

**What Are You, Chicken?**  
**Viewing Trustworthiness and Peer Pressure in *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

I was the joke of the last English Department in which I worked – an English teacher who had never read William Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*! This did not concern me in the least; I had heard such horrible things about teachers’ and students’ experiences with the play that I made it my own personal goal never to teach sophomore English, and thus never to teach *Julius Caesar*. In fact, my mentor understood these aspirations of mine and even published her own thoughts on the subject in the aptly titled “Why I Hate *Julius Caesar*: Advice from a Veteran.” She said of her years of being forced to teach *Julius Caesar*: “...I am about ready to join the conspiracy myself (if only to end the play sooner)!” (Ballard 29). My own plot to avoid *Caesar* worked for four years, to the amusement of my entire department, but the fifth year brought the dreaded news: I would be teaching *Caesar* that spring. (Ironically, my mentor had left the school and had “gifted” me her advanced classes, which included sophomores, and thus *Caesar*). My colleagues laughed while I prepared to read the play myself for the first time.

Teaching *Julius Caesar* that spring was not an enjoyable experience for me – nor, I fear, for the students either. I did not feel comfortable enough with the text to attempt anything fancy or fun. I stuck to the book: we read aloud or listened to the CD, I led discussions based on the questions in the margins of the Teachers’ Edition, and the students answered study questions at the end of each act. We got through it, and some students liked the play, but most couldn’t connect to it. I certainly did not do justice to the play or to Shakespeare, and so for many of my students, *Caesar* was just another stupid play they were forced to read.

Once again I am facing the daunting task of teaching *Julius Caesar*, but I do not want to repeat my first experience, so this time I am taking a different approach. This unit will not focus solely on William Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, but on trustworthiness and peer pressure, topics important and relevant to high school students. These issues will be explored before, during, and after reading *Caesar*, and the play will be a vehicle through which to study and analyze characters, their motivations, and their trustworthiness. (Pre-Advanced Placement students will also study *Macbeth* in a similar manner). Students will use the text of the play, supplemented with background information on historical context, and multiple film versions to analyze characters, understand direct and indirect methods of characterization, determine an individual’s trustworthiness, and discuss the risks of succumbing to peer pressure. By focusing on such relevant topics rather than merely the comprehension of the text itself, I hope to make *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* a positive educational experience for myself as well as for my students.

## **ACADEMIC CONTEXT**

### **Academic setting**

The school in which this unit will be taught is a high school in urban Houston, TX. It serves approximately 2,100 students, many of whom speak English as a second or third language.

Because many of my students are not native English speakers, Shakespeare's language can be extremely challenging, and for many it is a battle they do not fight willingly.

This curriculum unit has been designed for two tenth grade English courses, one regular level and one pre-Advanced Placement. The unit will be taught over a span of four weeks for the regular level students and six to seven weeks for pre-AP. Courses meet three times a week, once for 40 minutes and twice for 95 minutes; therefore, each lesson plan is designed for a 40 or a 95-minute class period.

### **Unit Objectives**

Though murder, war, and intrigue may spark the interest of some, many students will likely not look forward to reading yet another difficult tragedy (or two) about a bunch of "dead white guys." The literature of William Shakespeare is a staple in most high school English classes, and *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* in particular (with assistance from a variety of film versions) are strong vehicles through which to introduce touchy, yet vital, subjects to teens: trustworthiness and peer pressure. Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* arose from "a long tradition that glorified and scorned both Caesar and Brutus;" these characters receive similar attention in the play because they have an interesting relationship and it makes readers (students included) wonder "What if my friend became my enemy? Under what conditions does politics destroy loyalty and friendship?" (Derrick ix).

Students often neglect to choose friends and role models wisely, to the despair of their parents and teachers, and studying and characterizing various types of people in these two plays will hopefully assist students in their own lives. Films can be important tools in alleviating the pressure of the language itself, so my goal is to use them efficiently in conjunction with introductory and other activities to lighten the play(s) and teach students information that they can transfer into their own lives.

The overall goal in teaching this unit is that the students will not only gain an appreciation for Shakespeare on some level but also understand his language (through analysis, comparisons of films and texts, and film viewing) and find a relevancy in his work. Students should absorb the discussions on trustworthiness and peer pressure and be able to form the basis of strong, trustworthy relationships of their own (and avoid getting stabbed in the back!)

### **FILMS TO BE USED IN THIS UNIT**

In "Our Lofty Scene: Teaching Modern Film Versions of *Julius Caesar*," Samuel Cowl states that *Julius Caesar* is a curiosity; it is widely read and studied in schools, and yet it is oddly resistant to successful realization on the modern stage (222). What this means for English teachers preparing a curriculum unit is that *Caesar*, one of the students' most dreaded plays and one of the most challenging to teach, will not be easily complemented by good films. As I mentioned previously and I will discuss again below, film is an important tool in enhancing student understanding and enjoyment of Shakespeare, but as in many other areas, when it comes to film, *Caesar* continues to be a challenge.

As part of the introductory character research (see below), the video *Rome: Power and Glory* is an excellent tool. (It is commonly used by history teachers, so teachers should make sure they won't be usurping anyone's territory when using this film). This DVD provides a great deal of interesting information on the career of Julius Caesar, information that is presented in multiple formats, but because the video is a history of ancient Rome, there are also many facts that are irrelevant to this unit. In the "Special Features" section of the DVD, a timeline provides a brief introduction to Caesar, and "The Twelve Caesars" neutrally condenses the careers of all of the Caesars and discusses the interesting fact that the word "caesar" came to be used as a title for all

of Rome's emperors and was eventually adopted by the Russians (*czar*) and the Germans (*kaiser*).

*Rome: Power and Glory*'s Program II, "Legions of Conquest," Chapters 10 and 11 can be shown in one class period and cover Julius Caesar's rise to power. With quotes from Plutarch and many battle scenes, students learn of Caesar's "fortitude" and "genius for inspiring others," as well as his defiance of the Senate in crossing the Rubicon. There is little overlap here with the text of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, so teachers who don't want to reveal the meat of the play can use this section and not be disappointed.

Chapter 16 of Program III, "Seduction of Power," is an interesting presentation of the triumphs of Caesar, Cicero's warnings against Caesar's ambition, and Caesar's murder and subsequent deification. It repeats a good deal of Chapters 10 and 11, as it presents a full biography of the life of Caesar using primary sources written by Caesar's contemporaries, and it does cover some of the plot of the first three acts of Shakespeare's play as well. This chapter of *Rome: Power and Glory* can serve as an excellent tool through which to introduce Caesar's good deeds and his bad; students can form judgments of his character and discuss how he might have ruled as dictator had he lived.

At four hours in length, TNT's *Caesar*, directed by Uli Edel, does not easily lend itself to classroom viewing, but the fact that it was made for prime time television it will likely make it interesting to students. It begins many years before the text of Shakespeare's play, with the return of the dictator Sulla, and his soldier Pompey, to Rome. The ensuing scenes present the evils of dictatorship in Rome and the strength of Caesar, as he stands up for himself and refuses to divorce his wife in exchange for his life. The film provides excellent character development of the young Caesar, with his love for his wife and daughter and his bouts with epilepsy. Caesar is presented as a statesman, stating publicly at his wife's funeral that he won't rest until the Rome they had dreamed of is the Rome of reality; he is also presented as a brutal soldier when he refuses to feed the women and children of Gaul and as an adulterer when he becomes involved with Cleopatra in Egypt. Overall, this film does contain some of the plot from Shakespeare's play (up until the murder of Caesar) and can be shown in pieces to give students an idea of what Julius Caesar the man was really like. As with *Rome: Power and Glory* it can be used as a tool to initiate discussions of how students feel about Caesar as a man and as a ruler; from here, students can be introduced to the motives of Cassius and Brutus and the class can focus on the apparent benefits of killing Julius Caesar.

The most modern of the traditional film versions of *Julius Caesar* is the 1979 version produced by the BBC, *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare: Julius Caesar*. This version is completely true to Shakespeare's text, and its close set gives the appearance of watching a stage production. Unfortunately, this quality, combined with the actors' tendencies to be bland and yet simultaneously a bit too dramatic, makes this an unappealing film option for students. It can be used as a comparison with other films (see discussion in *Act Three* below) in scene analysis, but students will likely be bored by it otherwise. The BBC series itself is a great resource, but it did get "off to a slow start with a lackluster *Julius Caesar*, whose papier-mâché Rome, bedsheet costuming, and rhetorical paralysis signaled a decision to play it safe at all costs" (Rothwell 107).

Another commonly shown companion to Shakespeare's play is Stuart Burge's 1970 *Julius Caesar*. Though in color (a welcome change to students after viewing the 1953 Mankiewicz film) with grand montage affects of crowds, processions, and battles (Rothwell 154), the film seems "intentionally ugly" as the four central performances fail to gain viewers' interest (Crowl 229). The murder scene seems elongated, with grisly close ups of the conspirators' faces; this

combined with the poor acting makes the entire scene frightening in a way that Shakespeare did not intend.

In Burge's film, Charlton Heston's Antony is "far less complex than Brando's [in the Mankiewicz film]" and his funeral oration shows none of the "ironic modulation that distinguished Brando's performance, but is delivered with a deadly grimace" (Crowl 229). The Brutus of Jason Robards "delivers all of his lines in a monotone with no understanding of the inflicted rhythm of Shakespeare's iambic pentameter line;" Robards and Heston combined "labor through their performances without ever capturing the sheer joy for the actor provided by Shakespeare's language" (Crowl 230). The entire film seems to lack meter, and Rothwell calls it "one of the great mysteries in the history of filmed Shakespeare": it presumably had everything going for it, professional direction, an excellent cast, and an intelligent script, but it "remained dead in the water" (153). However, it can also be used for comparison with other film versions (see *Act Three* below), and the battle scenes will probably appeal to students as well.

The best film to complement this unit's stress on trustworthiness, peer pressure, and characterization is Joseph Mankiewicz's 1953 MGM production of *Julius Caesar*. Students will initially be disappointed in the fact that the film is in black and white and is not filled with the grandeur that they are used to in modern films, but as the film continues they will see its value as a companion to Shakespeare's text. The film's opening focus is a natural follow up to this unit's introductory activities on trustworthiness (see below) because it captures the play of politics and personalities among the play's central characters: Caesar, Cassius, Brutus, and Antony (Crowl 224). It also helps alleviate some of the confusion surrounding the title of the play (students often ask why it is not *The Tragedy of Marcus Brutus*) by framing Caesar "at the center of the film [while he is alive], whether progressing through the crowded streets preceded by Roman legionnaires, or pressed in on the sides by cheering ruffians" (Rothwell 43) and by capturing Caesar's "powerful looming presence" and his "centrality to the play and to the lives of the very conspirators who seek to topple him" (Crowl 226). This film may seem outdated to the students, but it is by far the best complement to this, and any unit on *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*.

As for *Macbeth*, the best film version to use is Roman Polanski's 1971 version. It uses only about 40% of the original script, but it "substitutes for deleted text a glittering array of visual and aural images" (Rothwell 147) and Polanski "makes magic out of filming" (Rothwell 151). Students will greatly prefer Polanski's Playboy-sponsored movie to the 1948 version in which Orson Welles' "radio background results in disembodied dialogue that never really gets into synch with the actors' bodies" (Rothwell 73). Trevor Nunn's direction of the Royal Shakespeare Company is considered to be one of the greatest successes in televised Shakespeare (Rothwell 106), but as with many staged versions, students will find that it pales to a production made for a movie audience. The three films work well together in a comparative analysis, as they are so strikingly different, and short clips can be shown of all three. The 2001 *Scotland, PA*, directed by Billy Morrissette is an interesting modernization of the play that students will find quite enjoyable; it is a "perky, even sassy, recontextualization" of *Macbeth*, and its "rapid pace and skillful continuity earn it respect as cinema," (Rothwell 263), but the language is extremely inappropriate for high school and clips should be used sparingly and carefully.

## **SECTION I: UNIT BACKGROUND**

A unit on William Shakespeare can be a daunting task to approach, both for teachers and for students. For the students, the idea may bring to mind endless hours of difficult language read in monotone voices, followed by boring discussions of – to them – irrelevant topics such as iambic pentameter, theme and symbol. For teachers, the task is to overcome as many of these preconceptions as possible, while at the same time attaching a relevancy to the play at hand and hopefully nurturing an appreciation of the play simultaneously. Shakespeare's plays are so full of

depth that the mere reading of them, rather than the viewing and discussing of them, can mean perpetuating the groans that many teachers receive upon the introduction of a unit on Shakespeare. Therefore, an entire unit designed around viewing and discussing a relevant theme, rather than merely “Shakespeare,” should bring enjoyment and understanding to much of the class; irrelevancy and boredom should be relegated to the past.

### **Trustworthiness**

This curriculum unit, centering on Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (with the addition of *Macbeth* for Pre-Advanced Placement students), will begin without mention of the oft-dreaded “Shakespeare,” and will start with general, teacher-led discussions. The introduction to the unit will begin with a presentation of the Roman virtues, personal and public. Following this lesson, I will steer students into a discussion of a topic important to adolescents, trustworthiness. Questions covered will focus on humans in general and adolescents in particular and will include the following: How do people decide whom to trust? How do people decide when to trust? What physical and verbal cues signal a person’s trustworthiness? When do people stop trusting an individual, and why? As a conclusion to discussion, students will then form small groups and role play various emotions, motivations, and character traits, followed by analysis of which characters the class feels are trustworthy and why and the creation of a “Whom do we trust?” bulletin board (see Lesson Plan One: An Introduction to Roman Virtues and to Trustworthiness below).

### **Peer Pressure**

Once students have gained a greater understanding of reading physical and verbal cues and determining whom to trust, the focus of the unit will shift from trustworthiness to peer pressure. An introductory activity will require student participation and will measure their susceptibility to the pressure of their classmates and hopefully allow them to see a connection between trust and peer pressure, thereby allowing them to recognize poor choices and make wiser choices themselves.

When the first student enters the class, I will ask him or her to sit on the floor, without giving an explanation. If the student asks why or hesitates at all, I will then ask the second student who enters the room to sit on the floor instead. The student who does sit on the floor is asked to prompt his or her classmates to do the same, again, without giving a reason. (Perhaps he or she can encourage using such popular phrases as, “Come on, it’ll be fun,” “Why not?” or “What, are you chicken?”) I will look disapproving of or confused by the behavior of all students, sitting or otherwise, but will say nothing to any of them. After the bell rings and all students have made their decisions, I will ask them to sit in their seats for a group discussion focusing on their behavior.

Discussing in small groups, students will contemplate the following: Why did we sit (or not sit) on the floor? Did it have to do with who was already sitting or how many people were already sitting? Why do we submit to peer pressure in general? Do we submit to just anyone? Is trust involved? How far are we willing to go for the approval of the group? Is there a limit? What can the consequences of submitting to peer pressure be, especially when the task involved is a legal or moral issue? Upon completion of this group work, students will then return to a whole class discussion where they will report their groups’ answers to the questions. Thus, the class will have begun to analyze peer pressure and the elements involved in submitting to or avoiding peer pressure; similar conversations will be had during the study of *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. I will conclude the day by relating our comments back to the Roman Virtues posted on our wall and by reminding students how we are, in the end, responsible for ourselves and for our decisions.

## **SECTION II: THE TRAGEDY OF JULIUS CAESAR BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

As the students and I progress in the study of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* itself, the students will be asked to transfer the knowledge they have gained about trustworthiness and succumbing to peer pressure and apply it to the actions of multiple historical figures. Students will be introduced to the historical context of the play and to the characters themselves, and they will discuss each character before beginning to read the play. I will only briefly discuss Shakespeare himself, since his life is covered in great detail with the study of *Romeo and Juliet* in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Introductory Character Research**

Students will study a timeline of the political and personal life of Julius Caesar and may also research his war against Pompey and the resulting struggles of Rome leading up to the time of the play, depending on what they have learned already in their world history class. Some of the main characters of the play, including Cicero, Brutus, Antony and Cassius, will be researched to determine their relationships with Julius Caesar. Two websites will be helpful, if computers are available to students. The first, *The Roman Republic*, is incredibly detailed and contains many maps, timelines, and summaries. I would provide students with guiding questions about Caesar's personal life, specific battles, and his death so that they don't get bogged down in the large amount of information. (Unfortunately, there are also many grammatical problems on this website, and students should be made aware of this as well). Suzanne Cross's *Julius Caesar: The Last Dictator* is much more scholarly and specific, and it contains links to biographies of Caesar, Brutus, Antony and Cicero.

*Rome: Power and Glory* and TNT's *Caesar* will also be helpful tools at this point to enhance student research (See description of content above). Both films can provide additional historical context and serve an introduction to direct and indirect methods of characterization that are used by filmmakers and can lead to a class discussion of the benefits of film as a supplement to text.

After viewing the films and completing research, the class as a whole can decide if the conclusions formed by watching the videos match those drawn by the research and then discuss what they expect to see in the play itself. Students will create assumptions based on the pre-play knowledge, deciding which characters (if any) seem trustworthy to them and explaining by what basis they formed these conclusions. A character attribute web can be created for each of these characters as well. As a transition to the play itself, students will remove their initial index cards and place Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Antony, and Caesar on the "Whom do we trust?" bulletin board under the appropriate heading, though a third section titled "?" may be necessary if students feel they have insufficient information.

### **The Play: *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar***

#### ***Act One***

As we begin the study of the text of the play, students will follow the characters they have researched carefully, again noting direct and indirect characterization (including dialogue and stage directions, where present). For example, after listening to the text, students will gather textual clues relating to trustworthiness throughout Act I, scenes ii and iii, where the seeds of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar are planted by the dialogue of Cassius, Brutus, and Casca. Additionally, in the text amid the potential conspirators' conversations, Antony refers to Cassius as a "noble Roman, and well given," and Caesar replies that he "fear[s] him not" (I.ii.197-198); of course, Caesar will admit to no fears, but if he *were* to fear, he says, Cassius is the man he would fear the soonest: "Seldom he smiles;" "He is a great observer, and he looks / Quite through the deeds of men" (I.ii.205, 202-3). Visually, at least to Caesar himself, Cassius does not appear trustworthy (and the implications are that Brutus and others in Caesar's train do appear

trustworthy). Students may not gather this from a text that is difficult for them to master, so additional practice with the text will be necessary (See Lesson Plan Two, day One below).

At this point in the unit, students will be introduced to MGM's 1953 version of the film *Julius Caesar*, which will aid students in their visualization of these characters, their stances, their body language, and their facial expressions (See Lesson Plan Two, day Two). Students will analyze actions, expressions and physical stance as complements to dialogue and discuss any new implications of character brought about by the film. With the addition of viewing to reading, students should be able to form some opinions about these characters and their motivations at the close of Act I, scene iii.

After the viewing of Act I, if time permits, students can create attribute webs that will represent how Caesar feels about these men (as opposed to how we feel; is it different?), and the "Whom do we trust?" bulletin board can be adjusted if necessary. These combined activities will hopefully allow students to feel a personal connection to the play, as they see their predictions enacted or disproved.

### ***Act Two***

The reading of Act II, scene i, will begin with the students predicting how Brutus will decide to go along with the conspiracy to kill Julius Caesar. From their introductory research, they know that he was present at the murder, but I would like to focus their attention to the decision itself – is Brutus pressured by his peers to go along with the conspiracy, or does he come upon the decision on his own? As study of Act I concluded, students had formed opinions on the trustworthiness of Casca, Cassius, Brutus, and Antony, and Act II will reveal greater insight into the characters and force students to defend their judgments or change their minds.

As we begin to listen to Act II, scene i, students will be asked to track the state of Brutus's mind (See Lesson Plan Three below). Students generally find Brutus to be relatively trustworthy in Act I; he is not as sneaky as Cassius or Casca, and he does not seem to hold personal grudges against other Romans. In Act II, his character will truly begin to be defined for them. After listening to Brutus's soliloquy (II.i.10-34), students will create a chart in which they will list Brutus's reasons for and against the murder of Caesar. At this point, I will ask them to express their feelings about Brutus himself – do they find him trustworthy?

As we continue listening to the play, I will stop the CD and ask students to ponder and discuss Brutus's decision in II.i, the omens of Calpurnia's dream and the strange happenings in Rome, and the letter by Artemidorus. By the end of Act II, students will have a greater understanding of Brutus and his motivations, and should be able to decide who, if anyone, should be trusted, and who has the best interests of Rome in mind (See also Lesson Plan Three below). Finally, we will adjust the "Whom do we trust?" bulletin board, adding more characters from the play and switching "the sides" of characters who had already been posted, if the students deem it necessary.

### ***Act Three***

Act III of *Julius Caesar* presents an excellent opportunity for students to experience fully the words and actions of the play. This act is so rich that I will teach it in two sections. The first will focus on the murder of Caesar, the roles of the minor characters, and the various film productions of the scene. The second section will include analysis of the oration of Brutus and of Antony in Act III, scene ii. The murder of Caesar, specifically, can serve as a point of comparison and a chance for students both to become a part of the text (by performing it) and to analyze critically multiple film productions of *Julius Caesar*. Additionally, a study of the eulogies given by Brutus and Antony will allow the students to compare the two speeches and discuss their effectiveness as well as what they reveal about the trustworthiness of the speakers.

The study of Act III, scene i, should be very thorough and can take two to three days. The first day will begin with students choosing (or being assigned) parts to read aloud. They have listened to the first two acts and should be more comfortable now with Shakespeare's language. They will read III.i.1-73 before I stop them to discuss the dialogue. Caesar seems so arrogant here, and students will be amazed that he continues to ignore warnings of doom from Artemidorus and from the Soothsayer and that he does not see the true motivation of Decius, Brutus, Cinna, Metellus, and the other conspirators. This is a great place to introduce the idea of Caesar's tragic flaw, hubris (though many argue that ambition is also a tragic flaw of his).

Students will continue reading to the end of the scene (III.i.74-297) with brief stops so that I can ensure comprehension. We will not spend much time on discussing this section of the scene other than to mention the brevity of the murder itself because students will be acting, viewing, and actively discussing the staging of Caesar's murder.

At this point in the day's lesson, students will participate in an activity that will help them understand the motivation of some of the minor characters as well as to visualize (perhaps) why Caesar continued to trust the conspirators until the end. Janet Field-Pickering's *The Secret Life of Minor Characters* asks students to re-enact "the meaty part – the actual assassination." They will stage the murder itself; students not acting will help place the actors and direct the scene, then all will discuss how the characters could best be placed to emphasize their role(s) in the murder.

Following Field-Pickering's plan, students will then form small groups in which each student takes the role of a conspirator and clarifies his motivation; each student will also devise a short, specific line for his conspirator to yell as he stabs Caesar. Finally, groups will stage the murder, using their new lines, then take away the words and act it again. Students will discuss how the scene went and whether it seemed more realistic than the first time (*The Secret Life of Minor Characters*). As a conclusion to the day's activity, we will divert from Field-Pickering's plan to analyze the ramifications of this activity. Do students believe that Caesar should have anticipated his murder? Would he have been able to read the conspirator's faces, especially considering the concerns Brutus voiced about their expressions in I.ii? Does Caesar continue to trust these men to the end, and if so, what does that say about his character? Students will hopefully gain greater insight into some of the characters upon which they will be able to draw throughout their study of *Julius Caesar* and beyond.

The final analysis of Act III, scene i, is adapted from Leslie Ballard's assignment on comparative analysis of *Macbeth* films (29-30). Students will watch three movie interpretations of Caesar's murder and its resulting speeches, Joseph Mankiewicz's 1953 version, of which they have seen clips before, Stuart Burge's 1970 interpretation, and the 1979 BBC production. While viewing, students will take notes (on a chart I will create and provide) on how the director created the scene: actors' facial expressions, gestures and movements, sets, music, camera angles, lighting, costumes and color (Ballard 29). Finally, they will complete their first major writing assignment of the unit by responding to a version of Ballard's prompt. They will compose their opinions of how the three versions of the films differ and then discuss their preference (Ballard 30), using the full writing process, including prewriting, revising and editing, thus addressing multiple writing TEKS (*Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading*) and making students more comfortable in their interpretation of the characters and the text itself.

Following their completion of the writing assignment, students will discuss their opinions of the various film versions. They will likely have preferred Mankiewicz's version, even in black and white, for the sheer fact that Marlon Brando's Antony is "a stunning example of cunning and calculation and is film acting at its best" (Crowl 227). I will take a poll of the preferred version(s), creating a three-columned chart on the board to list the reasons for their choice(s). If

there is a clear preference across the entire class, then that version will be the one used in any subsequent film clips throughout the study of the play.

As students prepare to read Act III, scenes ii and iii, I will assign parts for them to read aloud, prompting my best readers to read Brutus and Antony. I will also take this opportunity to remind them of the proper inflection and connotation of the word “ho” to avoid improper reactions to lines such as, “Stay, ho!” and, “Peace, ho!” At the conclusion of scene ii, students will return to the speeches of Brutus (III.ii.13-48) and Antony (III.ii.75-109, 120-139, 172-201, and 213-234). (*Speak the Speech! Shakespeare’s Monologues Illuminated* has very thorough analysis of each of these speeches and can help in teacher preparations for this activity). The students will summarize the speeches in small groups, determining their effectiveness and examining the reactions of the citizens. Finally, they will decide with whom their allegiances would lie if they were in the crowd, with Brutus or with Antony, and why. When drawing this conclusion, students should consider the peer pressure the citizens are experiencing while listening to these persuasive speeches; they seem to be swept away easily in the moment and to trust whoever happens to be speaking.

Finally, we reach III.iii, always a favorite. As a class, students will brainstorm why they believe Cinna the poet was murdered. This, of course, is an excellent opportunity to mention not only peer pressure, but the idea of mob mentality. Students may feel that Antony is indirectly responsible for this murder, since he is the one who incited the people to such a level. Does this cause any students who sided with Antony in III.ii to change their minds? Why?

As a conclusion to Act III and a link to Acts I and II, students will return their attention to the “Whom do we trust?” bulletin board. As characters die in the play, they will need to be removed from the bulletin board, but students may also want to adjust their allegiances after studying the speeches of the conspirators and of Antony in Act III. Characters names will be moved if the students deem it necessary, but each student who makes such a suggestion must defend his or her decision with direct evidence from the text. They will also refer to the Roman Virtues posters (See Lesson Plan One) and discuss which virtues are best represented in their “hero” (Brutus or Antony). If they feel that few are represented, is that enough to change their minds, or are they willing to go along with the crowd and let persuasive speech and peer pressure triumph over reason?

#### ***Act Four***

At this point in the study of the play, students often feel a bit discouraged; they are often under the impression that the play will end with the murder of Julius Caesar (didn’t *Romeo and Juliet* work that way?) and some are disappointed to find that they still have two acts to read. The initial excitement over the murder is gone, and the promise of a battle and a ghost is often not enough to stop their groans. For this reason, Act Four is the most difficult act to teach.

Before assigning parts for the students to read (offering bonus points if necessary), I will begin the day with a discussion entitled “Who are the good guys?” Students often side with Brutus, at least until Antony’s funeral speeches in III.ii, but Brutus is a murderer and is attempting to keep the triumvirate – among who is Octavius Caesar, who was willed leadership of Rome by Julius Caesar – out of power. Do they still side with him? Or are they against him? With whom do they feel Shakespeare wants us to side? What would they like to see happen in the remainder of the play; who would they like to win?

Act IV, scene i, is a difficult one for those students who have chosen to side with Antony. Antony and the other triumvirs discuss not only changing Caesar’s will but murdering their enemies. With this new information, we will revisit the Roman Virtue posters and determine how

much the students' opinion of Antony has changed. Students may have to realign their allegiances, and the "Whom do we trust" bulletin board may need to be adjusted yet again.

In Act IV, scenes ii and iii, we will discuss the relationship between Brutus and Cassius. Students who have supported Brutus will likely continue to do so, especially with his chastisement of Cassius in IV.iii.18-28 and with the news of Portia's death. We will examine the conversations between Brutus and Cassius to determine if Brutus remains trustworthy; does he still seem to be motivated primarily by what is good for Rome? Does Cassius trust him to do the right thing? Do we, as readers?

Finally we come to the entrance of Caesar's ghost in IV.iii.274-285. The ghost refers to itself as Brutus's evil spirit and is described as a "monstrous apparition" (lines 281, 276). Students will recognize this as Brutus's conscience, but they may be confused that Brutus is beginning to doubt his actions again. Perhaps he no longer believes that all that he has done has been and will be good for Rome; perhaps he believes that he succumbed to peer pressure by the other conspirators rather than fully thought out the murder and its ramifications.

The brief scene with Brutus and the ghost is another good opportunity to bring in a film to enhance student ability to judge character. (If the students had a film preference after the activity in III.i, that will be the film version I will show here). While viewing any of the film versions mentioned above, students have a chance to see the expressions on Brutus' face as he sees and listens to the ghost. They will perhaps be able to judge more easily what is going on in Brutus' mind and to determine just how frightened Brutus is by the apparition. As Brutus begins to doubt himself, the question I will ask as we conclude the study of this scene is whether the students are beginning to doubt Brutus as well. Do they still trust him after what they have seen and heard? Do they prefer him to Antony? Do we need to adjust and defend our bulletin board again? (At this point, Octavius should be added to the bulletin board, if he has not been already).

### ***Act Five***

As we prepare to study the final act of the play, I will take this time to have students create a chart on which to list all of the characters who have died in the play. The chart will have three columns, the name of the character, who killed the character, and the reasons for the character's death. This is a good opportunity to review not only some of the events of the play but the motivations behind the murders; this chart will be completed during Act V and the students can use it to compare the characters and what their deaths say about them and about those who murdered them. I will also lead a full class discussion and allow students to predict what will happen in Act V; finally, they will list the conflicts that are left to be resolved.

As students read V.i aloud, it will provide a springboard to yet one more discussion of trustworthiness and peer pressure in the play. Here we have the four remaining major characters, Brutus, Cassius, Antony, and Octavius, and they are acting like nothing more than boys before a pickup game of basketball. Are these characters presented as trustworthy? Or do they merely fall into these roles and act the way their peers expect them to act? What does this scene tell us about each of these leaders?

In scenes ii-v, the action moves more quickly than in other parts of the play. Students will, in small groups, discuss the implications of Cassius's suicide (IV.iii.33-46) and the reactions of Pindarus, Titinius, Messala, and Brutus. This will be our final chance to scrutinize the character of Cassius; though indirect characterization, what does Shakespeare want us to believe about Cassius? Titinius is willing to give his life over Cassius and Brutus says, "It is impossible that ever Rome / Should breed thy fellow" (100-101); are these consistent with the character that Shakespeare has created? What is our final thought of the character of Cassius before we go back to the battlefield? Is Cassius a "good guy"? A "bad guy"? Why?

As the forces of Brutus and Cassius are being defeated, the readers of the play have another opportunity to switch allegiances when Antony speaks to Lucilius at the end of V.iv. Antony here does not kill Lucilius, and I will ask students why they believe this is so. Does this make them trust Antony as a military leader, or do they still feel wronged by Antony's killing senators and other enemies?

As we enter the final scene of the play, Act V, scene v, I will ask students who they are hoping will win the battle, even though their introductory studies tell them that Antony and Octavius win. With whom do their allegiances lie? Are they the same allegiances as at the end of Act III? When Brutus apparently begs his servants to help him commit suicide, does that make him a weaker character? Do we pity him or do we judge him? Finally, based on the speeches given by Antony (V.v.68-75) and Octavius (V.v.76-79), what are our last impressions of Brutus? Is Brutus a "good guy"? Is Antony a "good guy"? Is anyone a "good guy"? If, so, why – because of loyalty to Rome?

At the end of this discussion, students will return to their "murder" charts and complete them, which will lead to a conversation about the motivations of the dead and what brought those who killed themselves to do so. Also, we will return to the "Whom do we trust?" bulletin board, removing all characters that have died and making final adjustments (and appropriate defenses) for the surviving characters. Who is left, and where are they placed? Do we trust anyone? What do our conclusions say about the future of Rome?

There is one character who plays an important role in Act V but has not been mentioned, and that is Julius Caesar himself. Both Cassius and Brutus die with Caesar's name upon their lips; what do these last words say about Caesar and his power? What do they say about how Cassius and Brutus felt regarding the murder of Caesar (and about how Shakespeare wants the readers to feel)? As the play ends, who is the most important character and why?

### ***Concluding the Study of the Play***

The same students who asked in Act III why there was more play if Caesar was already dead will be interested in Alisia Muir's lesson entitled "The Tragedy of ?". This activity will allow students to assert their beliefs in the individual characters to whom they have become attached and, as Muir states, will "guide students to scrutinize each of the play's characters and eventually lead them to discover what makes a character tragic." In Muir's activity, students define tragedy and tragic hero, and then brainstorm all of the characters in the play who could be characterized as a tragic hero (even those, like Titinius, who do not appear throughout the entire play). Students choose a character and individually justify their choice by revisiting the text to find examples that support their ideas. Muir then has the students write their reasons on pieces of large pieces of poster paper that have been displayed around the room and that are labeled with each character's name. Finally, I will follow Muir's plan and lead a class discussion that uses these pieces of large paper and the students' understanding of the play; is the play correctly titled, or would it be more appropriate to be *The Tragedy of Marcus Brutus* or *The Tragedy of Caius Cassius*? Why?

An alternative assignment to finish the study of the play focuses on the characters of Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, and Antony. I will distribute a list of values that they must rank for their choice of two characters; the values will include the Roman Virtues discussed earlier as well as acceptance, altruism, independence, friendship, honesty, justice, loyalty, morality, power, recognition, and wealth and are adapted from Larry R. Johannessen's Value Profile (213-214). Students must decide what each character values most and values least, thus making complex inferences and explaining their conclusions with direct evidence from the play (Johannessen 214).

We will debate the students' conclusions as a class, and we will use them to evaluate the given characters. Students will then take the information gleaned from Muir's and Johannessen's exercises and apply it to the motifs of trustworthiness and peer pressure that we have been discussing throughout the play. Based on the values given the most (and least) importance, should these characters be trusted? Is it wise to trust and be pressured by someone whose most important value is power? Where did these characters go wrong in forming their relationships?

Finally, students will list and analyze the major decisions made by Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, and Antony in the play. Students will determine whether, based on the knowledge provided by a study of history and by Shakespeare, those choices were wisely made. If it is difficult for the class to come to a consensus, a classroom trial may be organized for teams to defend the decisions made by their character. They must always refer back to the text and they may also refer to similar situations outside of the play. The goal of this analysis, as for the entire unit, is for students to gain an appreciation for Shakespeare, to be able to examine choices made in the play and the motivations involved, and to apply this information to their own lives, thus seeing relevancy in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (a play written more than 400 years ago about events that occurred more than 2000 years ago).

### **SECTION III: *MACBETH* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

For Pre-Advanced Placement students, a study of *Macbeth* will complement that of *Julius Caesar*, assuming that *Macbeth* is not a part of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. There are many similarities between the characters in the two plays, especially when it comes to the decisions that are made and the elements of trust in those decisions. (If *Julius Caesar* is not to be taught, and *Macbeth* is to stand alone, then many of the introductory activities on trustworthiness and peer pressure can be applied solely to *Macbeth*). In the study of *Macbeth*, particular attention will be paid to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the trust in their relationship, and the pressure that drives them to commit multiple crimes. Students will, in a similar manner to their study of *Julius Caesar*, examine the motivations of the characters and the elements involved in their decision making, from peer pressure to trustworthiness. Another "Whom do we trust?" bulletin board can be created, and the characters of Duncan, Macbeth, Banquo, Lady Macbeth, the witches, Macduff, and Malcolm can be placed under the "Trustworthy" and "Not trustworthy" headings, and moved and defended throughout the play. Finally, as with *Caesar*, film clips will complement the text and enhance student understanding of characters through direct and indirect characterization.

#### **Act One**

In Act I, I will focus classroom discussions on the following scenes: Banquo and Macbeth discussing the predictions of the three witches and whether or not these predictions should be believed (I.iii), King Duncan's criticism of the previous Thane of Cawdor, a traitor (I.iv), Lady Macbeth's greedy and chilling reading of the letter in which her husband informs her of his potential to be king (I.v), and Lady Macbeth attempting to convince her husband to kill King Duncan and hasten his own rise to the throne (I.vii). These scenes will establish the characters of Macbeth, Banquo, and Lady Macbeth, and the students will determine which of the characters should be deemed trustworthy. The class will be divided into small groups to decide whether they believe Macbeth will be susceptible to the witches' hints and his wife's pressures, or if he will side with Banquo and be wary of the witches' suggestions. As with the study of *Julius Caesar*, there is some idea in *Macbeth* of what is to come – the play is a tragedy, and Duncan's murder of the traitor Thane of Cawdor foreshadows Macbeth's future – but students may not determine this with text alone, so I will conclude the reading of Act I with film clips from Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* and a discussion of what the film adds to our decisions. Finally, we will add

Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, Duncan, and the witches to the “Whom do we trust?” bulletin board under the proper headings, with the students defending their choices aloud.

### **Act Two**

Act II, scenes i and ii give students a great insight into the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Class discussion will center on Macbeth’s state of mind before he has killed King Duncan, including his “dagger” speech and what it tells us about his thoughts about committing the murder (is he for it or against it), and his state of mind after the murder and what it likely means about the decisions he will make in the future. If Macbeth seems to immediately regret – and be haunted by – what he has done, is he likely to continue acting rashly and to murder more people? Or will he give more thought to the decisions he makes? Lady Macbeth is much stronger here than her husband – what does that tell us about her and the role she may play in her husband’s ambitions in the future? Would you trust either Macbeth or Lady Macbeth to make rational decisions throughout the rest of the play? Can students relate Macbeth’s situation here to that of people they know, people who are involved in gang situations? How can we learn from Macbeth’s decision and subsequent regret?

At this point in the play, I may have students complete another comparative film analysis, as they did in Act III of *Julius Caesar* (see above). Following Ballard’s plan, I would show three movie clips of the action from I.vii. through II.ii and have the students analyze the benefits of each version and its contributions to the text. The three film versions include Roman Polanski’s, one directed by Orson Welles (1948), and the stage version filmed for Thames TV and acted by the Royal Shakespeare Company (Ballard 29-30).

Scene iii will allow us to continue our analysis of the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and how well they are handling the murder and subsequent conversations. The class can also focus a discussion on the reactions of Banquo and Macduff to the murder; Malcolm and Donalbain will have to be examined as well to determine their motivations and to predict their future role(s) in the play. Scene iv will give students additional insight into Macduff’s character, and he and Donalbain can be added to the “Whom do we trust?” bulletin board under the appropriate heading(s).

### **Act Three**

Act III, scene i provides students with a final chance to determine the character of Banquo and whether or not they feel he would be trustworthy (apparently Macbeth does not think so!). In scenes ii-iv, Shakespeare continues to build upon the character of Macbeth, and students can draw conclusions as to Macbeth’s motivations for killing Banquo and attempting to kill Fleance. What brings him to commit these murders? Is he motivated by external forces like the witches or his wife? Does he submit to pressure to outside forces? What does the appearance of the ghost of Banquo signify about Macbeth’s regrets? Do the students feel that Macbeth regrets this decision? Finally, scene vi may cause the students to doubt Malcolm and Donalbain, as the lords do, and so character names may need to be shifted on the “Whom do we trust?” bulletin board again.

### **Act Four**

Class discussion of Act IV, scene i will center on Macbeth’s continuing ambition. What has brought him to this point? Is he to be trusted at all? Is he acting rationally? (Scene ii will assist in helping students answer those questions). Scene iii shifts focus to Malcolm and Macduff, and therefore classroom discussion will focus on these two men. They test each other a great deal in this scene – why? What does this tell us about each man? What kind of character does each seem to have, and does either one seem like he would be susceptible to peer pressure or outside pressure of any kind? Do the students trust either one, and does our bulletin board need to be adjusted yet again?

## Act Five

As with *Julius Caesar*, the class will enter their study of Act V with a conversation of conflicts that need to be resolved. As we read, class discussion in Act V will initially focus on comprehension; do the students see the links with the events here in this act with the witches' warnings and with Macbeth's doubts? Can they make predictions as the act progresses as to how the play will end?

We will also examine Lady Macbeth's "out, damned spot" speech (V.i) to determine her regrets of her actions. Students will be asked to determine if they pity her at all or if they feel that she deserves everything that seems to be happening to her. The class will analyze Macbeth's reaction to his wife's death (V.v) and discuss whether they pity him at all, and finally discussion will turn to the events immediately preceding Macbeth's death. Students will be asked to finish reading the play and answer questions in small groups. The questions will cover Macbeth's continued feeling of immortality and his reaction to Macduff's stunning news of his birth by Caesarian section, Macbeth's last lines and those uttered by Brutus concerning his own suicide in *Julius Caesar*, Malcolm's lines at the end of *Macbeth* as compared to those of Octavius at the end of *Julius Caesar*, and what students have learned from the experiences of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in this play. Finally, students will again turn to the bulletin board "Whom do we trust?" Are there any characters still on the board, and do we still trust any of them? Why? What did this play teach us about submitting to peer pressure? About remaining steadfast in our own beliefs? Can we apply any of the messages Shakespeare teaches in *Macbeth* to our own lives, and why?

This study of *Macbeth*, as an accompaniment to *Caesar*, should continue to enhance students' understanding of the language and characters of Shakespeare. They should see that his plays are often relevant and that they encourage students to form questions about themselves, the people they trust, and the decisions they make. Perhaps they will also take away additional warnings against submitting not only to peer pressure, but against submitting to ambition or to hubris; all of these warnings are important to consider when making decisions in life, for Macbeth, for Julius Caesar, or for high school students.

## LESSON PLANS

### Lesson Plan One: An Introduction to Roman Virtues and to Trustworthiness

This lesson will begin with a presentation of some of the Roman virtues, both personal and public. The heart of the Via Romana, the Roman Way, these virtues "are thought to be those qualities which gave the Roman Republic the moral strength to conquer and civilize the world" ("The Roman Virtues"), and I will introduce them to students as virtues that would have been required among many of the characters in *Julius Caesar*. Students will not be required to memorize the virtues in their entirety, but they will study those virtues which are most relevant to a study of *Julius Caesar* and its characters, including, but not limited to, the following: the personal virtues *auctoritas* (spiritual authority), *firmitas*, (tenacity), *honestas* (respectability), *pietas* (dutifulness), and *veritas* (truthfulness) and the public virtues *fides* (confidence), *iustitia* (justice), *liberalitas* (liberality) *nobilitas* (nobility) and *securitas* (confidence and security) ("The Roman Virtues"). Students will create posters for each virtue that will feature the word, its definition, an illustration, and perhaps an example of a famous person they feel represents that virtue. These posters will be displayed prominently in the classroom so that students can refer to them during the study of the play.

From here, I will ask the students what qualities we, as Americans, value today in our leaders (including not only our president but also our parents, teachers, principals, and additional local "leaders"). They will brainstorm as a class, and I will note their responses in cluster form on the

blackboard. We will discuss any similarities to the Roman virtues and note these on the board as well. The goal of this exercise is to steer the students into a conversation about a topic that is very relevant in their lives, trustworthiness, which is similar to, but not the same as, the Roman virtue *securitas*. Trustworthiness will be a major focus of this unit and will in turn lead to a candid analysis of peer pressure and how adolescents decide whom to trust.

I will lead the class in a whole class discussion of questions regarding trustworthiness, applying questions to people in general as well as to the microcosms of their own lives. (If the class is large or not likely to share opinions easily, I will provide them with the questions to peruse in small groups before I begin the discussion). As I ask them questions, I will chart their responses on the blackboard under the headings “in general” and “in our lives.” Questions will include, but will not be limited to, the following: How do people decide whom to trust? (How do you?) How do people decide when to trust that person? What physical and verbal cues are given to a person’s trustworthiness? When do people stop trusting an individual, and why?

As a conclusion to discussion, students will then form groups of four to six students, and each group will be assigned a role-play assignment. For this assignment, two students within the group will be asked to participate in a lunchtime cafeteria scene. Each will be given a slip of paper on which is written an emotion, a motivation, or a character trait, and they will perform a short skit in which their goal is to portray clearly what is written on their slip of paper. (This is similar to some skits that they may have seen on the television show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*). They do not have to perform immediately, but may take some time to prepare themselves; if students are not comfortable acting, they can ask the rest of the group for assistance, as well. This role-play assignment can be repeated within each group, giving all students a chance to act out a different emotion, motivation, or character trait. Once each set of students has finished the skit, the rest of the group should guess at what was written on the paper and explain their choices.

After everyone has had a chance to act, the class will come together as a whole, and I will ask them how they felt about reading the actors’ faces, which characters they would have trusted, and what types of behaviors, actions, or facial expressions affected this decision. The goal of this activity is to encourage students to study all aspects of a character before making the decision to trust anyone; I will also tell them that we are going to use a similar activity in our study of *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* when we watch various film versions, and that they will continue to hone their skills in determining the trustworthiness of a character in this manner.

As an aid to visual learners, at this point in the lesson a bulletin board will be created. With the title “Whom do we trust?” the board will be divided vertically in half, with one half subtitled, “Trustworthy” and the other titled “Not Trustworthy.” Students will be given colored index cards on which to write character traits (caring, lies a lot), types of people (bully, best friend, politician), emotions (angry, happy), physical clues (shifty, relaxed), or anything else they deem appropriate. These index cards will be affixed to the bulletin board under the proper heading, and students will be required to defend their choices of what is on the index card as well as its placement. This bulletin board will continue to be used throughout the unit, though the index cards will change.

## **Lesson Plan Two: *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, Act I**

### ***Day One (90 minutes)***

As we begin the study of *Julius Caesar*, students will likely have difficulty with the language and, therefore, with the characters’ motivations and trustworthiness. I will play *Audio Resource*, the audio CD provided with the McDougal Littell *Language of Literature* textbook, as the students follow along; “Hearing the inflections and proper delivery of the lines aids [the students’] understanding tremendously” (Ballard 29). I will monitor students’ faces closely as they are

listening and stop the CD for discussion as often as necessary to ensure that they are following and understanding the plot.

After listening to all of Act I, scenes i-iii, I will lead a whole-class discussion on the trustworthiness of Cassius, Brutus, Casca, and Antony as highlighted in I.ii-iii. (If the class is too large or tends to be too unruly to focus on this type of activity, I will prepare a handout with the questions and have students discuss their responses in groups of 2-4 before rejoining the whole class for discussion). I will ask the students for their initial impressions of Casca, Antony, Cassius, and Brutus, and I will have them refer to the text to support their answers. Students will also be asked to find evidence of how Julius Caesar seems to feel about these men.

Once we have completed the initial “how do we feel” discussion, students will find more concrete evidence of each character’s trustworthiness. I will divide students into groups of 2-4 so that at least one group will be responsible for becoming “experts” on the characters mentioned above. (Depending on the number of students in a class, the number of groups might vary. If necessary, I will assign more than one group per character, doubling up first on Cassius, then Brutus, Casca, and Antony). Each group will be given a poster-sized piece of paper, at the top of which they will write their character’s name followed by “Act I, scenes ii and iii.” The paper will then be divided in half vertically, with the subheading “Direct Characterization” at the top of the left column and the subheading “Indirect Characterization” at the top of the right. (A review of the methods of direct and indirect characterization might be necessary at this point, but generally the evidence under “Direct Characterization” will be dialogue spoken by the character and “Indirect Characterization” will contain either stage directions or dialogue spoken about the character).

Groups will be instructed that the goal of this exercise is to determine whether or not Shakespeare wants us to trust these characters. The students should find as much evidence as they can, writing it legibly in a thick, dark marker (only one color, for now) in the proper column on their poster paper. (I may need to guide them to specific lines in I.ii and iii: for example, I.ii, lines 1, 14, 234-250, 291-292, and 295-302 for Casca or I.ii, lines 5, 9-10, and 192-197 for Antony). When they feel they have enough evidence to support their judgments, the bottom of the butcher paper will be labeled “trustworthy” or “not trustworthy.” Finally, the groups will present their conclusions to the rest of the class after I assess them for accuracy (I may need to coach some groups or prompt them in a certain direction), and we will discuss any discrepancies from our initial discussion.

The goals of this lesson are to ensure that students have an understanding of some of the main characters in the play, to familiarize students with the text, to give students practice in comprehending the text and using it to support their arguments, and to bring students together so that all will begin the study of Act II literally and figuratively on the same page.

### ***Day Two (40 minutes)***

In order to emphasize the conclusions the students drew in the previous day’s lesson, and to add some visual credence to their arguments, I will show them Act I of MGM’s 1953 *Julius Caesar*. This film clip is approximately 27 minutes long, so time is of the essence today. I will quickly focus students and ask them to watch for only one thing during their viewing: Does the film support the conclusions that they drew using the text only, and if so, how?

After viewing, students will return to their groups and add (in a different color marker) to the “Indirect Characterization” column of their butcher paper. If time allows, I will lead a full class discussion in response to the film. What did the students gain from seeing a performance of the play? Did it affect their feelings towards the characters at all? If so, how? Did the director

appear to change Shakespeare's intent? Finally, we will discuss what students expect from these same characters (Casca, Antony, Cassius, and Brutus) as we progress to Act III.

### **Lesson Plan Three: *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, Act II: Analysis of Brutus**

As we begin to study Act II, scene i, students will be asked to track the state of Brutus's mind, determining what he is thinking as well as how he comes to his conclusions. Students generally find Brutus to be relatively trustworthy in Act I; he is not as sneaky as Cassius or Casca, and he does not seem to hold personal grudges against other Romans. In Act II, his character will truly begin to be defined for them. During this Act, I will continue to have students listen to the CD; I want them to gain some comfort in hearing and comprehending the text before I ask them to read it themselves.

After listening to Brutus's soliloquy (II.i.10-34), students will create a two-column chart in which they will list Brutus's reasons for and against the murder of Caesar. These reasons will include both Brutus's own reasons and the reasons that Cassius gave Brutus to ponder. (If students are struggling with this activity, I will encourage them to return to I.ii.79-89 to reread the initial reasons Brutus gave Cassius for not wanting Caesar to be emperor). At this point, I will ask them to express their feelings of Brutus himself – do they find him trustworthy? Why or why not?

As we continue listening to II.i and ii, I will stop the CD and ask students to ponder and discuss the following in a whole class setting:

- At the end of II.i., Brutus has obviously decided to go along with the conspiracy, telling Caius Ligarius that they will be participating in “a piece of work that will make sick men whole” (II.i.327). Why did he finally decide to kill Caesar? Did he convince himself, or did the “anonymous” letter written by Cassius, combined with the visit of the conspirators, pressure him into his decision? In other words, did Brutus succumb to peer pressure? Do you trust that Brutus is doing the right thing? Why?
- During II.ii, Calpurnia expresses her fears that Caesar will be killed today, the Ides of March. Though she has had graphic dreams, and the Soothsayer warned him about this date, Caesar initially decides to go to work anyway. Why? Is he too trusting of the people of Rome and of the men who surround him?
- Decius and the other conspirators visit Caesar in a beautiful scene of dramatic irony, and Caesar invites them in for wine. What does this say about his character? The trustworthiness of those men in the conspiracy?
- In II.i, Brutus had commented on the fact that the conspirators were wearing cloaks to hide themselves and their facial expressions; now that they aren't, how aren't they giving their plans away? Are they merely pressured into feeling a certain way since they are in a group?
- Finally, I will ask the students how they feel about Caesar at the end of this scene; do they feel that he should sense something going on? Is he too trusting?

Act II, scenes iii and iv are relatively easy for the students to understand. However, we will discuss the letter of Artemidorus, as students are usually interested in talking about how he found out about the conspiracy. Also, he calls the conspirators “traitors” (II.iii.16), but Brutus feels that what they are planning is the right thing to do. Who is to be trusted at this point? Who do the students feel has the best interests of Rome in mind? Why?

Finally, Act II, scene iv, which is often left out of movie versions, will be briefly discussed as well. Portia is obviously upset, and I will ask students why they believe she is upset. Does she know what is being planned for today (did Brutus tell her, as he said he would in II.i.305-306)? Does she trust that her husband will do what is best for Rome? Or does she just have a “bad feeling” about the day that causes her to worry about her husband's safety?

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One of the most modern traditional interpretations, students will enjoy that this version is in color, as opposed to Mankiewicz's black and white. Acting is not as inspired as Mankiewicz's version.
- . Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz. MGM, 1953.  
Most commonly used film version in high school classrooms. Can be used with TNT's educator's guide by Ann Marie Nault (see below).
- Macbeth*. Dir. Trevor Nunn and Philip Casson. Thames TV, 1976.  
Made for television and acted by the Royal Shakespeare Company. A stage production starring Sir Ian McKellan and Dame Judy Dench.
- . Dir. Roman Polanski. RCA/ Columbia Pictures, 1971. Rated R, but the best version to show with this unit. Will need to be censored, however, as there is some nudity.
- . Dir. Orson Welles. Republic Studios, 1948.  
Will be too old for most students' appreciation and should only be shown in clips, but has interesting camera angles and direction and makes a good comparison with Polanski's version.
- Muir, Alisia. *The Tragedy of ?*. 1999. Folger Shakespeare Library. 5 April 2005. <<http://www.folger.edu/eduLesPlanDtl.cfm?lpid=585>>  
A concluding activity for any of Shakespeare's tragedies. Encourages students to determine the importance of many characters from each play and discuss whether the title of the play is appropriate.

- The Roman Republic*. 2004. The Illustrated History of the Roman Empire. 23 April 2005. <<http://www.roman-empire.net/republic/rep-index.html>>  
Very detailed history of the Roman Republic, though there are many grammatical errors. Contains maps, pictures, timelines, and narrative. Helpful for background information for *Julius Caesar*, but students will need specific questions, as there is a great deal of information here.
- “The Roman Virtues.” *Nova Rome*. <[http://www.novaroma.org/via\\_romana/virtues.html](http://www.novaroma.org/via_romana/virtues.html)>.  
This website contains a list of the Roman virtues.
- Rome: Power and Glory*. Questar, 1999. (1998c)  
Background on Julius Caesar’s rise to power and his ambition to become dictator.
- Rothwell, Kenneth S. *A History of Shakespeare on Screen: A Century of Film and Television*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004.  
Chronicles films and television specials that have retold Shakespeare’s plays and analyzes their merits and weaknesses, their similarities and differences.
- Scotland, PA*. Dir. B. Morrissette. Sundance Channel, 2001.  
Rated R; language is not appropriate for school. Short clips can be shown mostly to establish setting and show a modern interpretation of *Macbeth* – 1970’s Pennsylvania in a fast food restaurant.
- Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*. New York: Signet, 1963.
- . *Macbeth*. In *Best Loved Plays of William Shakespeare*. New York: The Spencer Press, 1936.
- Silverbush, Rhona and Sami Plotkin. *Speak the Speech! Shakespeare’s Monologues Illuminated*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2002.  
Excellent, detailed analysis. Not for student use, but may be helpful for teachers to interpret and study the language of various monologues.
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading: Chapter 110. Subchapter C: High School*. 2003. Texas Education Agency (TEA) Office of Curriculum and Professional Development. 3 Mar. 2005.  
<<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/ch110c.html>>  
Description of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) required for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students.

## Supplemental Sources

### Books and Articles

- Durband, Alan, ed. *Shakespeare Made Easy: Julius Caesar*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron’s Educational Series, 1985.  
May be used by non-native English speakers to supplement the text.
- . *Shakespeare Made Easy: Macbeth*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron’s Educational Series, 1985.  
May be used by non-native English speakers to supplement the text.
- Elliott, G.R. *Dramatic Providence in Macbeth*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1960.  
Discusses Lady Macbeth’s motivation and Macbeth’s capitulation to her wishes. Could be used in formulating Pre-AP version of curriculum unit.
- Goll, August. *Criminal Types in Shakespeare*. Trans. Mrs. Charles Weekes. New York: Haskell House, 1966.  
Chapter 1 discusses motivations of Brutus and Cassius for the murder of Caesar, as well as what causes Brutus to submit to the pressure of his peers and go along with the conspiracy. Chapter 2 discusses the weaknesses in *Macbeth* that have him succumb to temptation and crime, and Chapter 3 focuses on the motivations of Lady Macbeth in convincing her husband to commit regicide.
- Hawkes, Terence, ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Macbeth*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977.  
Contains many articles on the play that might be useful in the development of the Pre-AP version of the curriculum unit.
- Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare: Drama Lit. Kit*. St. Louis, MO: McDonald Publishing Co., 1995.  
Good “setting the stage” questions, journal questions, and theme discussion on loyalty.
- Julius Caesar, Sourcebook*. Dallas, TX: McDougal Littell, Inc., 1997.  
Contains background information and context handouts for each act of the play, as well as study guide questions. *Julius Caesar* character background and an introductory question on peer pressure will be especially relevant to this unit.

Kirchhoefer, Maureen and Mary Dennis. *Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare*. San Antonio, TX: Novel Units, Inc., 1998.

Student packet and teacher packet containing background information and play activities. Character attribute webs will specifically apply to this unit.

Nardo, Don, ed. *Readings on Julius Caesar*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1999.

Billed as "accessible to students." Contains many articles on the play that could be used in the development of this curriculum unit.

Nostbakken, Faith. *Understanding Macbeth: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997.

Compares Macbeth's crimes to other cases of treason. Might be helpful in supplementing Pre-AP portion of the curriculum unit.

Plutarch. Selections from *The Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*. Trans. Sir Thomas North. In *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare. New York: Signet, 1963. 139-182.

Contains excerpts from the work that Shakespeare used as a source when writing *Julius Caesar*. Explains in greater detail many of the scenes in the play.

Rosen, William and Barbara Rosen. Introduction. *Julius Caesar*. By William Shakespeare. New York: Signet, 1963. xxi-xxix.

Insightful character analyses, especially the naïveté of Brutus and Cassius.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. In *Best Loved Plays of William Shakespeare*. Mary Cowden Clark, ed. New York: The Spencer Press, 1936.

Time, Victoria M. *Shakespeare's Criminals: Criminology, Fiction, and Drama*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.

An analysis of the crimes of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth and their motivation; will be used with Pre-AP section of unit to enhance discussion of trustworthiness.

### **Partial Filmography**

*A Critical Guide – Julius Caesar*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1998.

May be of assistance in choosing specific scenes on which to focus.

*Macbeth*. Dir. Michael Bogdanov. Public Media Inc., 1997.

A modern, urban take on the play. May add relevancy for students, but will need to be shown in clips; some material is not appropriate for the classroom.

*Macbeth in Manhattan*. Dir. Greg Lombardo. Hollywood Entertainment Corp., 2000.

Though rated R, clips may be shown. Modern interpretation may help students relate themes of the play to their own lives.

*Macbeth – Shakespeare Animated Films*. Random House, 1992.

May provide interesting insight into characterizations of trust. Will also serve as a contrast to other film versions.

*The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*. Dir. P. Kafno. Acorn Media, 2001.

Contains hilarious interpretations of all 37 of Shakespeare's plays. Both *Caesar* and *Macbeth* are interpreted in under a minute, but these clips can be used to inspire students to create their own brief interpretations of the plays.

*Shakespeare in London: The Life and Times of the Real William Shakespeare*. Goldhil Videos, 1998.

A dramatic and interesting introduction to William Shakespeare's life. Also shows the late Elizabethan setting in which Shakespeare lived.

*Shakespeare's Soliloquies*. Dir. S. Mansfield. Monterey Video, 2002.

Professional readings of soliloquies from *Julius Caesar* ("Friends, Romans,..." and "The noblest Roman") and *Macbeth* ("Out damned spot" and "She should have died hereafter"). Can be used to supplement other film versions or to provide alternate interpretations without the prejudice students have from the other films they have seen in class.

### **Web Resources**

Delahoyde, Michael. *Julius Caesar*. 2005. U of Washington. 5 Feb. 2005.

<<http://www.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/shakespeare/juliuscaesar1.html>>

An analysis of the play, including a warning against peer pressure.

- Handzus, Lisa. *Methods of Teaching Macbeth*. 2002. Gardner-Webb University. 9 Feb. 2005. <<http://www.gardner-webb.edu/english/Best/Handzus.html>>  
Contains insightful information on methods of teaching the play as well as a Works Cited containing film versions and reviews.
- Julius Caesar: Why we Study Julius Caesar*. Utah Shakespearean Festival. 5 Feb. 2005.  
<<http://www.bard.org/Education/Shakespeare/juliuswhyw.html>>  
Includes discussion on the play's contemporary issues.
- Last Minute Book Reports: Julius Caesar*. Disney Online. 13 April 2005.  
<<http://disney.go.com/family/lastminute/caesar>>  
Comical and very brief video summary of the play from the point of view of a young student who has waited until the last minute to do homework. Can be shown to students to introduce a similar activity, having students summarize what is most important in the play in under one minute.
- Nault, Ann Marie. *Stage to Screen – Julius Caesar*. 1998. Turner Learning, Inc. 9 Feb. 2005.  
<<http://turnerlearning.com/tcmbythebook/stage/julius.html>>  
Educator's guide for 1953 version of *Julius Caesar*, as produced by Turner Classic Movies.
- Special Edition Newspaper on the Trial of Julius Caesar: Whose Point of View?* 2003. Urban Education Partnership. 25 April 2005. <[www.laep.org/humanitas/digitalhs/juliuscaesar.html](http://www.laep.org/humanitas/digitalhs/juliuscaesar.html)>  
Billed as a culminating activity to a mock trial, but can also be adapted to be used as a small group or class assignment as a conclusion to the reading of the play.
- The Status Game*. Utah Shakespearean Festival. 5 Feb. 2005.  
<<http://www.bard.org/Education/Teaching/statusgame.html>>  
Lesson plans for a game determining roles in relationships; may serve as a good introduction to trustworthiness and peer pressure.

#### **Audio Resources**

- Be Thou Now Persuaded: Living in a Shakespearean World*. Prod. Elizabeth Pavone and Michael W. Johnson. Los Angeles: Rhino Entertainment Company, 1999.  
Four CD set of readings from productions of Shakespeare's plays, arranged by theme. Also includes information book with introduction to Shakespeare and analysis and transcripts of the readings.

Gaius Julius Caesar was a Roman general and statesman who played a critical role in the events that led to the demise of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. In 60 BC, Caesar, Crassus and Pompey formed the First Triumvirate, a political alliance that dominated Roman politics for several years. Their attempts to amass power as Populares were opposed by the Optimates within the Roman Senate, among them Cato the Younger with the frequent support of Cicero. Caesar rose to become one of the Viewing Trustworthiness and Peer Pressure in Julius Caesar and Macbeth Erin Counihan Lee High School INTRODUCTION I was the joke of the last English Department in which I worked an English teacher who had never read William Shakespeare's The Tragedy of Julius Caesar! This did not concern me in the least; I had heard such horrible things about teachers and students' experiences with the play that I made it my own personal goal never to teach sophomore English, and thus never to teach Julius Caesar. In fact, my mentor understood these aspirations of mine and even published her own thoughts on the In Julius Caesar, the omens from a fortune teller known as a soothsayer warn of what is to come. Shakespeare uses the soothsayer character to build suspense in the play. Shakespeare Themes. This series of short films explores some of the themes that span Shakespeare's plays, improving students' knowledge of his most popular works and the society in which they were written. Shakespeare Songs. Lady Macbeth is telling Macbeth to have the appearance of the innocent while his true nature should be of a serpent. He should have the temptation to do evil and not have any remorse. During the time Macbeth was written it was believed that the serpent was an instrument of Satan's used to tempt evil. Shakespeare Songs. I was born free as Caesar; so were you: We both have fed as well, and we can both Endure the winter's cold as well as he: For once, upon a raw and gusty day, The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores, Caesar said to me 'Darest thou, Cassius, now Leap in with me into this angry flood, And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word, Accoutred as I was, I plunged in And bade him follow; so indeed he did. Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'? Why should that name be sounded more than yours? Write them together, yours is as fair a name; Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well; Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em, Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Caesar. Now, in the names of all the gods at once, Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed, That he is grown so great?