

**English 391W
Studies in Shakespeare
Tragedies and Histories
Summer I, 2008**

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Course Description:

The purpose of English 391 is to read and discuss a number 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.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To examine how Shakespeare manipulated the conventions of tragedy and the chronicle play of his time to create quite different effects in each of his plays.
- 2) To investigate the historical and cultural backgrounds of his plays.
- 3) To appreciate his status as a leading public playwright as well as to observe his relationship to the courts of Elizabeth I and James I.
- 4) To discuss the current themes and philosophical insights of his plays.

Text:

(To be announced in class.)

Course Requirements:

- 1) Reading assignments and writing situations 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.

Selected Readings:

King Richard the Second

The First Part of King Henry the Fourth

Julius Caesar

Macbeth

Othello

King Lear

Hamlet

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 four (4) to five (5) meetings during the session, the student will be penalized two (2) points.
- 3) After a 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 session, he or she will have three (3) points added to the final grade in the course.

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 fail by default.

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

- 1) Average of reading assignments will be 1 component
- 2) 3 major exams will be 3 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.