

*Areté* April 2008  
Honors class attends gothic Shakespeare play  
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Revenge. Gore. Dismemberment. These are the kinds of things that make the Honors Transatlantic Gothic Literature course tick. So when the University of Louisville announced a production of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, it was only natural that this class would attend. The play centers on a circle of violence and revenge, which culminates in missing hands, severed heads, and one tasty meat pie.

The Gothic Literature class has spent the semester meeting in the dungeon of Cherry Hall on Monday nights to discuss the history and characteristics of this peculiar and important genre of fiction. However, the class has not been all reading; we have had movie nights to supplement the assigned novels (Kenneth Branagh's *Frankenstein* made for a memorable evening), and Dr. Sandra Hughes, an assistant professor in the English Department and the instructor for the course, has planned some field trips as well, including this trip to *Titus*.

On a crisp, clear Sunday, we loaded up in our "Bloody Massacre Express" (so-called by Hughes) and headed for Louisville. We spent a great deal of the drive working on another class project: an original Gothic short story that we plan to submit for publication. Ideas such as "The statue of Henry Hardin Cherry comes to life" and "There should be vaults under Cherry Hall" were passed around and recorded for later brainstorming sessions. Before we knew it, we were in Louisville. Time for some Shakespeare! U of L's production of this show was rather eclectic. You had the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare's poetry, a cast made up of students and faculty, and costumes that ranged from traditional Roman helmets to leather straps and chains. Nevertheless, the production made for some gory, over-the-top fun.

The show's director, Dennis Krausnick, who has worked with Shakespeare & Company in Lennox, Mass., gave a preliminary speech explaining his hopes that we would see the parallels between the unmitigated violence of the play and those images we see in the news every day. Shakespeare is still relevant even centuries after his death.

The trip was an excellent experience: we bonded, we winced, and we experienced some Gothic Literature in action.