

B.A. Seminar
Shakespeare's Serial Wars
Spring Term 2019, Wednesday, 16:15-18:00
Prof. Elisabeth Bronfen

As the historian Michel Foucault notes: "If we look beneath the surface of peace, order, wealth and authority, we discover a sort of primitive and permanent war". War is not only a continuation of politics with other means, but politics – be they personal or communal – are also conceived in terms of war. The working premise of this seminar is that Shakespeare's plays demonstrate the ubiquity of this entanglement, as does Hollywood's appropriation and refiguration of the Bard for the silver screen. In the problem play, *Much Ado About Nothing*, a battle of the sexes brings war back into the home. In the two tragedies *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, marriage and military campaigns are shown to be interlinked. Finally, in the Roman history play, *Coriolanus*, the war hero finds himself pitted against the demands of the polis.

1. (20 Feb) Introduction

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

2. (27 Feb) William Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*
3. (6 Mar) George Cukor: *The Philadelphia Story* (1940)
4. (13 Mar) Special session: How to write a seminar paper

MARRIAGE AND MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

5. (20 Mar) William Shakespeare: *Othello*
6. (27 Mar) *Othello* cont.
7. (3 Apr) Edgar G. Ulmer: *Strange Illusion* (1945)
8. (10 Apr) William Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra*
9. (17 Apr) *Antony and Cleopatra* cont.
10. (1 May) no class (Tag der Arbeit)
11. (8 May) Joseph L. Mankiewicz: *Cleopatra* (1963)

THE WAR HERO AND THE POLIS

12. (15 May) William Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*
13. (22 May) Ralph Fiennes: *Coriolanus* (2011)

Select Bibliography:

For the plays by William Shakespeare, please use either the Arden Shakespeare or the Norton Shakespeare (based on the Oxford Edition)

Requirements for the class:

- All students must prepare a thesis statement for each class, to be posted on Olat (course forum) by Tuesday 9 am of the respective week. This can also entail a series of questions, comments or associations; it will facilitate class discussion and allow me to see in what directions you have been thinking while preparing for the class sessions. **Neglecting to hand in 11 thesis papers will result in a fail.**
- Students taking the class for 6 KP must write an essay to be handed in on **October 1, 2019** (hard copy in my pigeonhole in the secretary's office and a pdf version to my assistant Morgane Ghilardi morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch).
- BA thesis students are asked to present their project in the final session. You will have to hand in your **BA thesis by November 1, 2019** (hard copy in my pigeonhole in the secretary's office, and a pdf version to my assistant Morgane Ghilardi morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch). It is wise to use the class discussions to test your ideas for this written assignment.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense and pertains to all assignments.