

The Shakesconsin Idea Assignment

Overview

In this class we are talking about how stories have been told to ever new audiences through ever new media: how Shakespeare and his works have jumped boundaries and audiences over the last 400 years.

Our core assignment asks you to re-imagine the stories that you have been reading and to think of creative ways to share them. The goal of the assignment is to get each of you thinking, early in your time at UW, about your role in “extend[ing] knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses” ([UW System Mission](#)).

How will you take what you learn in the classroom and spread it off-campus? It’s easy to talk about “ the university’s commitment to public service” ([The Wisconsin Idea](#)), but it’s hard to put those words into practice. “The Shakesconsin Idea Assignment” asks you to combine what you’re learning about Shakespeare and Media with audience engagement beyond the walls of our classroom and beyond the boundaries of our campus. Think creatively. We know you will surprise and excite us with your ideas, talents, and enthusiasm.

Important Dates

11/3: Proposal Due - Proposal should be a one-page “pitch” of your idea, outlining your **content**, what is **creative** about your approach, and the audience you expect to **contact** with your project (see rubric below). If you are proposing a collaboration with other classmates, your proposal should indicate all participants. Groups may submit one proposal for everyone in the group.

12/2: The public-facing part of your project must be completed and documented via social media. Use #shakesconsin on twitter and instagram so our public audience on social media can see what you are doing.

12/2: Narratives Due. Narratives should explain to us how your Shakesconsin Idea project uses Shakespearian **content** in a **creative way** that makes **contact** with people outside of this class. If you worked in a group, **each member** of the group must submit a narrative, and should discuss what their individual contribution to, and experience of, the group project was.

12/13: Shakesconnies Award Ceremony, in class.

Assessment

Your grade for this assignment will be determined by three factors: **content, creativity, contact** plus a concluding **narrative. See rubric below.** There are many many many ways to do well on this assignment. How you *describe* your projects and reflect on the process in your narrative, combined with our observation of your project documentation on the hashtag #shakesconsin, is a big part of how the grade is formed. Which is to say: even if you “fail” to execute your plan, or something unexpected happens, you can still save the day with a thoughtful narrative reflection. The more precisely and descriptively you reflect on the process, the better we’re able to see and understand the effort and execution.

Guidelines

Note: These are guidelines, not laws. Do you have a brilliant idea that would require an exception to one of the guidelines? Come talk to Professor Calhoun or Professor Senchyne. Pitch a great idea to us and we’ll give you official approval to go off-menu.

Groups

You may work alone or in a group. If you work in a group, keep these guidelines in mind:

Group Size: Without prior instructor approval, your group may be made up of no more than 4 people.

Group Selection: Without prior instructor approval, you may only group up with students in your discussion section.

Proposal: Groups may submit a single proposal.

Narrative: Each group member must write up a separate narrative focused on their individual experience.

Advice (Getting the Ball Rolling)

Use the rubric. If you're not sure what to do, start with one of the criteria. Is there an audience you feel you can connect with? Start with **Contact**. Do you have a special creative skill (singing, acting, art, game programming, making twitterbots, sound production, etc.)? Then it sounds like **Creativity** is the thing to build around. Have you stumbled across some Shakespearean lines or characters in our course reading that you really want to work with and think about more actively? **Content** is your launchpad.

Assistance

This assignment should feel like a challenge. We, your instructors and TAs, understand and expect that you may need some guidance along the way. We can offer guidance through all the regular channels (especially office hours and after-class conversations), but we also want to hear from you what would be most helpful. We're happy to help coordinate group work sessions where you can spitball ideas. We're happy to give feedback and honest opinions. One caveat: come to us *with ideas*. Be ready to pitch something--anything. We can help you best if you have something to work with--even the zaniest, most unformulated notion of what you might want to do.

Rubric

The following rubric serves several important purposes for this assignment. First, it should help you develop your own ideas for a Shakesconsin Idea project. Secondly, you might use the rubric to self-assess your work when writing your Narrative at the end of the project. Finally, your TA will use this rubric to assess the work that you did.

Criteria	Points Earned
Content - How well have you demonstrated understanding of Shakespeare's works, media history, or other topics covered in the course? NB: this doesn't mean the public product must be packed with erudition. Full points can be awarded when there is evidence that you put deep content knowledge into action even in implementing a seemingly "simple" public-facing product.	Low (0-6 pts) Medium (7-8 pts) High (9-10 pts)
Creativity - How innovative, well-conceived, exciting, or just plain interesting is your idea for engaging an audience outside the classroom? Not every idea has to be, or even can be, brand new, but we all can strive to think anew about our audience, situation, and context, and work make our project succeed within these factors.	Low (0-6 pts) Medium (7-8 pts) High (9-10 pts)
Contact - What effect has your project had on an audience outside of our classroom? Can be measured on many scales, for example a large number people for a short period of time, or a single person very deeply or over a longer period of time.	Low (0-6 pts) Medium (7-8 pts) High (9-10 pts)
Narrative - How did your project meet and how did it deviate from your expectations? How did you balance content, creativity, and contact? What was exciting? Unanticipated? What would you change? Focus especially on the process--we want to see you reflecting on and learning from this experience, not listing everything that you thought went well and how much work was involved. Let your project speak for itself in terms of quality and effort; this is the space to demonstrate your ability to self-assess honestly and strategize for the future.	Low description & reflection (0-6 pts) Medium description & reflection (7-8 pts) High description & reflection (9-10 pts)