

# ENGL116 — Reading Shakespeare: An Introduction

Trimester 3 2009-10

20 Points



## TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: from 1 to 18 December **and** from 26 January to 12 February  
Last piece of assessment due: 11 February (Test)

## NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

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

## CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11am–1pm, in Hunter LT 220. There are no tutorials.

## COURSE DELIVERY

The two-hour sessions will be taught in workshops, a combination of lecture, class discussion, and small-group work. 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. There are no tutorials for this course, so students are expected and required to attend at least 70% of sessions.

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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!

## COURSE CONTENT

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.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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.

## READINGS

### Essential 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.

**NB:** All undergraduate textbooks will be sold from VicBooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

## EXPECTED 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.

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

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 4 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 26 January**. (Tests the first, second, and third course objectives.)
- (3) A 2-hour **test** (40%), in the final class session on **Thursday 11 February**. Details of the format to be announced later. (Tests all four course objectives.)

## ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office on level 8 of the Von Zedlitz Building.

## PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

The paraphrase 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.

### Extensions

The deadline for handing in the essay (Tuesday 26 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 and no comments will be offered. Note that no work can be accepted after **Friday 12 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 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The minimum course requirements which must be satisfied include completion of three exercises and the essay by **Friday 12 February**, the sitting of the final test on **Thursday 11 February**, and attendance at **70% of classes** (i.e. at least 13 out of 18 two-hour sessions). Failure to satisfy the course requirements will leave you with a fail grade.

## STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Work submitted in the final examination will obviously be handwritten. You are expected to write clearly. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work. Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

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

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

You 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 or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx)

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Week 1	Tuesday 1 Dec	Introduction to Shakespeare and <i>Macbeth</i> . 1.1: ways of (cautiously) approaching the witches.
	Wednesday 2 Dec	1.2 (at Duncan's camp). Shakespeare's language. The world of Macbeth's Scotland.
	Thursday 3 Dec	1.3 (Macbeth and the witches) and 1.4 (Macbeth and Duncan). Witchcraft Shakespeare's verse. PARAPHRASE EXERCISE (1).
Week 2	Tuesday 8 Dec	1.5 and 1.6 (Lady Macbeth). Imagery. Gender issues: being a woman. PARAPHRASE EXERCISE (2).
	Wednesday 9 Dec	<i>Macbeth</i> on the Elizabethan stage (guest lecture by DAVID CARNEGIE). 1.7 (the decision). Soliloquy and character. Gender issues: being a man.
	Thursday 10 Dec	2.1 and 2.2 (the murder of Duncan). PARAPHRASE EXERCISE (3).
Week 3	Tuesday 15 Dec	2.3 and 2.4 (after the murder). Comedy and prose. Ideas of kingship. PARAPHRASE EXERCISE (4).
	Wednesday 16 Dec	3.1 to 3.3 (the murder of Banquo). The question of Banquo: Shakespeare, history, and legend.
	Thursday 17 Dec	3.4 to 3.6 (the banquet scene, and after). Textual issues. PARAPHRASE EXERCISE (5).

**CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR BREAK**

Week 4	Tuesday 26 Jan	4.1 (return to the witches) and 4.2 (Macduff's family). Prophecy and knowledge. ESSAY DUE.
	Wednesday 27 Jan	4.3 (the England scene). Politics: kingship and resistance.
	Thursday 28 Jan	Act 5. Tragedy and endings.
Week 5	Tuesday 2 Feb	Before Shakespeare: <i>Macbeth</i> and its sources.
	Wednesday 3 Feb	Critical readings.
	Thursday 4 Feb	Critical readings.
Week 6	Tuesday 9 Feb	After Shakespeare: versions and adaptations.
	Wednesday 10 Feb	After Shakespeare: versions and adaptations
	Thursday 11 Feb	FINAL TEST.