

ENGL 425/525: *Hamlet*
Spring 2010
Paper topics

Short Paper 1

The first short paper should develop an argument about and an analysis of Belleforest's version of the Hamlet story or Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*. You might want to evaluate Shakespeare's use of this source material, but you can also deal with these sources on their own by exploring the ways in which they use language or imagery, or by analyzing their thematic concerns. You might want to focus on how these works explore or dramatize specific ideas about or attitudes toward revenge. Another possibility for this paper would be to analyze the Q1 text of *Hamlet*. What are this text's shortcomings? In what ways is it useful? You are encouraged to avoid consulting secondary literature as you write this paper. If you do use outside sources, don't use them simply to support your own claims.

Short Paper 2

This paper should develop an argument about and analysis of the relationship between the Q2 and F texts of *Hamlet*. Identify an individual passage (or idea, or character) that is treated differently in the two texts and evaluate the differences. You might want to select a passage that is included in one text but not the other and develop an argument about why that passage should be included or excluded. You might want to evaluate the editorial methods used by various editors (including the Arden editors) to grapple with the two texts. You are encouraged to avoid consulting secondary literature as you write this paper. If you do use outside sources, don't use them simply to support your own claims.

Final Paper

The final paper is a research paper. Students should develop an argument about and an analysis of *Hamlet* that grapples with one of the play's major themes or cruxes. After you have identified an aspect of the play to investigate, you should research it as thoroughly as possible, and evaluate what you have found. If you disagree with the critical treatment of the play, explain why. Are there things the critical literature has not adequately accounted for in its treatment of the play? You are encouraged to comment on the ways in which your topic is dealt with in the stage and film history of the play.