

**English 391W**  
**Studies in Shakespeare**  
**Tragedies and Histories**  
**Fall, 2007**

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**1. Course Description:**

The purpose of English 391 is to read and analyze several of Shakespeare's histories and tragedies, from the earliest experiments of his career to the great history plays of the 1590s through the major tragedies of the early 1600s.

**2. Course Objectives:**

1. To investigate the historical and cultural backgrounds of his plays as well as an awareness of recurrent motifs in the plays.
2. To study how Shakespeare manipulated and blended the various connections and structures of history and tragedy to create quite different effects in each of his plays.
3. To analyze and evaluate the philosophical insights of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.
4. To show Shakespeare's influence in the courts of Elizabeth I and James I.
5. To discuss common concerns of Shakespeare's plays which explain Shakespeare's position as a leading public playwright.

**3. Text:**

(To be announced in class.)

**4. Course Requirements:**

1. Reading assignments will be given over the plays and background. These assignments are announced in class. These assignments will be averaged and evaluated as a major grade. No make-ups are given; however, the one (1) lowest grade will be dropped for each student.
2. 3 major examinations will be given in class. These examinations will require writing and analysis over the material read and discussed.
3. Consideration will be given for class participation.
4. A comprehensive final examination will be evaluated as two (2) major assignments.

5. **Selected Readings:**

King Richard the Second

King Richard the Third

The First Part of King Henry the Fourth

Othello

King Lear

Julius Caesar

6. **Absence Policy:**

The University bulletin stresses the importance of punctuality and “regular” attendance. In order to adhere to their guidelines, I have adopted the following absence policy for my classes:

1. A student is allowed three (3) absences during the semester without any penalty being imposed. (This absence without penalty does not apply to any work missed.)
2. If a student misses more than four (4) to five (5) meetings during the semester, the student will be penalized two (2) points.
3. After the student misses six (6) classes during the semester, he or she will not receive credit for the course.
4. If a student has maintained a perfect attendance for the entire semester, he or she will have three (3) points added to the final grade in the course.

7. **Grading System:**

All grades are based on a 100 point scale: 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59-0=F. All work must be completed and turned in on time or you will fail by default.

Your final course grade will be calculated and averaged as follows:

1. Average of reading assignments and writing will be 1 component
2. 3 major exams will be 3 components
3. Project, if applicable, will be 1 component
4. Final examination will be 2 components

I add the grade of each component and divide by the total number of components to determine your final grade. The last consideration given for grade distribution is to include points for perfect attendance or to subtract points for lack of attendance.