

# **A Seminar on Shakespeare**

will be conducted by ERASMUS guest

## **Professor Krystyna Kujawska-Courtney**

Chair of the British and Commonwealth Studies Department  
Faculty of International Studies and Politology  
University of Lodz

**Wednesday 15 May & Thursday 16 May 2019, 13:30-16:00,  
in Old Philosophy building Room 112**

Students interested in attending the seminar should contact Dr Effie Botonaki  
during her office hours and sign up in person by Friday 10 May.

(40 spaces available; a priority list will be kept)

If there are spaces left after Friday 10 May,  
the relevant list will be available for signing up in Room 308A

**A certificate of attendance will be issued**

## **Seminar Programme**

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1:30-4:00**

**“Shakespeare’s Representations of Rape: Introductory Remarks”**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1:30-4:00**

**“Making Shakespeare European: The Case of the First Black Shakespeare tragedian Ira Aldridge.”**

Attached below are the bio of the speaker and the relevant abstracts.

## **BIO**

**Krystyna Kujawska Courtney** is Associate Professor at the University of Lodz, Poland, where she chairs the British and Commonwealth Studies Department and the International Shakespeare Research Centre. Her research interests focus mainly, but not exclusively, on theatre and literary theory, especially gender and New Historicism: she initiated and edited translation of Stephen Greenblatt’s essays, introducing his concepts in Poland (2006). She is a Fulbright Fellow—now the vice-President of this organization in Poland. She was the recipient of grants from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Huntington Library and Kosciuszko Foundation. She has published, internationally and locally, numerous articles and essays in monographs published on the long-term global authority of Shakespeare’s plays and on his dramatic works in relation to theatre and early modern and contemporary culture. Selected monographs which she authored and/or edited include: *Some Renaissance/Early Modern Topoi in the Twenty First Century* (2015); *Shakespeare 2014 in His 450. Birth Anniversary* (2014); ““No Other But

a *Woman's Reason*": *Women on Shakespeare. Towards Commemorating the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shakespeare's Birth* (2013); *The Post-Marked World: Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2012); *Culture under the Sign of Gender* (2013). She also published two monographs (in Polish and in English) devoted to Ira Aldridge's theatrical achievements (2009). She is a Polish Correspondent of the *World Shakespeare Bibliography*, edited an annotated *Polish Bibliography of Shakespeare 1980-2000* (2005), and she co-edits (with Yoshiko Kawachi) an international periodical *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, published both in paper and digital form by DeGruyter (Open Access): <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/mstap>

## ABSTRACTS

### **Shakespeare's Representations of Rape: Introductory Remarks**

The lecture will survey representations of rape in selected works of Shakespeare. The subject fascinated him throughout his career. It first appeared in his early narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece* and later in one of his first tragedies *Titus Andronicus*. Though his later works do not represent sexual assaults upon women as graphically, rape is present in most of his Roman and historical plays (e.g. *Coriolanus*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*), comedies (e.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*) and romances (e.g. *Cymbeline*, *Pericles* and *The Tempest*). In the social structure of Shakespeare's England which gave power to men, women were simply treated as the property of male family members. Any accomplished or attempted sexual violation of women polarized male legal and emotional bonding. It disrupted and/or empowered homosocial solidarity. A preliminary study of the presence and dramatic use of rape shows a distinctive evolution in Shakespeare's attitude to this omnipresent subject. One reason of this change might be a shift in its legal classification; the Elizabethans slowly stopped treating rape as a crime against (male) property and began seeing it as a crime against an individual.

### **Making Shakespeare European: The Case of the First Black Shakespeare Tragedian Ira Aldridge**

Although, as the archives show, Shakespeare came to Continental Europe in the seventeenth century via the performances of English strolling companies, it was only in the nineteenth century when he became permanently rooted in European culture. The appropriation not only of Shakespeare's dramas, but also of the dramatist himself turning him into a national figure for cultural, social and political reasons started at that time. Translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays appeared. Luminaries published their scholarly and critical approaches, and visual art and creative writing inspired by Shakespeare and his works were circulated in various publications. It was, however, the popular culture of performance, which contributed to the propagation of Shakespeare's authority and made his dramas available to the general public. My lecture is to show in what ways and to what extent the travelling performers' influences helped create a truly European Shakespeare. Acknowledging the achievements of the English actors and actresses, I will present the contribution to Shakespeare's presence in European culture by Ernesto Rossi, Tommaso Salvini, Adelaide Ristori and Helena Modjeska. The main thrust of my presentation will, however, center on the accomplishments of Ira Aldridge, the first Black Shakespeare tragedian, whose performances not only introduced Shakespeare in many European countries, but also complicated the understanding of the performance of blackness and the semiotics of blackness in the nineteenth century European culture.