

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the Problem of Evil

An Honors (Un)Common Read Course

IDH2930

Section 2413

Spr 2024, Class #29695

FW 11:45-12:35 (5th Period)

Little 119

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Office Hours 2-3:00 Wednesday (and by appointment)

Course Description:

In this course we will delve into Shakespeare's 1605 play set in eleventh-century Scotland that depicts the life of a Christian warrior who becomes his kingdom's ruler and bloody tyrant. Macbeth is a man trapped in a Scotland torn by conflicting values: a savage warrior culture set against the ideals of a saintly Christian virtue. Shakespeare's fascination with characters' thoughts and actions is deeply rooted in the ways those characters grapple with the demands of their political and social cultures. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth live in a land of warlords and holy men, in an early-medieval Scotland characterized by belief in a natural order suffused with witches, angels, devils, spirits, and other beings bridging the gulf between God and man. The course will focus on close and intentional reading of the play. We will read selections out loud in class as we discuss textual cruxes and confusing moments. Additional source readings will be provided on Canvas, including selections from Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, James I's *Daemonology*, Seneca's *Medea*, and medieval miracle plays influencing the "porter" scene, among others. Requirements: short weekly discussion posts on Canvas, one discussion leader assignment, and one in-class final exam.

Texts:

Macbeth, William Shakespeare, ed. Jan H. Blits, Hackett Publishing Co., Indianapolis, 2021.

Course Requirements:

In-Class Participation/Attendance 20%

Longer Canvas Comments/Replies 35%

Weekly Canvas Comments	25%
Final Exam (in class)	20%

Learning Outcomes:

Critical Thinking

Students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape William Shakespeare's thought in his dramatic writing.
- Approach issues and problems within the study of English Renaissance drama from multiple perspectives.

Communication

Students will be able to:

- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning regarding the structure and content of Shakespeare's drama clearly and effectively in written work and in class discussions.

Course Expectations:

Read all portions of *Macbeth* by the date assigned for class discussion. You will access additional required readings in Canvas. I will also provide weekly Reading Guides to guide your reading for that day—these will mainly be composed of questions, but will also include key terms and concepts we will discuss in class and which you will be expected to know. Each week you will complete a "Weekly Canvas Comment" of 3-4 sentences. You will also post 3 Longer Canvas Comments (at least 250-wd) throughout the semester and 3 responses to another student's Canvas post. See "Canvas Comment Assignment" below. You will have a final in-class exam, which will account for 20% of your grade. For class each day, you should be ready to discuss the scene(s) for that day, and to pose questions regarding any confusions or difficulties you have with language, allusions, structure, character, plotting, argument, etc. Class participation will influence your final grade (for the better or worse in any borderline cases), and you will be evaluated according to your level of preparation for each day's discussion (see "In-Class Participation" below).

Description of Graded Work

1. In-Class Participation and Attendance: 20%

- a. 10% of your total course grade is based on verbal, in-class discussion participation: an exemplar participant shows evidence of having done the

assigned reading before each class, consistently offers thoughtful points and questions for discussion, and listens considerately to other discussants. See participation rubric below.

- b. 10% of your total course grade is based on attendance. On-time class attendance is required for this component of the course grade. You may have two unexcused absences without any penalty. Starting with the third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence reduces your attendance grade by 2/3: an A becomes a B+, and so on. Excessive tardy attendance (3 or more) will also reduce your attendance grade: for each 3 tardies, your attendance grade will be reduced by 1/3.
- c. Except for absence because of religious holiday observance, documentation is required for excused absences, per [UF attendance policy](#). Excessive unexcused absences (6 or more) will result in failure of the course. If you miss 6 or more classes (excused or not), you will miss material essential for successful completion of the course.

2. Longer Canvas Comments and Replies: 35%

- a. You will post three 250-wd "Longer Comments" on Canvas throughout the semester. You will post these in the "Discussion" area of our Canvas page. These will be assigned by sign-up sheet at the beginning of the semester. See details in syllabus below. These will count for 25% of your course grade. You must pose a question based on the play's content, and you must quote the play at least twice. See grading rubric below.
- b. You will post three 100-wd "Longer Replies" on Canvas to another student's "Longer Comment" three times throughout the semester. Your reply must directly respond to issues raised in the "Longer Comment" and these will count for 10% of your course grade. You will post it directly in the reply area to a particular student's post in that week's "Longer Comment" discussion in the "Discussion" tab on our Canvas page.

3. Weekly Canvas Comments: 25% [Separate from the "Longer Canvas Comments/Replies"]

- a. Every week you will post a three- to four-sentence Canvas Comment on the reading for that day, due Tuesday by noon before our Wednesday class. You will post these to the weekly module on our Canvas page. You must post even if you are assigned a Longer Canvas Comment that week. See details below.

4. Final Essay: 20%

- a. I will provide more information on Canvas regarding the final essay, which will be a written exam taken in class.

Weekly Canvas Comments (Due Tuesday by noon)

ALL students are required to post a question or comment on that week's reading on Canvas by Tuesday at noon, including those students assigned to longer Canvas Comments. There is no length requirement for these posts--your interests and questions will help to structure and focus our discussion for that week—three to four sentences are sufficient. You may simply pose a question of fact, such as the literal meaning of a phrase, or even a plot point. You might also ask a question regarding the meaning of a metaphor. A Weekly Canvas Comment is considered late if it is posted at any time after noon on Tuesday. Late responses (after 12:00) will have a full grade deducted from the grade received for each day the response is late (An A will be reduced to a B, etc.). You will receive full credit (an "A") for meeting the minimum requirements described above. Points are taken off only for late comments.

Longer Canvas Comments (Due Tuesday by noon) and Longer Canvas Replies (Due Wednesday by 9 a.m.)

Each week, 3 students will post a **250-word "Longer Comment"** on the reading assigned for that day, which typically consists of part of an Act of *Macbeth*. In your comments **you must offer TWO quotes** from the reading assigned for that day, though you are free to also quote from other acts and scenes in *Macbeth*. You may discuss content, subject matter, tone, theme, allusions, argument structure, dramatic scenario, etc. You may also pose a number of questions in your comment, as if you were opening up a discussion at the beginning of a class period. If you are assigned a **"Longer Reply"** that day, you must post at least **100 words in response** to a **"Longer Comment"** to which you have been assigned. There are no requirements in terms of quoting for the replies, but your reply must directly respond to the issues raised in the student's longer comment. A sign-up sheet for these longer comments and replies will be circulated the first week of class. You will be assigned 3 longer comments and 3 longer replies all semester, and this will comprise 35% of your grade (25% for Comments; 10% for replies).

Grading Rubric for Longer Canvas Comments and *Replies *(excepting length and quoting requirements)

A—At least 250 words; utilizes concepts presented in class and reading, linking them in interesting ways to the topics you raise; uses at least two quotes from the reading assigned that day (you must focus on the scene assigned, though you can bring in elements from other scenes); quotes correctly and cites line numbers; provides nuanced readings of quotes in question and offers a carefully structured argument; perfect grammar and spelling.

B—225-250 words; utilizes course material adequately but not excellently, mentioning one or two course concepts; utilizes quotes but may not contextualize them completely or explain relevance to larger argument; less nuance or complexity than an "A" response; one grammar or spelling error.

C—200 words; may mention course concepts but does not link them adequately to topic or display relevance to quotes from text; any quotes from text do not clearly support the larger argument; argument is simple and no attempts are made to find patterns in the text; two to three grammar and/or spelling errors

D—Fewer than 200 words; utilizes one course concept but uses it incorrectly; discusses the text too broadly with few specifics; quotes text once; citation form incorrect; no conceptual links between examples in the text.

E—100 words or fewer; no attempt to incorporate course concepts; does not quote text; no argument; grammar and spelling errors throughout.

Class Participation

Grading for class discussion follows a *general* rubric of A=speaking 2-3 times each class period; B=speaking once a class period; C=speaking every other week or so; D=speaking a couple times a semester. F=attending class but not speaking at all. If you have trouble speaking up in class, feel free to prepare beforehand a question or two to pose during class, and that counts as contributing to productive class discussion.

I will provide on Canvas short "reading guides" for all readings, corresponding to the scenes assigned for that day's reading. Ideally you should prepare answers to the questions posed in the reading guides, as I will call on students for their responses—of course, if you volunteer your answers first, I won't have to call on you 😊. Additionally, you may have a follow-up question to some of the questions I have posed, and those are always welcome.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Jan. 10	<i>Macbeth</i> , Introduction (pp. x-xx) Act and Scene: 1.1-1.2 <u>Canvas:</u> King James I and VI, <i>Daemonology</i> (1597) (sel.); King James I and VI, <i>News from Scotland</i> (1591) sel.
Jan. 17	<i>Macbeth</i> 1.3-1.4

Canvas:

Ireland
Raphael Holinshed, *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and*
(1587) (sel.) (pp. 135-142)

Jan. 24 ***Macbeth*** 1.5-1.6

Canvas:

Seneca, *Medea* (1581 tr.) (sel.)

Jan. 31 ***Macbeth*** 1.7

Canvas:

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* (1581 tr.) (sel.)

Feb. 7 ***Macbeth*** 2.1

Canvas:

Livy, *History* 1.57-60

Euripides, *Medea*, 397-403

Bacchylides, "To Hecate" frag. 1B:

https://www.loebclassics.com/view/bacchylides-fragments/1992/pb_LCL461.253.xml?readMode=reader

Feb. 14 ***Macbeth*** 2.2

Canvas:

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* (sel.)

Feb. 21 ***Macbeth*** 2.3-2.4

Canvas:

Henry Garnet, *A Treatise of Equivocation* (1598) (sel.)

Feb. 28 ***Macbeth*** 3.1

Canvas:

Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* 2.3.16-22

Mar. 6 *Macbeth* 3.2-3.4

Mar. 13 SPRING BREAK

Mar. 20 *Macbeth* 3.5-4.1

Canvas:

Reginald Scot, *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584) (sel.)

Mar. 27 *Macbeth* 4.2-4.3

Canvas:

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 2-2, q178, a1, ad4

Apr. 3 *Macbeth* 5.1

Canvas:

Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, Chpt. XXVIII (pp. 493-512)

Apr. 10 *Macbeth* 5.2-5.4

Canvas:

Raphael Holinshed, *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587) (sel.) (pp. 142-150)

Apr. 17 *Macbeth* 5.5-5.9

Canvas:

Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, Chpt. XXVIII (pp. 512-521)

Apr. 24 In-class essay

VI. Required Policies

Grading Policy

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. Once you have earned a final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Completion credit.

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Campus/Academic Resources:

Honors Program

The Honors Program office is found at 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519. Questions for an Honors advisor can be directed to advisor@honors.ufl.edu. You may also schedule an Honors advising appointment via Microsoft Bookings at <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/> , 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

