Shakespeare’s lines reverberate not only on stages, movie screens, and in classrooms, but also in courtrooms: he has been cited in more than 800 judicial opinions. This course will explore three of Shakespeare’s plays through the lens of the law, examining the ways in which justice, punishment, and litigation are a cultural practice often rooted in our shared stories. All three of our plays this semester — King Lear, Measure for Measure, and Merchant of Venice — center around themes of the law’s violence. How violent does the law need to be to control violence? That’s the question that Shakespeare investigates, and one that we will consider in the context of our own legally violent society.

But while Shakespeare is our topic, our goals concern communication skills and critical thinking: you will learn to identify relevant questions about an issue, synthesize multiple perspectives, assess the soundness of a position, revise your work based on feedback, and apply your research to real-world issues. The course will also help you formulate and defend your point of view via written essays, oral presentations, visual analysis, and through electronic and nonverbal communication.
EVALUATION

Every assignment will have specific and thorough guidelines that explain the project. You can access the assignment information on both T-Square and the course website. You can also discuss an assignment with me before it’s due. While the assignments themselves are challenging, you should never feel lost or confused about that actual parameters of an assignment or my expectations. If you do, please ask questions in class, come to see me during my office hours (or make an appointment), or e-mail me.

The Reading Quizzes will occur periodically at the beginning of class. They will cover both the Shakespeare reading assignments and the nonfiction articles assigned. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, which includes a 0 received for a quiz given during a class absence. The grade includes your attentive and active engagement in class (explained more fully below in “Classroom Policies”).

In the Research Essay, you will closely engage with one of Shakespeare’s plays. Choose a concept in the play, conduct research on it, and write a 6-page paper.

Handmade Paper will be created at Georgia Tech’s Paper Museum on June 28. It will give you the opportunity to learn and practice how paper was made in the late 16th century.

The Data Mining Assignment requires you to create four different infographic representations of one of the plays, each with 3-5 sentences explanation.

The Final Portfolio will encompass revisions of your semester’s work along with a statement about your quality of failure and a multimodal reflective essay.

Each assignment must be followed by a reflective essay, entered into Mahara within one week of receiving the artifact back, in which you address the points required in the Portfolio Directions.
Plagiarism, from the Latin word for kidnapping, is presenting another person’s work as your own. It is a serious offense and can ruin your academic career. When you deliberately use someone else’s language, ideas, images, or other original material or code without fully acknowledging its source by quotation marks as appropriate, in footnotes or endnotes, in works cited, and in other ways as appropriate, you will fail the assignment in which you have engaged in academic misconduct and be referred to the Office of Student Integrity, as required by Georgia Tech policy:

**Honor Challenge:**  
http://www.honor.gatech.edu/

**Office of Student Integrity:**  
http://www.osi.gatech.edu/index.php/

**Process for academic misconduct:**  
http://www.osi.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=15

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**MISTAKES ARE WELCOME**

A writing teacher I admire, Nick Carbone, has this to add about plagiarism:

Unfortunately, the term “plagiarism” is more technical than practical. It’s used to describe equally mistakes in handling and citing sources and deliberate cheating and lying about the authorship of the work you hand in. In fact, one refuge of many cheaters is to say that they merely made mistakes in source handling. So by plagiarism in this course I want us all to distinguish between fraud and cheating, which is always wrong, and mistakes in learning, which are inevitable, correctable, and for many people, necessary for learning. Mistakes are welcome; deliberate fraud is not. (“Talking about Plagiarism: A Syllabus Strategy”)

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**THE QUALITY OF FAILURE**

One of the greatest obstacles to learning is the fear of failure. Students have sometimes been taught that they need to be perfect — or as close to perfect as possible — in order to be validated, approved, and rewarded. But I think that there are things far more important than perfection: curiosity, risk taking, persistence, integrity, self-awareness, and often failure itself. I want you, in the words of Edward Burger, to make for yourselves “a mind enlivened by curiosity and the intellectual audacity to take risks and create new ideas, a mind that sees a world of unlimited possibilities.”

For this reason, part of your final portfolio will involve addressing how you handled failure this semester in English 1102. Have you been willing to challenge yourself and take risks that might result in failure? Have you been aware of when you have failed, and refused to give up in the face of failure? Have you found ways to use your failure to create something new and interesting? Have you grown from your failures? I hope — in the spirit of Shakespeare’s own risk-taking — that you will allow yourself to take risks and learn from them.
DISAGREEMENTS

I think most of what I have learned that is of any consequence has come through disagreement and further exploration. I welcome your respectful disagreements with me. If we all interpret Shakespeare’s plays -- or literature and law more broadly -- in the same way, we have a problem, because no true thinking will be occurring At the prison where I teach, the new students are very hesitant to disagree with their peers, or me, because in the prison universe, disagreements almost invariably escalate into violence. But the incarcerated students gradually learn that disagreements make the classroom environment more interesting, productive, generative, and challenging. My classroom is not Plato’s Cave.

Please note that the college classroom is a place where ideas are exchanged respectfully. I look forward to an environment where this will occur, but I don’t have much tolerance for distracting behavior, such as rudeness, texting, sleeping, or updating your Facebook page during class. If your participation is disruptive to the classroom discussion, if it creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment, you are subject to removal from the classroom at my discretion.

Please see Georgia Tech’s policy on disruptive behavior at http://www.ctlr.gatech.edu/sites/default/


You have the opportunity to revise any of your three major projects this semester. The ability to accept and act on criticism is one of the most important critical abilities you can develop. Can you hear constructive criticism with an open mind, build on lessons learned, and make revisions in response to suggestions? Then I will assess your revised project a second time. A revision isn’t just a quick fix of the obvious errors, but a “re-visions,” or another look at your artifact, in which you address feedback. If you choose to revise, it can only help, not hurt your grade. The revision must include a cover letter, in which you explain to me what and why you revised what you did. You may send revisions as e-mail attachments, but make sure I respond and tell you I received the revision. If I do not respond within a day, I did not receive the revision.

Revisions are due one week from when you receive a grade and feedback from me. If you revise an assignment, I will average the two grades as your assignment grade.

Please note: Some scholarships and academic tracks require that you maintain a certain grade point average. My grading policies are fair, and I’m always willing to discuss concerns you have over any specific grades when I return them to you. But I will not negotiate an overall course grade based on your jeopardized scholarship (or any other social or funding pressures). I am committed to fair, ethical, and equitable grading at all times.
LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Try to avoid late assignments. In order to make the evaluation process fair to students who submitted their work on time, I will accept late assignments only if you communicate with me about it, and every day an assignment is late, the grade will be lowered by a letter grade (ten points). This includes weekends and there are no exceptions.

Any assignment that is not submitted will be recorded as a 0 (“zero”) and averaged with the rest of your grades. This can damage your course average severely: For example, if you have completed five assignments with a 92 average but don’t submit a sixth assignment (which is counted as a “zero”), your overall average will be a 77.

COMMON POLICIES

You must familiarize yourself with Georgia Tech’s common policies about the evaluation rubric (grading), course completion, attendance requirements, participation in class, non-discrimination, the Communication Center, accommodations, academic misconduct, syllabus modifications, dead week policies, syllabus modifications, and learning outcomes. You will be responsible for these policies, and when you sign the Statement of Understanding, you affirm that you are familiar with these policies.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

In addition to respectful, engaged participation, I have the following somewhat controversial classroom policies: 1) no laptops unless we are specifically using them, for example during the workshop days; 2) cell phones on silent and in your bags; 3) you should ask at least two questions or make two comments in each class. If speaking during class is extremely uncomfortable for you, you may write down your comments and/or questions and give them to me at the end of class. Alternatively, if you are very enthusiastic about speaking in class, please refrain from making more than five comments or asking more than five questions. You may write down what you were not able to say and I will read it after class. I also urge you to come to my office hours, and if they do not suit your schedule, arrange alternative office hours with me. This is to keep the entire class equitably participating during the time we have together.

“When we are born, we cry that we are come To this great stage of fools.”

(King Lear 4.6.186-87)

ENGLISH 1102
FINAL PORTFOLIO

Complete portfolio instructions are available on T-Square, on the Common Policies website (http://b.gatech.edu/27jHJnJX), and on the course website.
STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

PLEASE READ, PRINT, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO DR. HIGINBOTHAM

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and GT’s Common Policies for ENGL 1102 and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

__________________________________________________________
PRINT FULL NAME

__________________________________________________________
LEGIBLE SIGNATURE

__________________________________________________________
DATE

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

_____ I give my instructor, Sarah Higinbotham, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, ENGL 1102 as examples in presentations and in print and electronic publications.

_____ I do not want my work used as examples in any situations.

If you give permission for your work to be used, please indicate how you want to be acknowledged:

_____ Please acknowledge me by name.

_____ Please use my work, but do not acknowledge me by name.

The following information enables me to contact you if your work is used.

__________________________________________________________
PRINT FULL NAME

__________________________________________________________
LEGIBLE SIGNATURE

__________________________________________________________
PRINT PERMANENT ADDRESS

__________________________________________________________
PRINT CAMPUS ADDRESS

__________________________________________________________
PHONE

__________________________________________________________
EMAIL ADDRESS

__________________________________________________________
DATE