

**Dusting off the Classics:
Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
[Richard Sacks](#) — Fall 2024**



**Enrichment Program
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**

Four Wednesday evening sessions from 6:30-8:30pm MDT: September 4, 11, 18, 25
In-person at DU (Sturm Hall 254), with class size limited to 30

PLUS: live performance of *Hamlet* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts
Saturday September 21 at 7:00pm MDT (ticket price included in tuition)

Course homepage: <https://sacks-richard.com/hamlet-at-du>
Professor Sacks' email: sacks.richard@gmail.com

COURSE OVERVIEW

For over 400 years, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has captivated and confounded actors and directors, scholars and critics, and of course audiences around the globe, confronting them all – and confronting us still today – with agonizing questions about what it means to be – or not to be – human. Are we “noble in reason [and] infinite in faculties,” as Hamlet muses aloud in his oft-quoted “what a piece of work is a man” speech, or (as he continues) are we “this quintessence of dust?” And how can we coexist with the excruciating contradictions of the world around us? Or with the suffering of those who love us for better or for worse? Or with the ghosts that insistently inhabit our minds and spirits? Or ultimately, as he wonders in the play’s most famous soliloquy, how can we live with our very selves – “to be or not to be?” Join Dr. Richard Sacks, who spent four decades at Columbia University teaching its core great books course, in a deep dive into these and other difficult questions through a four-session close reading of the unimaginably dazzling language and unbearably tragic visions of this astonishing text.

Scheduling note: on Saturday evening September 21, 2024 at 7:00pm – between the third and final Wednesday evening sessions – we will attend the fall 2024 production of *Hamlet* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

READING SCHEDULE

September 4	Act 1, Scenes 1-5
September 11	Act 2, Scenes 1-2; Act 3, Scene 1
September 18	Act 3, Scenes 2-4; Act 4, Scenes 1-7
September 21/25	Act Five, Scenes 1-2

(I strongly suggest you finish reading the text before the DCPA performance on 9/21)

COURSE EDITION

We will be using the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet* (3rd edition, 2019, Heather Hirschfeld and Philip Edwards, eds., Cambridge University Press, paperback edition, ISBN-13: 978-1316606735, currently \$11.95 from Amazon or Tattered Cover). You are welcome to use a different edition, but if you do so you should be prepared for numerous differences between your text (including its line numbers) and the one we’ll be using. For some context on this vexing problem, see the “Note on Editions” on the [course homepage](#).

COURSE RESOURCES

Materials such as weekly handouts and updates, as well as links to online resources, will be posted on the course website “materials and info” page (<https://sacks-richard.com/hamlet-at-du-materials>).