

Shylock

ENG 4930 (3373) & JST 4936

Spring 2009; T4; R4-5

Instructor: Dr. Judith Page, Department of English, Turlington 4326, 392-6650, ext. 293

email: page7@ufl.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 12-2 or by appointment

Course description and outline

This course will focus on the influence of Shakespeare's Shylock on literature and culture, primarily in Britain in the 19th century but also in earlier and later periods.. We will consider Shylock as both a literary character and as a negative archetype that develops a life of its own in other works of literature, art, theatre, and film. "Shylock" influences and infiltrates British literature and culture in the 18th century and continues a vibrant and often disturbing presence in contemporary popular culture, where, for instance, on *The Sopranos* he is abbreviated to a "shy" or common loan shark.

The course will follow a roughly chronological organization from the medieval period when several related stereotypes or myths associated with Jews gain currency (such as, the Blood Libel, the Wandering Jew) to 16th century when the play was written and first performed and then the 18th century when it was revived on stage after an absence of over a century. Students will study the play closely and carefully, and will also read relevant biblical, historical, and philosophical material, as well as texts on the performance history of the play.

After considering performance, we will return to the 19th century to study various fictional texts that re-imagine the character of Shylock or in some way present themselves as interconnected with *The Merchant of Venice*. Even when authors do not explicitly set their texts up in relation to Shylock or Shakespeare, Shylock often haunts the story by his absence or in Dickens's *Oliver Twist* by the similarity of the unnamed Shylock with Fagin. As the Victorian period progresses, Shylock pervades the political discourse surrounding Benjamin Disraeli's various roles in public life, as well as the continuing debates over emancipation and nationality. Various cartoons from the period attest to the persistent connection between the converted Jew Disraeli and the persistent Shylock.

Required texts (available at the UF bookstore)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Prioress's Tale* (1399): William Wordsworth's 1827 translation
[on reserve]

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (1597); Longman Cultural Ed. with readings

Several essays and book chapters on reserve

Maria Edgeworth, *Harrington* (1817)

Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (1819)

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1838)
Will Eisner, *Fagin the Jew* (2003)
George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (1876)
Amy Levy, *Reuben Sachs* (1888)
Several film versions of *The Merchant of Venice*, including Laurence Olivier and Al Pacino as Shylock

Recommended and Supplemental Reading (on reserve)

Adelman, Janet. *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in The Merchant of Venice* (2008)
Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society* (1993)
Martin Coyle, ed. *The Merchant of Venice: Contemporary Critical Essays*
Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England* (1979; rpt. 1999)
Frank Felsinstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes* (1995)
Jonathan Freedman, *The Temple of Culture: Assimilation and Anti-Semitism in Literary Anglo-America* (2000)
Michael Galchinsky, *The Origin of the Modern Jewish Woman Writer* (1996)
Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred* (1986)
John Gross, *Shylock: A Legend and its Legacy* (1992)
Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World* (2004)
Kenneth Gross, *Shakespeare is Shylock* (2006)
Christopher Hibbert, *Disraeli: The Victorian Dandy who Became Prime Minister* (2006)
David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England* (1996)
Toby Lelyveld, *Shylock on Stage* (1961)
Karl Marx, *Selected Essays* [including "On the Jewish Question"] trans. H. S. Stenning (1968)
Montegu Frank Modder. *The Jew in the Literature of England* (1939)
Judith W. Page, *Imperfect Sympathies: Jews and Judaism in British Romantic Literature and Culture* (2004)
Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (2001)
Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion* (1995)
Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali* (1960)
Linda Rozmovits, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Culture in Late Victorian England* (1998)
James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (1996)
Spector, Sheila(ed). *British Romanticism and the Jews: History, Culture, Literature* (2002)
Spector, Sheila (ed). *The Jews and British Romanticism: Politics, Religion, Culture* (2005)
Nadia Valman, *The Jewess in Nineteenth Century Literary Culture* (2007)
Martin Yaffe, *Shylock and the Jewish Question* (1997)

(as well as several articles and essays)

Requirements

Regular class attendance and participation are required. Always bring the text(s) under consideration to class. All students are responsible for material covered in class and for any changes made to the syllabus when announced in class. In addition, students must provide “ufl” email addresses for course mailing lists. **Students may miss 3 hours of class. After that, a student will lose one point in the final grading for every hour of class missed. A student who misses more than 9 hours of class will not pass the course. Lateness counts for half an absence.**

Please turn off your cell phones and laptops when you enter class and put them away.

Students must be able to access the course’s web site and must register for accessing electronic reserves in Library West: <https://ares-uflib-ufl-edu.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/ares>.

In order to pass this course, students must submit all written work. No late work will receive full credit. Late papers will be reduced by half a letter grade for each day late. A student may request an extension on a paper one week before the due date.

Students must adhere to the guidelines for academic honesty set out in the Undergraduate Catalogue. Violations of academic honesty may result in failure of the assignment or the class.

The University encourages students with disabilities to register with the Office of Student Service in order to determine appropriate accommodation. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester if disability is an issue.

Written Assignments and Grading

Midterm exam: In class..... (25%)

Paper*(30%)

Final exam: Take home(35%)

Participation and attendance:.....(10%)

The grading scale for the class is 90-100, A; 87-89, B+; 80-86, B, and so on.

Paper (6-7 typed pages)

You may write your paper on any question pertaining to Shylock and his many transformations; you may focus on any period and any number of primary texts. You must refer to at least three critical, theoretical, or historical texts from the reserve list. You must document each and every source according to the Modern Language Association guidelines, which are available in various forms, including in a work such as the *MLA Pocket Handbook*. If you have any questions about the meaning of plagiarism

or the need to cite any sources consulted, please ask me about this. It is your responsibility. Always acknowledge any help that you have received in preparing the paper. (You might do this by including an acknowledgments page.) Also, be sure to proofread the final draft of your paper very carefully—frequent typos and mechanical errors weaken even a lively paper.

An *A paper* develops a complex, detailed, and imaginative argument based on analytical reading; it takes some risks in its ideas and approaches and shows sophisticated thought. An *A paper* is impeccably written, virtually free of grammatical and stylistic problems.

A *B paper* contains ideas and insights, but the ideas are either not as complex or not as fully or clearly developed as an *A paper*. There may be some summary and paraphrase when there should be analysis. There may be errors in style and grammar or lack of adequate supporting evidence for assertions.

A *C paper* may have some ideas, but the argument is not developed and the details are inadequate. This paper generally includes more paraphrase or summary than analysis and contains far too many grammatical or stylistic errors to be good.

Papers earning grades less than *C* do not satisfactorily meet the above standards, although a *D paper* may have some redeeming qualities.

Schedule of Readings

- T 1/6** Class introduction.
- Th 1/8** Read “Introduction” to *The Merchant of Venice*, xiii-xviii and “Contexts,” 95-131.
- T 1/13** Read and print out Wordsworth’s translation of Chaucer’s “The Prioress’s Tale” (in *William Wordsworth: Translations of Chaucer and Virgil*) at Ares;; also read “Contexts,” 131-190 on usury.
- Th 1/15** Read *Merchant*, Acts 1-2
- T 1/20** Read *Merchant*, Act 3
- Th 1/22** Read *Merchant*, Acts 3-4
- T 2/27** Read “Contexts,” “Shylock on Stage,” 191-22; Read Page, “Reinventing Shylock,” in *Imperfect Sympathies*, 53-79 at Ares
- Th 1/29** Begin reading *Harrington*; Performance: *The Merchant of Venice* (directed by Michael Radford)
- T 2/3** Discussion

Th 2/5 Performance: *The Merchant of Venice* (directed by Trevor Nunn);
Begin discussion of *Harrington*, "Introduction," 7-64 and Appendices, 297-323

T 2/10 *Harrington*

Th 2/12 *Harrington*

T 2/17 *Ivanhoe*, Vol. 1

Th 2/19 *Ivanhoe*, Vol. II (clips from *Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe* (directed by Stuart Orme)

T 2/24 *Ivanhoe*, Vol. III

Th 2/26 **Midterm exam in class**
Begin reading *Oliver Twist* over the weekend.

T 3/23 Read Ragussis, "The "secret" of English anti-Semitism," at Ares

Th 3/5 *Oliver Twist, Book the First*

SPRING BREAK

T 3/17 *Oliver Twist* (completed)

Th 3/19 *Oliver Twist*

T 3/24 *Fagin the Jew*

Th 3/26 Read Wohl, "Ben Ju Ju: Representations of Disraeli's Jewishness in the Victorian Political Cartoon," in *Jewish History* at Ares; read Eliot, "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!," in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* at Ares

T 3/31 *Daniel Deronda*, Books I-III

Th 4/2 *Daniel Deronda*, Books IV-VI

T 4/7 *Daniel Deronda*, Books VII-VIII

Th 4/10 **NO CLASS (PASSOVER/EASTER)**

T 4/14 Read "Introduction" and all of *Reuben Sachs*; **Paper due**

Th 4/16 *Reuben Sachs* continued; also read Appendices and *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 1-21 at Ares

T 4/21 NO CLASS

Take-Home Final Due Friday, April 25 at noon