



INVITATION

You are cordially invited to the Inaugural Lecture of
Professor Simon Barker

‘Like a Soldier to the Stage’: Field Commander Hamlet and the ends of tragedy.

Wednesday 10 December 2008, 6pm
University of Gloucestershire, TC001
Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ
Followed by light refreshments at 7.15pm in the Chapel.

For directions, go to: www.glos.ac.uk/directions

INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES



UNIVERSITY OF
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Please include number of places requested and postal address. Please indicate if you require reserved disabled parking.

Inaugural Lectures, Room 213, Fullwood House

Simon Barker BA (Hons) (Stirling), PGCE (FE), PhD (Wales), FRSA is Professor of English Literature in the Department of Humanities based at Francis Close Hall, Cheltenham.

Before joining the University of Gloucestershire he was Head of English at the University of Winchester and earlier a tutor at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. A qualified teacher, he has also taught in the University of Wales and for the Workers' Education Association. He has been a visiting professor at universities in Italy and the United States and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1990.

He has published widely on literature and the performing arts with a special emphasis on the theatre of the late-Tudor and early-Stuart periods. Early books included, with Colin Haydon, *Winchester: History and Literature*, and an edition of a John Ford play for the Routledge English Texts series. In 2002 he edited *Wartime Refractions*, a special issue of the journal *Literature and History*. He is co-editor with Hilary Hinds of *The Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama* (2003) and Macmillan published *Shakespeare's Problem Plays* in 2005. Two recent books, both published in 2007, are his edition of Thomas Deloney's *The Gentle Craft* (a popular Elizabethan history of shoemakers) for Ashgate, and *War and Nation in the Theatre of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, for Edinburgh University Press. His many other publications include studies of twentieth-century theatre and television. He is presently writing an account of the life and work of John Galsworthy, which will incorporate an analysis of the reception of the film and television adaptations of *The Forsyte Saga*.

This inaugural lecture considers the treatment of Shakespeare's most famous protagonist in a variety of contexts and environments: school and university curricula; stage and screen (from London's Globe theatre to the work of Laurence Olivier and David Tennant); and as an object of curiosity, a 'character' quite apart from Shakespeare's play, whether in the psychiatrist's chair or in the world of comedy and advertising. The lecture addresses these various Hamlets as a measure of the significance of Shakespeare as a long-present and continuing force in both high and popular culture. The lecture concludes, however, with the view that Hamlet's most coherent identity is his most overlooked and possibly his most controversial, an identity completely omitted from the most recent Stratford production, but one that has much to say about the meaning of tragedy in general.



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