

SYLLABUS

The Sonnets of William Shakespeare

Session #1, October 6 (Sonnets 1-20)

Introduction:

#18, Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

#129, Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame/Is lust in action;

Main Focus:

#1, From fairest creatures we desire increase,

#10, For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,

#20, A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted

Sonnets on related themes:

For #18, #1, and #10, cf. #16, But wherefore do not you a mightier way

For #1 and #10, cf. #4, Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend

Session #2, October 13 (Sonnets 21-39)

Main Focus:

#29, When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes

#30, When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

#34, Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day

#35, No more be grieved at that which thou hast done.

Related themes for #29 and #30:

#25, Let those who are in favor with their stars

#31, Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts

#62, Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye

Related themes for #34 and #35

#24, Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled

#33, Full many a glorious morning have I seen

#26, Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage

Session # 3, October 20 (Sonnets 40-89, Part I)

Main Focus:

#40, Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all.

#41, Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits

#53, What is your substance, whereof are you made,

#73, That time of year thou mayst in me behold

#69, Those parts of thee that the word's eye doth view

#75, So are you to my thoughts as food to life

Related themes for #40 and #41:

#42, That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,

#61, Is it thy will thy image should keep open

Session #4, October 27 (Sonnets 40-89, Part II)

Main Focus:

#65, Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea

#83, I never saw that you did painting need

#84, Who is it that says most, which can say more

#77, Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear

#87, Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing

Related Themes

For #65, cf. #18, Shall I compare thee to a summer's day

#19, Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws

#55, Not marble nor the gilded monuments

#60, Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore,

For #83 and #84, cf. #21, So is it not with me as with that muse

#85, My tongue-tied muse in manners holds her still

#86, Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,

Session #5, November 3 (Sonnets 90-126)

Main Focus:

#90, Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,

#94, They that have power to hurt and will do none,

#105, Let not my love be called idolatry,

#117, Accuse me thus: that I have scanted all

#119, What potions have I drunk of siren tears

#116, Let me not to the marriage of true minds/Admit impediments.

Related Themes

For #90, cf. #91, Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,

#92, But do thy worst to steal thyself away,

For #94, cf. #93, So shall I live, supposing thou art true,

#95, How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame

For #117 and #119, cf. #56, Sweet love, renew thy force. Be it not said

#110, Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there

#111, O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,

#118, Like as to make our appetites more keen,

#120, That you were once unkind befriends me now,

Session #6, November 10 (Sonnets 127-154)

Main Focus:

#130, My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

#147, My love is as a fever; longing still

#134, So, now I have confessed that he is thine

#144, Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,

#129, Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame/Is lust in action;

#146, Poor Soul, the center of my sinful earth,

#154, The little love-god, lying once asleep,

Related Themes

For #130, cf. #127, In the old age, black was not counted fair,

#131, Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,

For #147, cf. #137, Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes

#152, In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,

#138, when my love swears that she is made of truth

For #134 and #144, cf. #133, Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan

For #129 and #146, cf. #141, In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,

For #154, cf. #153, Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep.

Recommended edition of the Sonnets:

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine

Because the course will not cover the life of Shakespeare, you may wish to consult one of the following biographies aimed at general readers:

Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare, Stephen Greenblatt, W. W. Norton, 2004

Shakespeare, Michael Wood, Basic Books, 2003

In addition, if you are interested in analyses of and commentaries on the sonnets, the following books are very detailed and widely used.

Shakespeare's Sonnets, Stephen Booth, Yale University Press, 1977

The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets, Helen Vendler, Harvard University Press, 1997