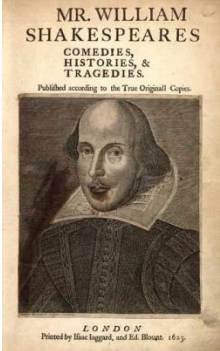


<b>Veranstalter</b> .....	<b>Prof. Dr. Stephan Karschay</b>	
<b>Thema</b> .....	<b>Shakespeare and Genre: Comedies, Histories and Tragedies?</b> [ENG-6/a, AA-V3a/b, ENG-12, AA7, AA-10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA3, AA-MA4, AA-W, AA-WB]	
<b>Art der Veranstaltung</b> .....	<b>Seminar II</b>	
<b>Veranstaltungsnummer</b> .....	<b>53-549</b>	
<b>Zeit</b> .....	<b>Di 12-14</b>	
<b>Raum</b> .....	<b>Ü35 - 01047</b>	
<b>Beginn</b> .....	<b>16. Oktober 2018</b>	

When the actors John Heminges and Henry Condell published the first collected edition of Shakespeare's dramatic works in 1623, they chose the following title for the book that is known today as the First Folio: *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*. In that volume they included a verse eulogy by Ben Jonson, who canonised his rival and friend as "not of an age, but for all time". This critical evaluation has proved prophetic with regard to Shakespeare's undiminished appeal for audiences and readers worldwide; it also aptly captures the persistence with which we use the genres of 'comedy', 'history' and 'tragedy' to catalogue Shakespeare's dramatic *oeuvre* to this very day. Genre categories are one way for writers to tell their audiences what to expect, a practice already used by Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights and theatre directors to indicate what kind of play was about to be performed: black, red or white flags were flown to signal the staging of a tragedy, history or comedy, respectively. Yet generic groups are also *created* by the very examples they seem to comprise, so that each new member of a genre has the potential to revise and subvert the category and, with it, audience expectations. Shakespeare played with the notion of genre in creative and even subversive ways that continue to exercise literary critics to this day. In our seminar, we will work to obtain a solid understanding of the major dramatic genres in which Shakespeare excelled. Concomitantly, we will pay particular attention to those moments in Shakespeare's plays that undermine the dominant genre categories of 'comedy', 'tragedy' and 'history' or push any notion of generic stability to its limits (as in the case of the so-called 'problem plays'). We will engage with different definitions of genre: formal properties (such as plot development and characterisation) and affective ones (such as catharsis and laughter) will receive equal attention. It is also worth noting that Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not work in a historical vacuum: early modern playwrights drew heavily on ancient traditions of comedy (Menander, Plautus) and tragedy (Sophocles, Seneca), and we will consider these historical backdrops as well. We will also look at some modern performances/adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and examine how these productions negotiate critical questions of genre.

#### Set Texts:

The individual plays to be studied in this class will be announced in the first week of term. If you wish to purchase a collected edition of Shakespeare's works, I recommend *The Norton Shakespeare* (ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al.), currently in its third edition, which is scholarly and readable.

#### Workload:

Regular contributions to seminar discussions, lively participation in teamwork, an oral group presentation, and written course work (such as reading-response papers). The seminar will conclude with a substantial term paper. Please note that this is a reading-intensive class that will require you to engage with a wealth of critical materials in addition to our primary readings of Shakespeare's plays.

#### Introductory Reading:

Danson, Lawrence. *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.  
Hopkins, Lisa. *Beginning Shakespeare*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.