The class will read, write about, and discuss ten plays from the second decade of Shakespeare's career. We will begin at the end of Elizabeth's reign with the world's most famous literary character and his play, Hamlet, after which we will treat ourselves to Twelfth Night, the culmination of the "great comedies," and possibly "the most beautiful work of art ever created," in the words of one Shakespearean. Then, as we enter the more doubtful and cynical first decade of the reign of James I, we will read the "problem comedy" Measure for Measure, and then Shakespeare's least classifiable play Troilus and Cressida. Then we will read the three greatest Jacobean tragedies: Othello (which Professor Porter is currently completing the mother of all editions of, and which seems likely to prove the essential Shakespeare tragedy of our new century), King Lear (still considered Shakespeare's supreme work), and finally Macbeth, Shakespeare's deepest plunge into the depths of evil. Finally we read Shakespeare's final genre, romance, with the experimental Cymbeline, the glorious Winter's Tale, and The Tempest, Shakespeare's troubled and troubling valedictory.

Examinations: A final, a 3-4 pp. paper, and a 10-12 pp. paper. Grade to be based on class participation, written work, and final.