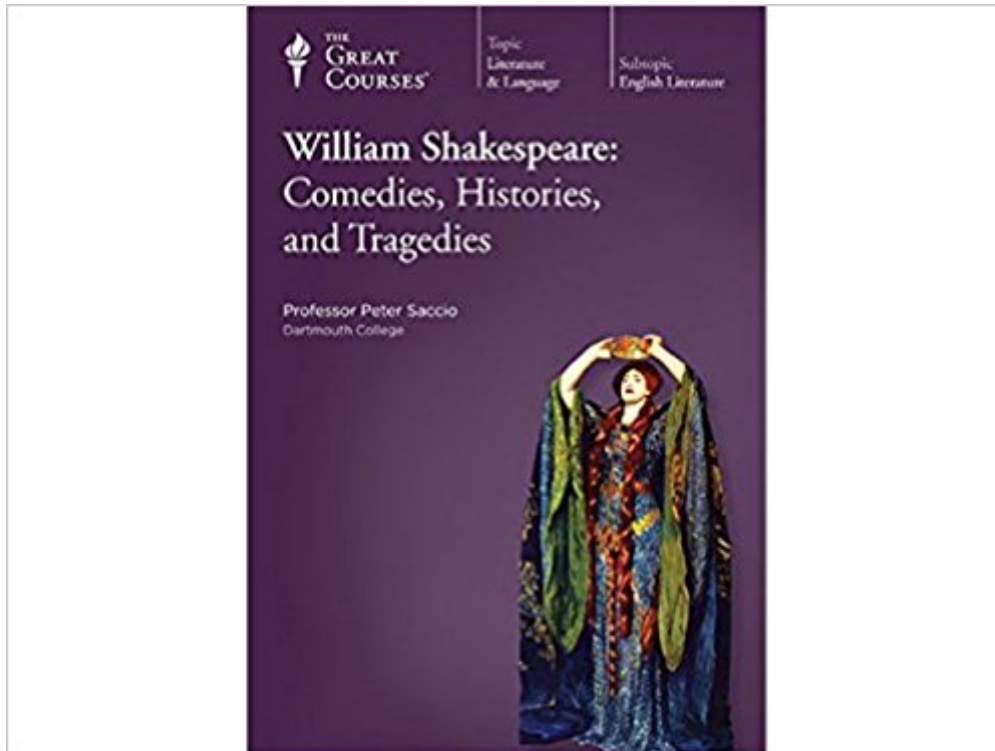


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# William Shakespeare: Comedies, Histories, And Tragedies



## Synopsis

Shakespeare's plays - whether a comedy like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a history like *Henry IV*, or a tragedy like *Hamlet* - are treasure troves of insight into our very humanity. These 36 lectures introduce you to Shakespeare's major plays from each of these three genres and explain the achievement that makes him the leading playwright in Western civilization. As you'll see, the key to Shakespeare's massive achievement is his "abundance," according to Professor Saccio; not only in the number and length of his plays but in the variety of experiences they depict, the multitude of actions and characters they contain, the combination of public and private life they deal with, and the richness of feelings they express. All the major plays are here for you to dive into, explore, and enjoy: *The Taming of the Shrew* (with its realistic look at bourgeois marriage customs), *Measure for Measure* (which shows Shakespeare breaking out of comic conventions), *Richard III* (the source of one of the Bard's most entertaining and frightening historical villains), *Henry V* (which raises questions about the morality of warfare), *Macbeth* (with its piercing look into the consciousness of a man hungry for power), and more. As the richness of each of these and other plays is revealed, you'll also touch upon the far-ranging philosophical and theological implications behind them. By the last lecture, you'll have a true understanding of why these comedies, histories, and tragedies endure even to this very day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Shakespeare's plays - whether a comedy like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a history like *Henry IV*, or a tragedy like *Hamlet* - are treasure troves of insight into our very humanity. These 36 lectures introduce you to Shakespeare's major plays from each of these three genres and explain the achievement that makes him the leading playwright in Western civilization. As you'll see, the key to

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Really enjoying this series and learning a lot about the plays and the Shakespeare's world. I listen while commuting in my car. Worth every penny. Peter Scaccio knows and loves his subject... his lectures are so articulate and cogent.

I thoroughly recommend these CDs by Professor Saccio. I've read all of Shakespeare's plays and am very impressed by these audio CDs as a supplement to the plays. Prof. Saccio discusses the main points, themes, passages as well as giving historical context. He is very entertaining and clearly very knowledgeable. Most importantly, he is able to present his knowledge in a way that is comprehensible as well as engaging. I like these CDs so much, I've already ordered the other Shakespeare course that Prof. Saccio has made.

“If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?” Shylock in *Merchant of Venice*<sup>1</sup>

Shakespeare Then and Now<sup>2</sup> The Nature of Shakespeare's Plays<sup>3</sup> Twelfth

Night<sup>4</sup> Twelfth Night<sup>5</sup> Malvolio in *Love*<sup>6</sup> The Taming of the Shrew<sup>7</sup> Getting Married in the 1590s<sup>8</sup> The Taming of the Shrew<sup>9</sup> Farce and Romance<sup>10</sup> The Merchant of Venice<sup>11</sup> Courting the Heiress<sup>12</sup> The Merchant of Venice<sup>13</sup> Shylock<sup>14</sup> Measure for Measure<sup>15</sup> Sex in Society<sup>16</sup> Measure for Measure<sup>17</sup> Justice and Comedy<sup>18</sup> Richard III<sup>19</sup> Shakespearean History<sup>20</sup> Richard III<sup>21</sup> The Villain's Career<sup>22</sup> Richard II<sup>23</sup> The Theory of Kingship<sup>24</sup> Richard II<sup>25</sup> The Fall of the King<sup>26</sup> Henry IV<sup>27</sup> All the

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Macbeth" "Fair Is Foul"35 Macbeth" "Musing on Murder36

Macbeth" "Enter Two Murderers" I love Shakespeare. At the age of 9 I had read all of his plays by acting them out with my sisters because we had a complete set of his plays. That is what you did when you didn't have hundreds of television channels or computers and it was raining outside. I am not a Shakespearean expert but more of an aficionado. When this Great Course came up on my Audible membership, I just had to get it. The Course is a series of 36 half hour lectures by Prof. Peter Saccio Ph.D. from Dartmouth College. It is not merely a reading and dissecting each play, but more of an overview of the themes of Shakespeare's plays and what we should learn from them. I especially loved when the Professor pooh-pooed those ideas that Shakespeare didn't write his own works as class bias and prejudice. I also enjoyed the modern takes on plays like "Taming of the Shrew" and "Merchant of Venice". I know that this course has set more goals for me in retirement. I would like to see all of Shakespeare's plays either live or on dvd/video. I have already seen the version of "Richard II" on Prime this month. This is what a great teacher will do for you.

Challenge you to further your research and enjoyment by pursuing experiences that will continue your brain's capacities. Thank you Professor Peter Saccio for inspiring me.

Professor Saccio's courses on Shakespeare remain my favorite Great Courses after more than a decade. They are delightful by themselves and I now watch the plays with more enjoyment. I no longer attempt to analyze every character and every soliloquy as if for an English class essay and I enjoy noticing some of the dramatic techniques and director's choices that I did not see before hearing this marvelous course.

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