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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2008 Volume I: Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare

Religious Elements in Shakespeare's Hamlet

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This *Hamlet* unit is designed to enlighten students about the influence, permanence, and potency of religion in our lives. By looking at a Shakespearean play through a religious lens, students can comprehend more deeply the context within which the play was written. Once they understand the religious allusions made within the play, they can then analyze their purpose. Afterwards, students are able to interpret and discuss religious influence, permanence, and potency in contemporary society. My aim with this unit is to illuminate religion's influence in the decisions of people during the 16th Century, and then pose the question to my students: Is this still the case today? I want my students to understand how religion, according to believers of various faiths, may serve as a guide for personal improvement and as a foundation for ethics.

(Developed for AP English Literature, grade 12; recommended for English, Language Arts, and Literature, grades 6-12)

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