

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE, AND MEDIA STUDIES
ENGLISH SUMMER PROGRAMME 2007-08



ENGL 116
Reading Shakespeare:
An Introduction

Class Timetable

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 3–5 pm, in Murphy LT 220,
 from 4 to 20 December, and from 22 January to 7 February.

The two-hour sessions will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. There are no tutorials for this course, so students are expected and required to attend at least 70% of sessions.

Staff

Geoff Miles, VZ 915, phone 463-6809, e-mail geoff.miles@vuw.ac.nz (course convener).
 Tatjana Schaefer, VZ 917, phone 463-6802 (lecturer and course administrator).

Texts

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Nicholas Brooke, Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford, 1990), \$21.95.

You are strongly recommended to get this edition, or at least another edition with full on-page annotation; students will be expected to make use of the notes during class.

ENGL 116 Reading Shakespeare: Contexts for 'Macbeth' (Student Notes), \$18.10.

Aims, objectives, and teaching methods of the course

The course is an introduction to Shakespeare, focusing on the reading of a single play, *Macbeth*, and associated material. The focus is on close and detailed reading of the text of the play, familiarising students with early 17th century English and with Shakespeare's use of poetic forms, rhetoric, and imagery. We will look at Shakespeare's techniques of plot construction and character creation, and at the text's implicit cues and possibilities for performance in the Elizabethan theatre and on modern stages and screens.

We will also look at some surrounding texts which shed light on *Macbeth*: scenes from plays by Shakespeare dealing with similar themes; extracts from Shakespeare's sources, and documents revealing Renaissance views and debates about the play's key concerns (kingship, political murder, witchcraft, gender); a range of film and television versions, adaptations, and parodies of the play.

The course will be conducted in two-hour lecture/discussion sessions. Students should come to each class having read and thought about the reading for the day, and be prepared to respond to questions and to take part in both small-group and general discussion.

The course is designed for those interested in Shakespeare, and especially as a preparatory course for those going on to take more advanced Shakespeare courses such as ENGL/THEA 208. By the end of the course students should

- have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of *Macbeth*;
- have a detailed and precise comprehension of Shakespeare's language (including his vocabulary, syntax, verse forms, imagery, poetic and rhetorical effects), enabling them to provide detailed paraphrases and critical analyses of passages from *Macbeth*, and to approach other Shakespearean texts with adequate comprehension;
- understand the structure, techniques, and conventions of the Elizabethan stage;
- have some knowledge of relevant aspects of English Renaissance history and culture.

Assessment

The course is internally assessed. The pieces of work required are:

- (1) Three **exercises** (10% each) involving the paraphrase and explanation of a short passage from the play. *Five* such exercises will be carried out in class, on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting on Thursday 6 December; the *best three marks* will be counted towards your assessment. (Tests the first and second course objectives.)
- (2) A **critical analysis essay** (30%), of 1200-1500 words, analysing a scene or episode from the play, due **Tuesday 22 January**. (Tests the first, second, and third course objectives.)
- (3) A 2-hour **test** (40%), in the final class session on **Thursday 7 February**. Details of the format to be announced later. (Tests all four course objectives.)

Extensions and penalties

The exercises will be carried out in class time. It is not compulsory to complete more than three of them, but the more you complete, the better your chance of a higher grade. If you complete fewer than three in-class exercises, an alternative piece of assessment will be required.

The deadline for handing in the essay (Tuesday 22 January) will be strictly applied. If you need an extension, you must apply to the convenor, Geoff Miles, *before* the due date. A simple request will suffice for an extension of a week or less; for a longer or additional extension you will need to provide supporting documentation (e.g. a medical certificate). Late work submitted without an extension will be penalised by one grade for every three days. Note that no work can be accepted after **Friday 8 February**. Make sure you plan your work in advance to deal with competing deadlines, and be aware of the tight timetable of the summer trimester.

Mandatory requirements

The minimum course requirements which must be satisfied include completion of three exercises and the essay by **Friday 8 February**, the sitting of the final test on **Thursday 7 February**, and attendance at **70% of classes** (i.e. at least 12 out of 17 two-hour sessions). Failure to satisfy the course requirements will leave you with a fail grade.

Workload

The guideline for an 18-point 100-level paper is at least 12 hours of reading and study (including class attendance) for 12 weeks. Since ENGL 116 is accelerated to 6 weeks, workloads must be adjusted accordingly, especially by doing much of your reading and essay-writing in non-teaching weeks.

Information, and Blackboard

Course information (including essay topics, exam information, and updates to the course schedule) will be distributed in classes and posted on the English noticeboard, on the third floor outside Hugh Mackenzie 206; it will also be posted on the course's Blackboard online site at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. If you have any problems accessing Blackboard, contact Tatjana Schaefer. Material on Blackboard will include some supplementary lecture material, but because the classes are largely discussion-based, lecture notes will *not* be posted on Blackboard; there is no substitute for actually attending the classes!

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the VUW homepage at:

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available on the course's Blackboard website:

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

(NOTE: This timetable is highly provisional, and will almost certainly change in the course of the trimester. Take it as a rough guide to the rate at which we will move through the play, and the order in which key issues will be introduced.)

Tu 4 Dec	Introduction to Shakespeare and <i>Macbeth</i> . 1.1: ways of (cautiously) approaching the witches.
W 5 Dec	1.2 (at Duncan's camp). Shakespeare's language. The world of Macbeth's Scotland.
Th 6 Dec	1.3 (Macbeth and the witches) and 1.4 (Macbeth and Duncan). Witchcraft Shakespeare's verse.
Tu 11 Dec	1.5 and 1.6 (Lady Macbeth). Imagery. Gender issues: being a woman.
W 12 Dec	1.7 (the decision). Soliloquy and character. Gender issues: being a man.
Th 13 Dec	2.1 and 2.2 (the murder of Duncan). The Elizabethan stage and staging.
Tu 18 Dec	2.3 and 2.4 (after the murder). Comedy and prose. Ideas of kingship.
W 19 Dec	3.1 to 3.3 (the murder of Banquo). The question of Banquo: Shakespeare, history, and legend.
Th 20 Dec	3.4 to 3.6 (the banquet scene, and after). Textual issues.

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR BREAK

Tu 22 Jan	4.1 (return to the witches) and 4.2 (Macduff's family). Prophecy and knowledge. ESSAY DUE.
W 23 Jan	4.3 (the England scene). Politics: kingship and resistance.
Th 24 Jan	Act 5. Tragedy and endings.
Tu 29 Jan	Before Shakespeare: <i>Macbeth</i> and its sources.
W 30 Jan	Critical readings.
Th 31 Jan	After Shakespeare: versions and adaptations.
Tu 5 Feb	After Shakespeare: versions and adaptations.
W 6 Feb	NO CLASS: WAITANGI DAY.
Th 7 Feb	FINAL TEST.