Hegel knew Shakespeare (almost all of Shakespeare) by heart; this is not obvious, since he quotes from memory, without quotation marks, and without mentioning the name. In short: Hegel developed his philosophy of history and his philosophy of right with a lot of Shakespeare in mind. Thus, the combination of Hegel and Shakespeare works in both directions: it is profitable to know Shakespeare, if one wants to understand Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as it is profitable to read Hegel in order to understand Shakespeare. The rediscovery of Shakespeare in the 18th century comes along with a philosophical interest in Hegel, whose modern dimension has been most thoroughly investigated by Hegel and, in his wake, by an implicitly Hegelian New Historicism or Cultural Materialism.

The seminar shall discuss both perspectives, but shall first of all read closely the more or less explicit Shakespearian passages in Hegel’s philosophy and, consequently, read all the more closely the Shakespearian texts, motifs and cruxes, identified and problematized by Hegel and dealt with in recent philosophical criticism, notably by Stanley Cavell and Jacques Derrida.

Texts to be bought (all paperback editions)


**Aristotle, On Poetics**, trans. Seth Benardete and Michael Davis, St. Augustine’s Press (this edition, please!)

**Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit**, trans. Miller, Oxford UP

**Philosophy of Right**, trans. Knox, Oxford UP

Also recommended: Goethe, *Willhelm Meister*, Penguin

Shakespeare research

A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearian Tragedy*, Penguin

Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays by Shakespeare*, Cambridge UP

Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearian Negotiations*, California UP


Also recommended

Christoph Menke, *Tragic Play*, Columbia UP

Martin Harries, *Scare Quotes from Shakespeare*, Stanford UP


Schmitt, *Hamlet or Hecuba*, Telos Press

Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, Routledge