Two parts. Bring this prospectus to class with you with any notes on it that will help with writing two short essays, but use no other texts or notes. Spend half your time on each part.

1.

Write on the following passage from Richard III 4.4. Place it in its narrative and thematic context and interpret the action with reference to the language used. Just how critical is this episode to the final action of the drama?

QUEEN ELIZABETH [. . .] What canst thou swear by now?
KING RICHARD The time to come [. . .].

328 As I intend to prosper and repent,
    So thrive I in my dangerous affairs
330 Of hostile arms – myself myself confound°
    Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours,
    Day yield me not thy light nor night thy rest;
    Be opposite, all planets of good luck,
    To my proceeding – if, with dear heart’s love,
335 Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
    I tender° not thy beauteous, princely daughter.
    In her consists my happiness and thine.
    Without her follows – to myself and thee,
    Herself, the land, and many a Christian soul –
340 Death, desolation, ruin, and decay.
    It cannot be avoided but by this;
    It will not be avoided but by this.
    Therefore, good-mother° -- I must call you so –
    Be the attorney of my love to her.
345 Plead what I will be, not what I have been;
    Not my deserts, but what I will deserve.
    Urge the necessity and state of times.°
    And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

QUEEN ELIZABETH Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?
KING RICHARD Ay, if the devil tempt you to do good.
QUEEN ELIZABETH Shall I forget myself to be myself?
KING RICHARD Ay, if yourself’s remembrance wrong yourself.
QUEEN ELIZABETH Yet thou didst kill my children.
KING RICHARD But in your daughter’s womb I bury them.
355 Where, in that nest of spicery, ° they will breed
    Selves of themselves, to your recomfiture. °
QUEEN ELIZABETH Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?
KING RICHARD And be a happy mother by the deed,
QUEEN ELIZABETH I go. Write to me very shortly,
360 And you shall understand from me her mind.
KING RICHARD Bear her my true love’s kiss
    [He kisses her] and so farewell --

Exit [ELIZABETH]

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman.
2.

Write a short essay on one of the following questions.

A. film vs. text

Loncraine's *Richard III* makes massive cuts in this long play while transposing its action into a realistic but contrafactual* modern story, set in the interwar period of the European twentieth century. What are the effects of this work of shortening and transposition? Focus on scenes reflecting one of these matters:

- Cutting Margaret from the play and distributing parts of her role to other women, while playing up Anne. (What's the impact on women's presence in the play? On Richard's relations with women?)
- Interpreting Richard's staginess through the extremely theatre-conscious antics of Ian McKellen. (Note the scene in the men's room, the soliloquy at 1.2.215-50, the re-broadcast of the coronation, the way he plays 3.7. What else?)
- Inscribing Richard's rise into the framework of British politics (with a Prime Minister – Hastings -- and a nascent British fascist party).
- Camping up the ending, with a hyperbolic chase scene, a pursuit up through the scaffolding of a building, and Richard's apparent surrender to Richmond (to the tune of Al Jolson singing "I'm Sitting on Top of the World").

B. irresistible vs. resistible

Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard's rise and fall is consistent with the "Providential" reading of English history. That model implies that the nigh-irresistible rise and defeat of the "machiavel" Richard (see Norton 1, p. 540) was divinely ordained to make way for the Tudor dynasty. In contrast, Brecht's *Arturo Ui* (1941) evokes parts of *Richard III* (and a speech from *Julius Caesar*) to make a play about a gangster whose rise is highly "resistible." So: what work does Shakespeare do for Brecht’s play? Is he saying that Hitler and Ui are *like* Richard, or just the reverse – that they are ignobly *unlike* him? Or does he use the Richard story to make another point entirely about the shape and direction of history itself?

*'contrafactual story": i.e. a "what if?" narrative. (No fascist dictator or king ruled Great Britain in the interwar era. There was a fascist movement at work in the U.K. in the 1930s, but allusions to it in the film are marginal at best.)