Spring, 2007: WRTG, 3020: TOPICS IN WRITING, sec. 074  
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 will write two full essays (one analysis, one argument) and several shorter assignments, first on the topic of Oedipus the King, then Macbeth.

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! Part of your assessment includes 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 TB 1 (Temporary Building, next to Clare) by Monday afternoon (3 P.M.), or e-mail it to me at hall123@juno.com by Monday afternoon. Then bring 18 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, and please let me know in advance if you require accommodation for religious observances. I’ve attached to this syllabus important information about the honor code and about appropriate classroom behavior. 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, 12:15 - 1:45 P.M., in TB1, room 9 (ext. 3821), or arrange a later time to see me on those days. Should you need to contact me outside these hours, you can call me at 303-443-9717, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., and leave a message there rather than on the office voice mail. You should also e-mail me at hall123@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 McKellen and Judi Dench). Roman Polanski’s film version of the play (1971) is well worth watching.
WRTG, 3020, sec. 074: SHAKESPEARE’S MACBETH AND GREEK DRAMA, contd.

Week 1 (Jan 13-15)
Introduction to the course and discussion of Oedipus the King (Worksheet provided).

Jan 18: Hand in answer (1-2 pages) to a question on the worksheet.

Week 2 (Jan 23-25)
Jan 23: Continue discussion of Oedipus the King, relating it to Aristotle’s definitions of tragedy.

Jan 25: Discussion; in-class writing; preparation for critical interpretation assignment

Week 3 (Jan 30-Feb 1)
Week 3 assignment on critical interpretation of Oedipus the King.

Weeks 4-5 (Feb 6-15)
Begin discussion of Macbeth. Hand in 1-2 page answer to one question on the Macbeth worksheet on Feb 6.

Feb 8: Hand in the revised version of Week 3’s assignment on Oedipus the King, along with your original version, for a grade.

Week 6 (Feb 20-22)
Workshop assignment on a question that discusses Macbeth in relation to Oedipus the King (handout to be supplied).

Mar 1: Hand in the revised version of your response to Week 6’s assignment, along with your original version, for a grade.

Weeks 7 - 10 (Feb 27-March 22)

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 protagonist generates “pity” and “fear” in the audience/reader; or how the question of kingship is explored in one or both of the plays.

SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (Apr 3-5):
Discussion of argument strategies; workshops an assignment that connects two essays from the Signer edition of Macbeth, arguing for or against some of their assertions (handout supplied).

April 5: Hand in analysis paper (two copies)
Weeks 12 - 15 (April 10 - May 3)

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.

April 12: Hand in your revised version of Week 11's assignment, together with your original version.

This argument paper replaces a final exam; it must be handed in by or before noon on Monday, May 7.

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.
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 policies 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