

Seymour Library Talk

TITLE: Zombie Shakespeare: A Discussion of the Undying Bard on the 400th Anniversary of his Death.

April of 2016 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of one of the greatest playwrights in the English language. During those 400 years, however, the idea of Shakespeare has refused to die. To celebrate that zombie-like perseverance, Scott O'Neil, a doctoral candidate in Renaissance literature from the University of Rochester, will offer a talk that incorporates Shakespearean biography, Victorian Bardolatry, Shakespeare in the American West, and Shakespeare in performance and the cultural imagination. The bulk of the talk will be centered on *King Lear*, perhaps the Shakespeare play most focused on issues of death and aging, and thus most suited to the 400th deathiversary of the playwright. O'Neil will offer a reading of the play that links the disappearance of the Fool to the tragic conclusion. Several clips from modern productions will be included, as will archival work from the Folger Shakespeare Library, including letters from Edwin Booth--famed in his time as a preeminent Shakespearean actor, and famed in our time as the elder brother of the man who assassinated Abraham Lincoln.