



FINAL EXAMINATION

Due: 4pm, 19 January

General Directions: Write three coherent, well-argued essays on three different topics, one each from each of the three sections. Each of the essays should not exceed three double spaced pages. Remember that you will have to discuss at least five different plays (one of which must be *Hamlet*) on the examination, so plan accordingly. GOOD LUCK!

PART ONE - DEVELOPMENT

- 1) How did Shakespeare's interests and emphases change during his playwriting career as he moved 1) from the early plays to the plays of his middle period, and 2) from these middle plays to the late works. Choose ONE play from EACH of the three periods, and write an essay discussing what you consider the most significant changes, in themes and techniques, that distinguish the middle plays from the early ones and the late plays from the middle ones. Noticing, for instance, that the middle period seems to contain a preponderance of English history plays is not a suitable focal point for comparison since we didn't look at ALL the plays in any particular grouping. Choose plays that you will enjoy writing about, but be specific and analytical in your focus.

Early

Middle

Late

**Midsummer Night's
Dream**

Twelfth Night

The Winter's Tale

Romeo and Juliet

1 Henry IV

Richard II

PART 2 - COMEDY

- 1) Northrop Frye's "Greenworld" has been a dominant and extremely useful paradigm in classifying and explaining Shakespeare's comedies. Explain the basic tenets of the theory and apply it to two comedies that we've looked at in this class. NOTE: If you choose this question DO NOT devote significant discussion to Midsummer Night's Dream.
- 2) Shakespeare's comedies (and indeed the histories and the tragedies) have been fruitfully analyzed in terms of their embodiment of and relationship to two more primitive notions of communal accord, festivity, and the carnivalesque. Compare the carnivalesque in at least two plays that we have studied. Don't forget to address the political dimensions of this concept and its potential utility in the plays

PART 3 - Hamlet

- 1) Discuss the nature of the ghost. Assess the various theories put forward concerning the ghost, where he comes from, and what he signifies to Hamlet and the other characters in the play. Which theory (if any) do you find most compelling and why?
- 2) What's Hamlet's problem? Discuss and assess the various possibilities put forward by various commentators on the nature of Hamlet's character. Which theory (if any) do you find most compelling and why?