Instructor: J. L. Hall

Fall, 2006: POWR, 3020: TOPICS IN WRITING, sec. 049
SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH AND GREEK TRAGEDY

The aim of the course is to help you to write clearly, forcefully, and coherently, and to develop your skills in critical thinking. During this semester you'll write two full essays (one analysis, one argument) and several shorter assignments, first on the topic of Oedipus the King, then Macbeth, or a topic that covers the two plays.

All your work should be typed. The class will be conducted mainly as a workshop where discussion will focus on the best ways to develop and improve paragraphs and papers overall. Be prepared to participate! One assignment will be writing critiques of your classmates’ drafts, which will help you to become good constructive critics of your own work as well as that of your classmates. Shorter assignments, peer reviews and class participation make up one-third of your grade, and the two longer essays make up the remaining two-thirds.

Usually we’ll discuss the papers of one half of the class each session. As I’ll need to see your work in advance, you must hand it in before it’s scheduled to be discussed; i.e. if your work is to be discussed on Tuesday, put a copy in my mailbox in TB1 (Temporary Building, next to Clare) by Monday afternoon, or e-mail it to me at hallj123@juno.com no later than 5 P.M. that day, and bring copies to class. If it is to be discussed on Thursday, hand a copy to me and the rest of the class on Tuesday. Leave plenty of time for making copies, as it’s essential not to distract the rest of the class by being late.

Please regard attendance as mandatory, since more than three unexcused absences (for any reason) will affect your final grade. If you must miss class because of extended illness, you’ll need to provide medical evidence. Check the honor code at www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode, and in particular, be careful not to plagiarize the work of another student or another source; otherwise, you could fail the course. I encourage you to consult with me in my office hours on Tu/Th, 11 - 12, 15, and Tu, 2 - 2.30, in TB1, room 9 (ext. 3821). Should you need to contact me outside these hours, you can call me at 443-9717, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., and leave a message there rather than on the office voice mail. You can also e-mail me at hallj123@juno.com, rather than using the campus e-mail address. Students who need academic accommodations because of disabilities should provide me with a letter from Disability Services as soon as possible. You can contact them in Willard 322, at 303-492-8641, or access www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

WHAT YOU NEED

A notebook, which you should bring, with the text we’re working on, to class time every time, for taking notes and for in-class writing assignments.

Required texts: Shakespeare, Macbeth (Signet, 1998)

Recommended: Diane Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), or an equivalent manual to check on questions of grammar style, citation, etc.

You can watch, or purchase from Norlin Library, copies of the 1982 BBC version of Macbeth or the 1976 Royal Shakespeare Company version of Macbeth (Ian McEllen and Judy Dench). Roman Polanski’s film version of the play (1971) is well worth watching.
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**Week 1** (Aug 29 - 31)
Introduction to the course and discussion of Oedipus the King (Worksheet provided)

**Aug 31:** Hand in answer (1-2 pages) to a question on the worksheet.

**Week 2** (Sept 5 - 7)
**Sept 5:** Continue discussion of Oedipus the King, also in relation to Aristotle’s definitions of tragedy.

**Sept 7:** Discussion; in-class writing; preparation for critical interpretation assignment.

**Week 3** (Sept 12 - 14): Workshop assignment on critical interpretation of Oedipus the King.

**Weeks 4 - 5** (Sept 19 - 28)
Begin discussion of Macbeth. Hand in 1-2 page answer to one question on the Macbeth worksheet on Sept 19, and another short writing assignment on Sept 26.

**Sept 21:** Hand in the revised version of Week 3's assignment on Oedipus the King, along with your original version, for a grade.

**Week 6** (Oct 3 -5)
Workshop assignment on a question that discusses Macbeth in relation to Oedipus the King (handout to be supplied).

**Weeks 7 - 10** (Oct 10 - Nov 2)

**Workshop the first paper (ANALYSIS).** Beginning with the opening paragraph, work on your own analysis (an interpretation that evolves a strong thesis) of a particular issue arising from the two plays we have studied. Some topics you might consider: how the two plays differ in their exploration of fate (or predetermination) vs. free will; the question of moral responsibility in Oedipus and Macbeth, and how it affects our view of these characters as tragic heroes; the roles of the wives in the two plays; whether the “downfall” of each main protagonists generates “pity” and “fear” in the audience/reader; or how the question of kingship is explored in one or both of the plays.

**Oct 12:** Hand in the revised version of your response to Week 6's assignment, along with your original version, for a grade.

**Week 11** (Nov 7 - 9):
Discussion of argument strategies; workshopping an assignment that connects two essays from the Signet edition of Macbeth, arguing for or against some of their assertions (handout supplied).

**Nov 9:** Hand in analysis paper (two copies)
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Weeks 12 - 16 (Nov 14 - Dec 14)

Workshop the second paper (ARGUMENT). Choose a controversial topic and develop your own argumentative thesis on the play, being sure to address counterarguments. You can choose an argumentative topic that spans both plays or concentrate exclusively on Macbeth. Some topics to consider: whether or not the presentation of Lady Macbeth is anti-feminist, ultimately reinforcing traditional stereotypes about women; whether Macbeth forfeits the status of “tragic hero” by becoming a brutal murderer; whether the Witches are truly instrumental in Macbeth’s downfall.

Nov 17: Hand in your revised version of Week 12’s assignment, together with your original version.

Week 13 (Nov 21 - 23): THANKSGIVING BREAK

This argument paper replaces a final exam; it must be handed in by or before noon on Monday, December 18

Note: As you revise and add to your longer papers, please attach the immediately preceding draft to the copy of the new version that you give to me.
For your information: C.U.'s policies on religious observances, classroom behavior, honor code, discrimination and harassment

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.
See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See polices at
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at
http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html@student_code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at
http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh