



كلية: الآداب

القسم او الفرع: قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

أستاذ المادة: م.م. شمم إسماعيل عطوي

اسم المادة باللغة العربية: المسرحية

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Drama**

اسم المحاضرة الثامنة باللغة العربية: أهمية المكان في مسرحية هاملت

اسم المحاضرة الثامنة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Setting in Hamlet**

## Setting in Hamlet

“Elsinore” is the English spelling of Helsingør, a town on the eastern coast of Denmark. In Shakespeare’s lifetime, Helsingør was an important military location, the stronghold from which the King of Denmark controlled a narrow stretch of sea. A fortress had stood in the town since the [middle ages](#), and between 1574 and 1585 Frederick II of Denmark rebuilt the fortress as a magnificent castle. Will Kemp, a member of Shakespeare’s acting company, probably visited the castle at Helsingør to perform for Frederick, who was an enthusiastic patron of theatre, so Shakespeare likely knew where the town was and what its castle was like. The threat of invasion from neighboring countries is essential to the plot of *Hamlet*, which ends with the Norwegian prince Fortinbras storming the castle. The threat of invasion also contributes to *Hamlet*’s mood of anxious uncertainty.

Frederick II’s castle was the largest of its kind in [Renaissance Europe](#). The castle made Helsingør famous as a cultural center, and *Hamlet*’s Elsinore is also a cultural center. Just like Frederick, Claudius is visited by travelling actors. Hamlet and his friend Horatio have come to Elsinore from Wittenberg, Europe’s leading university. Laertes is visiting from France, and we learn that another Frenchman, Lamord, has recently visited Elsinore. Claudius receives tribute from the ruler of England and exchanges diplomatic messages with the King of Norway. Accordingly, *Hamlet*’s story is not just about the strange customs of an isolated backwater. On the contrary, *Hamlet* is about the central problems of Renaissance thought: philosophical uncertainty, the anxiety of damnation, and the difficulty of knowing how to act morally. Hamlet is a sophisticated, modern intellectual. He is familiar with the latest ideas from all over Europe. His philosophical doubts express the profound uncertainties which lay at the heart of European culture when Shakespeare was writing.

The whole play takes place inside Elsinore’s castle, except for Act Five scene one, which takes place just outside, or possibly in the grounds of the castle. This confined setting reflects Hamlet’s situation. He feels trapped by his duty to his father and his duty as a member of the Danish royal family, so his story is confined behind the battlements of the Danish royal fortress. Elsinore is a place with many private spaces. Hamlet is often alone when he delivers his soliloquys. Ophelia has a “closet”—a private space—and so does Gertrude. Claudius prays in a private chapel. These private spaces reflect the play’s obsession with how people behave when they are not performing for other people. At the same time, the characters’ privacy is often disturbed or spied upon. Polonius spies on Hamlet while he talks to Ophelia. Hamlet invades Ophelia’s closet and he spies on Claudius while he prays. When Hamlet invades Gertrude’s closet, Polonius is spying on them both. All this spying contributes to the play’s atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust