



# Shakespeare and the Fall of the Mask



Code Apogée  
2MIAM11



Composante(s)  
UFR Langues et  
Civilisations



Période de  
l'année  
Semestre 2

## En bref

- > **Mobilité d'études:** Oui
- > **Accessible à distance:** Non
- > **Effectif:** 15

## Présentation

### Description

The mask on stage is a fundamental topic in theatre studies that has received much coverage. Less studied, arguably, is the moment when the mask comes off, or down. The fall of the mask on stage always creates a gasp, a smile, a sense of horror, awe, satisfaction amid the audience as with the characters who witness the event. Which ever way you look at it, this becomes a public event. This seminar explores our reactions in such moments, on stage, by asking : What is the character letting fall, when it lets fall its mask? What do we include in the definition of a mask ? In deed, depending on how we understand the concept of the mask, the "fall" can take on a variety of different significances, and the consequences of such an event can make the play fall in the category of a comedy, or a tragedy. This seminar is about character identity as much as it is about audience response, or the representation of risk running, immunity, disease, loss of self, loss of life.

The first section of the seminar, from weeks 1 to 6 explore our response to the « existential » nature of the theatrical

drop of the mask. Weeks 6 to12 the semester concentrate on the risks run when the mask falls : risks of losing face, when discovered by the enemy, or even risks of losing one's life in times of crisis, in times of an epidemic.

Students will each week be given an extract of a play with supporting critical material to read. The seminar will provide a supporting analysis in the shape of a video, All documents are provided on the e-moodle platform. Students are invited to explore language, gesture, costumes, as well as to think about the language on disease (and the spread of) that spans through the plays.

### Contrôle des connaissances

**Contrôle continu et dispensés :** remise de trois travaux d'environ 600 mots chacun, au choix parmi les sujets qui leur seront proposés.

### Informations complémentaires

Ouvert aux étudiant-es en mobilité sous réserve du nombre de places disponibles.

### Bibliographie

#### **Sources premières**

Dans un premier temps les étudiants auront lu en anglais les pièces suivantes dans une édition annotée de leur choix: *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Richard II*, *Richard III* et *King Lear*.



## **Sources secondaires (sélection préliminaire)**

- \* DILLON, Janette, "From Revels to Revelation: Shakespeare and the Mask", *Shakespeare Survey Volume 60: Theatres for Shakespeare*, ed. by Peter Holland, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 58-71.
- \* HALL, Edith, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- \* PARSONS, Philip, "Shakespeare and the Mask", *Shakespeare Survey 16, Shakespeare and the Modern World*, ed. by Allardyce Nicoll, Cambridge University Press, 1963, 121-131.
- \* SHEPHERD, Robert K., "Shakespeare's *Henry V*: Person and Persona", *Proceedings of the II Conference of SEDERI*, 1992, 303-312.
- \* WILDE, Oscar, *The Truth on Masks: A Note on Illusion*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (27 Oct. 2012)
- \* ZEITLIN, Froma I., "The Theatre of Self and Society in Athenian Drama", in Winkler, John J. and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context*, Princeton, 1990.