



# Macbeth

## with Dr. Junius Johnson

### Lesson for Macbeth

#### Outline:

In this read-through of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Dr. Junius Johnson focuses on the interplay of supernatural elements woven throughout the play.

- Dr. Johnson tracks the following themes which keep the plot moving towards its predetermined conclusion throughout the play:
  - The appearance of the supernatural:
    - The three sisters (witches)
    - The ghost of Banquo
    - The goddess Hecate
  - The relationship between Macbeth and his wife:
    - Feels like one lifeforce is shared between them.
    - As one weakens, the other strengthens.
- From the beginning, the cadence of the witches' speech indicates a strangeness about the sisters and the opening scene.
- A rebellion follows in the next scene and sets the stage for an overturning of the proper order of things, harkening back to the witches' prophecy, and propelling Macbeth's own self-destruction.
- Like Hamlet, Macbeth wonders whether the prophecies of his future kingship are meant to lead him to perdition. Unlike Hamlet, he does not seek independent verification.
- Instead, Macbeth turns to his wife who quickly goes about plotting to bring it about.
  - Her estimation of events is it is her duty to "man up" for her husband.
- After the deed is done, Macbeth's guilty conscience eventually leads to his hysteria, while his wife is in denial about her guilt.
  - The reversal comes about when she begins confessing her sins in a sleepwalk.
  - Eventually she is tormented to the point it is believed her death was a suicide.
- When the king's murder is discovered, it throws everything into confusion and further destruction.
  - Macbeth seizes the throne but must now remove Banquo and his line for fear of succession to the throne.
  - When he faces Macduff, his reason betrays him and he is killed.
- Ultimately, what Macbeth has lacked in his manhood is not his wife's accusation to act bravely, but his inability to feel strongly and with compassion.