

Shakespeare In-Depth with Philippa Kelly

Patriotism, Passion, and Skepticism

We are thrilled to be returning with Shakespeare In-Depth lecture series with Philippa Kelly, beginning February 23.

Those who know Philippa's Grove Talks can expect her characteristically rich, immersive knowledge of Shakespeare's life and plays, together with an exploration of the vital question: what makes these plays so potent for the moment we are living in right now? In sounding the form and pressure of his own time and place to create his dramatic characters and situations, Shakespeare was also, with uncanny prescience, sounding the form pressure of our own.

Delve into classics like *Macbeth* and lesser-known works like *Antony and Cleopatra*, learn about what playgoing was like in Shakespeare's time, and get ready for a return to Cal Shakes this summer with an exploration of *The Winter's Tale*. Emerge from sixteen weeks with Philippa knowing rich, surprising details of Shakespeare's life some freshly illuminating perspectives of our own times.

Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings from 5:30-6:30 PM

An additional optional study group will be held the Saturday after each second lecture at 11:00 AM starting March 6.

All sessions will be held via Zoom and recorded in case you can't attend live.

What to expect:

- Each play or topic will be discussed over a two-week period with two classes on Tuesday evenings and a more informal study group the Saturday after the second class (a total of 3 hours of learning).
- Each class will include a 45-minute lecture and 15 minutes of Q&A.
 - Send in your questions to Philippa before the lecture via info@calshakes.org
 - Ask your questions in the chat during the lecture and Philippa will address them in class
 - Unanswered questions will be answered on the Ask Philippa blog: calshakes.org/blog
- Most classes will also include a performance by a beloved Bay Area actor or a visit from a special guest.
- Read below, for a detailed description of each class

We so hope that you will join us for one or all of these two-week classes.

The Sessions

Playgoing in Shakespeare's Time: cock-fighting, bear-baiting, & religion.

Lectures: February 23 & March 2, 5:30-6:30 PM

Study Group: March 6, 11:00 AM

How is theater used as social and political commentary, then and now? What records do we have of how audiences responded to violence, humor, infidelity and bullying in Shakespeare's plays? How do such responses compare to our own lives and contexts? And, if within a single week, audiences could have seen one or two Shakespeare plays as well as plays by other dramatists, who were these other dramatists and how did they relate to Shakespeare?

The Winter's Tale: power, rage, gender, and the price of restoration.

Lectures: March 9 & March 16, 5:30-6:30 PM

Study Group: March 20, 11:00 AM

What is jealousy? Where does it come from? We know it's one of the most powerful emotions in igniting human action – and in igniting a play. Jealous King Leontes groundlessly accuses his wife, forcing her, heavily pregnant, into jail, causing the death of their son and trying his wife in court for adultery once she has given birth on a cold stone floor. If Leontes makes a late run against Lear for Shakespeare's most repellent father/king, Shakespeare provides a door to unlock our emotion for this anti-hero, giving the key to the play's two strong women, Hermione and Paulina.

Antony and Cleopatra: love ornamented with age and majesty.

Lectures: March 23 & March 30, 5:30-6:30 PM

Study Group: April 3, 11:00 AM

What happens when older lovers bring to their passion not the youth and ingenuity that characterize Romeo and Juliet, but their decades of experience with authority, ambition and power? What is the cost of the love shared by Antony of Rome and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt? And how does a composer translate this play into operatic form? In our second week, world-famous composer John Adams visits our class to tell us how.

Special Guest on 3/30: Composer John Adams who created an *Antony and Cleopatra* opera, to be premiered at the Metropolitan Opera.

As You Like It: the family we choose.

Lectures: April 6 & April 13, 5:30-6:30 PM
Study Group: April 17, 11:00 AM

There are the families we are born into and the families we choose – and Shakespeare builds this distinction into the very soil of *As You Like It*. This play—full of sadness, joy, and brilliant repartee—offers a theme that Shakespeare often revisits: if we have the strength to leave behind biological relationships that hurt us, seeking new experiences in places unknown, we might find far more rewarding ways to live on earth. The freedom afforded by adoptive relationships has its metaphor in the wild, uncharted forest that contrasts with the forest of Arden

The Tempest: identity and the sea.

Lectures: April 20 & April 27, 5:30-6:30 PM
Study Group: April 24, 11:00 AM*

Although *The Tempest* is one of the few Shakespeare plays not to have a clear literary source, it was inspired by a real-life event. Philippa will discuss this, as well as Shakespeare's prelude to Freud and psychoanalysis in using the sea as an emblem of lost identity. We'll also explore the question: is Prospero a victim or an oppressor, or both? And we'll consider Caliban, so reviled by Prospero and Miranda, yet the character with some of the most beautiful and heart-breaking lines in the whole of Shakespeare. Caliban, too, like Prospero, mourns a lost self and an identity that has been stolen.

*Note this study group is being held a week earlier due to another event a Cal Shakes.

Shakespeare's History Plays: creating a cultural history.

Lectures: May 4, 5:30-6:30 PM – *Henry IV Parts I & II*; May 11, 5:30-6:30 PM – *Henry V*
Study Group: May 15, 11:00 AM

Shakespeare's history plays offered a way to curate a cultural history for his audiences, many of whom could not read. Yet we don't look at Shakespeare to chronicle accurate histories – instead, Shakespeare mines history to understand the way in which history is studded with some of the profound paradoxes of human nature.

Macbeth: the reach and the limits of human ambition.

Lectures: May 18 & May 25, 5:30-6:30 PM
Study Group: May 29, 11:00 AM

Success, ambition, love, aspiration – these elements are all a part of the way in which Lord and Lady Macbeth grasp toward their future – and yet, as Macbeth notes even before his first fateful murder, “the greatest is behind.” The murder of Duncan is an early climax of sorts – before it, Macbeth is rent with equivocation, and he gives way to the deed in order to safeguard himself and his marriage. But while Duncan's death provides

Macbeth with a path forward, this path is fraught with anguish and remorse. As we look at our lives and choices, the death of Duncan could be a synonym for any act that makes it difficult for a person to live with the knowledge of they we have been and who are now, rendering the once longed-for future meaningless. ("Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow...")

Shakespeare's Vision of Revenge: from *Titus Andronicus* to *Hamlet* and beyond.

Lectures: June 1 & June 8, 5:30-6:30 PM

Study Group: June 12, 11:00 AM

Elizabethan audiences always insisted on seeing eventual justice. They loved blood (think bear-baiting and public executions). And the theme of revenge also embodied profound human mysteries. Revenge had been forbidden by the laws of Church and State – but could it be a part of providential plans? Or was it indeed a strictly human emotion, an activity that humans permitted themselves as an expression of the need to take control of life?