

Hello,

Together with the team at Warwick University and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon, I'm hugely looking forward to welcoming you next month to Shakespeare and his World, our unique online course based on the collections of the Trust. You can find out more about the Trust and the Shakespeare houses here: <http://www.shakespeare.org.uk>

The course is aimed at everybody from the Shakespeare beginner to teachers of Shakespeare and the seasoned playgoer. In the first week, we'll have a general introduction to Shakespeare's life, world and work, and in each subsequent week we'll be linking a particular theme to a particular play. To get the best out of each week, it would be best to read the play while following the course. Though you'll still learn a lot even if you don't manage to do that - especially if it's a play you've studied before or seen on stage or film.

Each week we'll provide the link to an online edition of each of the plays but, to be honest, any edition will do. If you would like to get started now you can access the plays here:

<http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/>

For those of you who want to prepare for the course, perhaps even read the plays, the order of the plays we will study are as follows:

Week 2: The Merry Wives of Windsor

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareMWW>

Week 3: A Midsummer Night's Dream

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareMND>

Week 4: Henry V

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareHenryV>

Week 5: The Merchant of Venice

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareMoV>

Week 6: Macbeth

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareMacbeth>

Week 7: Othello

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareOthello>

Week 8: Antony & Cleopatra

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareAC>

## Week 9: The Tempest

<http://bit.ly/FLshakespeareTempest>

The final week is a general round up and a look at Shakespeare's 'afterlife' - the amazing story of his posthumous fame all around the world.

There is still time to invite friends and colleagues to enrol on the course and take part alongside you. As a reminder, the course page where they can enrol can be found here:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/shakespeare-and-his-world-2>

There will be plenty of opportunity to interact with other learners once the course begins. In the meantime, feel free to use the hashtag #FLshakespeare for any discussions in social networks.

The course is due to start on Monday 29th September. We will contact you again a week before the course begins, and will also send a welcome note as soon as we get underway.

If you have any queries or feedback in the meantime, please feel free to contact the FutureLearn team at the email address [feedback@futurelearn.com](mailto:feedback@futurelearn.com).

But for now, this is just to say hello and welcome. Over six thousand of you have signed up already: the entire world is genuinely going to be our stage on this course!

Jonathan Bate and Jennifer Reid  
The University of Warwick