity grew from the early modern period to the present;

2. have a clear understanding of Ireland's particular roles within that narrative;

3. have a good grasp of the issues pertaining to Shakespeare's place in the world of digital textuality, and a general appreciation for some key issues in Digital Humanities;

4. have learned how to work with primary materials, including how to handle fragile and highly valuable materials;

5. be familiar with the working methods of specialist research facilities;

6. be able to plan and conduct original research and present the findings of that research in a coherent, compelling manner;

7. be able confidently and convincingly to make a presentation of their ideas to an audience of their peers.

Learning Aims:

1. to introduce students to a broad range of materials relating to the history of Shakespeare publishing.

2. to bring students to understand how Shakespeare's reputation was formed over time and how this contributed to the rise of his popularity.

3. to expose students to a wide range of primary research materials, both in the University's own collections and at other research institutions.

4. to foster independent thought among students and to prepare them for carrying out primary research.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: A single project, devised by the students individually, in consultation with the module organiser.
- Name/Type of Component(s): Research Project
- Word Count of Component(s): 5,000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%