

# STRATFORD Shakespeare FESTIVAL



“EN 495X” OR “HON 495X” (4 cr.)— “The Stratford Festival Experience”

Official Dramatic Focus for the Season:

“This Rough Magic”

The NMU English Department is thrilled to announce its Fall 2026 edition of “The Stratford Festival Experience,” a field-based course designed to give NMU students an opportunity to experience first-hand Canada’s world-renowned Stratford Festival. Over the course of a five-day, international field trip, participants will view and discuss **SIX PLAYS**, including 1) *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller’s masterpiece of American 20<sup>th</sup> century drama; the incredible wit of Oscar Wilde’s 1890s comedy, 2) *The Importance of Being Earnest*; a bold adaptation of William Congreve’s 18<sup>th</sup> century comedic classic, 3) *The Tao of the World*; arguably Shakespeare’s most sublime Romance, 4) *The Tempest* (1611); a newly translated, 1974 Italian comedy by Eduardo de Filippo, titled 5) *Sunday, Monday, Tuesday*; and the Shakespeare-inspired hit 2015 Broadway musical, 6) *Something Rotten!*

What a truly exceptional lineup!

Participants in this course will read all of these plays and a number of secondary works during the summer of 2026 as preparation for our trip to Stratford, which takes place from August 17-21, 2026. Upon our return to Marquette, students will take an academic course (either EN 495X or HON 495X) to develop an individual research project with the course Instructor during the Fall 2026 semester, based upon their experiences with both text and performance in Stratford. As many of you know, the theatres in Stratford, Ontario, Canada, offer some of the very finest staging of classical drama anywhere in the world: these plays will therefore be acted and directed by some of the most talented artists working in theatre today (including Yanna MacIntosh, Seana McKenna, Lucy Peacock, and Geraint Wyn Davies, among many, many others). We seriously encourage you to consider this opportunity as an absolutely thrilling part of your NMU experience.

## Preliminary Itinerary

### **Preliminary Itinerary:**

**Monday, August 17:** Depart Marquette, MI; drive to Birch Run, MI. A class session in the hotel Business Center this evening regarding the plays we will encounter, setting our expectations for what we are about to experience. Accommodation: Comfort Inn.

**Tuesday, August 18:** Depart Birch Run, MI; arrive in Stratford, Ontario. Continue our discussion informally throughout the day, including at our first lunch when we arrive in Stratford (around noon). Then view *The Tempest* (2pm). Dinner. Then view *Death of a Salesman* (8pm). Accommodation: Parlour Inn.

**Wednesday, August 19:** Continue our discussion of the previous day's events and anticipate today's over an informal breakfast. Then lunch, followed by *Something Rotten!* (2pm). Dinner. Then view *The Tao of the World* (8pm). Accommodation: Parlour Inn.

**Thursday, August 20:** Continue our discussion of the previous day's events and anticipate today's over an informal conversation during breakfast, followed by a tour of the Wardrobe Warehouse (10am). Lunch, followed by *Sunday, Monday, Tuesday* (2pm). Dinner. Then view *The Importance of Being Earnest* (8pm). Accommodation: Parlour Inn.

**Friday, August 21:** Continue our discussion of the trip's events over an informal conversation during breakfast and our long drive back to Marquette.

### Co-Leaders

**Dr. David Wood** (Instructor and Course Co-Leader) serves as Professor of English and English Department Head. He has led countless NMU student groups to various theatres over the last 19 years. These include trips with groups ranging in size from 2 students to 50, at theatres spanning from Stratford, Ontario, Canada, to Stratford-upon-Avon and London, England; from Chicago to Houghton, MI; & from Minneapolis to Milwaukee. He has also published widely on Shakespeare and other Renaissance dramatists.

**Dr. Chet DeFonso** (Course Co-Leader) serves as Associate Professor of History. Dr. DeFonso has co-led group trips to Stratford for many years, as well, and is an experienced actor in Renaissance drama and numerous musicals. Dr. DeFonso's academic research focus involves British and Canadian history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Special Notice

Class participants will require a passport to enter Canada and to re-enter the United States. *You CANNOT participate in this course without a passport. All passports will be reviewed just prior to departure. Students enrolled in the course but who do not possess a valid passport on the day of departure will not be permitted to go.*

### Cost

Much of this course is funded for all participants through the remarkable generosity of our donor, retired NMU Professor Emeritus Bob Dornquast. Our Benefactor's "NMU Stratford Endowment Fund" covers all fees associated with this trip, including all travel, lodging, and theatre tickets.

Please note, however, that participants will be responsible for most of their meals and any extra spending money they wish to spend. Additionally, as this class is formally an international study abroad course, students must pay an NMU administrative fee, which includes international health insurance. **That final total cost per student will be \$150, due June 1, 2026.**

### **Class Size**

The class will be restricted to 10 students.

### **Course Registration**

This class will be offered as part of the Fall 2026 semester course offerings, but our travel will take place **during the week just before the regular Fall 2026 semester begins**. Students may thus take advantage of NMU's flat rate tuition plan. In order to apply for participation in this course, we require only that interested students submit a formal letter of application (maximum 700 words), answering the following prompt:

**\*How will participating in this class fit into your education and life goals, respectively, both at NMU and in your plans for the future?\***

The deadline for the letter of application is Friday, February 6th, by 5pm, and it should be sent via email to [dwood@nmu.edu](mailto:dwood@nmu.edu). The Instructor will work with the NMU Registrar to add those students accepted for this trip into either EN 495X (4 credits) or HON 495 (4 credits) for Fall 2026.

### **Course Readings**

Those accepted to participate in this course will complete all primary readings, secondary readings, and assigned worksheets during the latter part of summer 2026; accordingly, all students will be expected to arrive for our departure from Marquette having read these works carefully and thought about them deeply. Doing so will allow us to discuss in careful detail all work assigned during our intense, weeklong field trip. Students can expect numerous additional reading and writing assignments upon our return, as well.

**Link:** [www.stratfordfestival.ca](http://www.stratfordfestival.ca)