

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES  
2016/17

ENGLISH 4230G

SEMINAR IN LITERARY STUDIES

**Title:** Hamlet Hamlet Hamlet

**Class time:** 8:30-11:30 Mondays

**Classroom:** BR-302

**Instructor:** D. Grace

**Phone:** 519-432-8353 x 28244

**Office:** 179

**email:** dgrace2@uwo.ca

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Course Description:**

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the most studied and best-known of Shakespeare's works. It has penetrated the public consciousness (almost everyone knows at least a few *Hamlet* quotations, even if they don't know it). It has been performed, re-envisioned, adapted, and parodied innumerable times, and it has influenced everything from Japanese cinema to *The Lion King*. It is almost impossible to come to the play without at least some preconceptions about it. Consequently, a close study of the play itself can be very revealing. This course will focus primarily on the play itself, but will also consider key readings and filmic adaptations of it.

**Texts:**

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Norton, 2011.

Various secondary readings from the library or internet will also be assigned.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Participation:	15%
Critical Response:	20%
Journal:	15%
Essay :	30%
Seminar:	20%

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan.9	Introduction
Jan. 16	<i>Hamlet</i> Act I
Jan. 23	Act I
	<b>SEMINARS BEGIN</b>
Jan. 30	Act II
Feb.6	Act II
Feb. 13	Act II
Feb. 27	Act III
Mar. 6	Act III
Mar. 13	Act IV
Mar. 20	Act IV
	<b>ESSAY DUE</b>
Mar. 27	Act V
Apr. 3	Act V, Conclusion

## CLASS POLICIES: ENGLISH 4230G

### **Literary Studies**

Literature is by its nature exploratory. It pushes against conventions, assumptions, limits, and even good taste. Literary texts may be culturally, morally, politically, racially, socially, religiously, ideologically, and/or linguistically or otherwise offensive to some (yes, even Jane Austen). In taking this course, you agree to expose yourself to material that you may find offensive and agree to read all required work and do all required assignments, even if the materials involved are offensive to you. It is understood that literary analysis and evaluation can include consideration of what is offensive and why, within the context of reasoned discussion and civil debate.

### **General Requirements**

You may from time to time during the course receive direction to avail yourselves of University services and resources, or to engage in activities and pursuits outside the confines of the university, as part of the requirements for this course. Failure to follow such direction will be taken into account and may have a detrimental impact on your grade. It is understood that such requirements will be directly relevant to the materials being studied or to your progress as a student and that such directions will not be unduly onerous or burdensome.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is crucial in a seminar course, as a key component in seminar-format learning is discussion. You are expected to attend regularly and to engage actively in class discussions. This does not mean that you must speak in every class, or that you must always say something that will amaze the whole room, and be handed down to posterity with all the éclat of a proverb, but it does mean that you must engage in the discussion. If you miss more than two classes, your participation grade will be no higher than 4. If you miss more than three classes, your participation grade will be zero, regardless of how actively you participate in the other classes.

### **Assignments**

Due dates for essays are included on the course schedule. Assignment topics will be provided well in advance of the due date. Consequently, you are expected to be aware of deadlines and to observe them; few excuses for lateness are acceptable under these circumstances. The pressure of other work is not an acceptable excuse for lateness, as the point of giving you your deadlines in advance is to allow you to plan your schedule accordingly. **Late assignments will be accepted but will be penalized 2% per day, including weekends.** Apologizing for lateness or asking if you can submit the essay a day or two late will in no way affect this policy. **Essays MUST be written to conform to the MLA guidelines for research papers. Failure to conform to the MLA guidelines will be penalized.** Essays must have their pages held together by a paper clip or staple; loose sheets will not be accepted. Do not submit essays in duotangs, binders, plastic folders, or any other

kind of folder. All essays submitted on time will be returned promptly (usually within three weeks of submission) and will include, on return, written annotations throughout and a general commentary following the essay. Late essays will be returned eventually; in addition to having grades deducted, late papers will receive little or no written commentary. Where research requirements are specified, failure to observe them will be penalized; it is incumbent on you to begin work sufficiently in advance of the due date to meet the assignment requirements.

### **Submission of Work**

Submit work to me IN PERSON or through the main office for placement in my mailbox, which guarantees that the date of submission will be recorded. Essays placed under my office door are, in the first instance, likely to get lost (students have claimed they placed essays I never received under my door) and therefore subject to a grade of zero, as unsubmitted; furthermore, essays I find on my floor are considered received when I find them, NOT when they are dated by the student. For example, an essay due on Thursday and placed under my door on Friday might not be found until Monday. That essay is considered to have been submitted the day I found it--that is, four days late, not one day late. It is your responsibility to get your essay in on time. When you submit written work, you should keep a copy, so that you have it should something happen to your original (I have never lost a student paper, but work may go astray in other ways).

### **Seminars**

**Presentation:** Seminars MUST be presented on the day scheduled (sign-up sheets will be posted on my office door on the first day of classes). Keeping on schedule is challenging enough without having to juggle seminar presentations, and this class is over-enrolled, so we have **no flexibility** vis a vis the schedule. You should be prepared to lead the class for an hour in an exploration of your subject, but how you do so is up to you. You may make a formal presentation; you may require participation by asking questions, designing some kind of interactive exercise, having students act out short scenes, or in other ways; you may use visual aids such as video clips, overheads, or handouts (if you get me materials in advance of class, I can make copies); you may present a skit, etc. In short, the format for the presentation is open, as long as the presentation addresses the topic in a useful and interesting way. It should be anchored to the play and address specifics, but it can be exploratory rather than conclusive, as long as you have clear ideas about what you are doing and where you are going. I am even open to considering the possibility of pair or group presentations, so if some of you wish to propose such a presentation, discuss it with me.

**Follow-up:** Within seven days of your presentation (see me for exceptions such as Reading Week, end of term etc.), you must submit a written self-evaluation in which you summarize (at least; you may provide the actual text of what you said, if you take that approach) what you did, provide a commentary on why you chose the approach you did, and provide a commentary on how you think the presentation went (did you achieve your ends? what worked? what did not? what would you do differently next time? etc.). Include a works cited list detailing any secondary sources used for the presentation (including visual

resources such as film clips). The written report need not take the form of a formal essay or conform to MLA guidelines, except insofar as it provides a works cited list. It should be approximately four or five typed pages.

### **Critical Response**

Each student will be expected to select one of the texts from the recommended secondary reading list and write a 1,000 word commentary on its usefulness to a study of *Hamlet*. Recommended readings will be on reserve at Brescia and/or Weldon, as available; some may be available online, as well. No more than THREE students may write on the same text. Sign-up sheets will be available by the end of the first class, on my office door. Due dates for these responses will be staggered throughout the term, depending on the text selected, so the earlier you sign up, the more choice you will have about when your response will be due.

### **Journal**

One of your assignments for this course is a journal. I want you to document your changing experience of *Hamlet* as the term progresses. Journal will be due one week before the end of classes—that is, March 27, 2017. Ideally, each time you work on the course, whether reading the play or secondary material, or even watching a production or an adaptation, you should make a journal entry, but at a minimum, do one entry per week during your reading and during the period of class discussion. Entries need not be long, but CAN be as long as you wish (within limits—e.g. don't write twenty-five entries of 1,000 words each!). At a minimum, each entry should be two to three paragraphs, if you are writing one per week, but may be shorter if you are making more frequent updates. Journal entries need not be written in formal English but should be grammatically correct (more or less), employ correct spelling, and so on.

What should you record?

1. Initial impressions/thoughts, perhaps even prior to beginning (e.g. "One look at the cover and the thickness of this book, and I knew I was in trouble. . . .," or "Having seen the Mel Gibson film, I approached this book with [fill in your own term]").
2. Responses as you read. How does the play make you feel? Can you not wait to find out what happens next? Do you hate the characters? Consider what about the book makes you respond as you do. OR, is the critical study useful? Comprehensible? OR does the production/adaptation reveal possibilities you had not considered before? Do you agree/disagree with the interpretive choices? Etc.
3. *Changes* (if any) to your response as you read (e.g. "I was bored by *Hamlet* until x happened, but then. . ." or "Initially, I was puzzled about what was going on, but as the narrative developed," or, "before reading Prosser's study of revenge in the play, I did not realize ..." etc.) Consider what about the material you are considering might lead to these changing responses.

4. Thoughts about how (if it happens) you discover ways that *Hamlet* turns up elsewhere in your life (e.g. “I got a Valentine that said ‘sweets for the sweet’ on it; after reading *Hamlet*, that didn’t seem like such a positive message”; or “A movie/TV show I was watching clearly echoes this aspect of *Hamlet*” etc. What is significant about such connections? Why is it significant?

5. What (if anything) about your response to *Hamlet* changes during our class discussions.

6. Anything else that strikes you as germane or relevant during the reading process. This might include how looking at secondary sources influences your thoughts, random connections you noted in the world while reading, etc.

### **Academic Standards**

As a university student, you are expected to meet certain requirements in your work. First, you are expected to use the English language clearly and correctly (see the Academic Calendar for University policies on English language proficiency). Grammatical errors or infelicities in your writing will have a significant impact on your grade. You are expected to use formal language, not colloquial language. Second, as an English student you are expected to follow MLA guidelines for essay writing; matters of format will be referred to as the "mechanics" of writing in class and in comments on essays. Third, you are expected to have a thesis and to build an argument that will provide reasonable evidence and analysis sufficient to convince the skeptical reader of the validity of your position. You are not expected to summarize the plot of the work you are discussing, to repeat what we have done in class, or to toe a particular line. Overall, there are three broad areas in which you must show competence: grammar, mechanics, and analysis. A guide to how work is evaluated follows.

A: To earn an "A" you must handle the mechanics of essay writing perfectly or nearly so; work must conform to MLA requirements and must be grammatically correct (or nearly so), clear, formal, and elegant. Excellent writing has its own stylistic flair, as well as being grammatically competent. "A" work has a well-defined thesis, is carefully and clearly structured, makes excellent use of evidence from primary and secondary sources, and provides an argument that goes significantly beyond the information provided in class: you cannot earn an "A" by telling me what I have told you. You cannot earn an "A" without using secondary sources, at least for your major paper.

B: To earn a "B" you must write well, making few grammatical errors; you may slip occasionally, but infrequently. Major errors, such as sentence fragments, dangling participles, misplaced modifiers, etc., are not acceptable and will pull your grade down to, at best, low "B" range. "B" work will be fairly well-organized and argued but will probably miss some important aspect(s) of its case. Overall, it will make good use of evidence from the primary text, and perhaps from secondary materials, but will not fully capitalize on the best material available to prove its case. It will be

- less adventurous than "A" work, closer in theme and content to the "safe" material (e.g. perspectives explored in class or readily available in the bulk of the critical material). It may suffer from occasional, minor errors of fact or interpretation.
- C: "C" work will probably suffer from numerous writing problems, both grammatical and mechanical, which will probably affect the clarity of the paper. That is, what the paper means to say will not be easily deducible from the sentences as presented, due to errors of construction, word choice, and so on, that obscure the intended meaning. The structure of the argument will probably be unclear, due to an insufficient introduction, an illogical linking of arguments, or a loose linking of points. When your argument consists of a sequence of points treated more as a list than as a coherent structure, you are likely working in the "C" range. "C" work tends not to use evidence well, either because it integrates evidence poorly into the essay, because it misinterprets the evidence in some way, or because it does not use any direct evidence at all. The thesis in "C" work will probably be overly general, vague, or simplistic; the argument will be similar.
- D: "D" work will be weak grammatically and mechanically. Numerous major and minor grammatical errors will occur. Clarity will be a significant problem in the essay. Evidence, if used at all, will be poorly integrated and poorly evaluated, though it may be of some relevance to the topic. The argument will be poorly structured and/or unclear; links between ideas will not be evident, and the ideas themselves may not seem related to the central topic. Important arguments will be missed, as will important evidence; the interpretation may be based in a misreading of the text under discussion. Significant errors of fact may occur.
- F: "F" work will suffer from severe writing limitations. What is meant will often be difficult or impossible to determine. The mechanics will be nonexistent, or so poorly handled as to be incoherent. The thesis will be vague to the point of banality, or simply wrong. Evidence will not appear or will be misused significantly; "F" work will show a fundamental lack of understanding of the topic and/or work under discussion. The argument will probably be poorly structured; elements of it will seem to be irrelevant to the topic. Significant evidence will be missed, or misused if it appears. Significant errors will probably occur with evidence use, including the misquotation or even misrepresentation of your text. Clear conclusions will be lacking, or will be so self-evident as to be meaningless (e.g. "Therefore, if Lizzie hadn't married, she would have stayed single").

## 2016-17 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

### 1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated. Documentation shall be submitted as soon as possible to the student's Academic Advisor indicating the period of illness and when the student should be able to resume academic responsibilities. Students must submit their documentation along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded from: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg117.html> The student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness can be viewed at: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

### 2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, [www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca), for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*



The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg130.html> )

### **3. ABSENCES**

**Short Absences:** If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

**Extended Absences:** If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

### **4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg113.html>

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

#### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

#### **Computer-marked Tests/exams:**

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that

may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS**

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Student Academic Appeals under Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg112.html> )

## **6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES**

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

## **7. SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western [http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for information including a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

---

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.