Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest* (1611/1623) presents a tale of magic and miraculous circumstance set on a remote island. The play offers a comment on contemporary Renaissance topics such as humanist ideals, the discovery of the New World and magic or natural philosophy, while apparently anticipating the fantasy and science fiction genre. The play has seen a varied and vibrant afterlife, not least in the twentieth and twenty-first century, spanning dystopian fiction, postcolonial rewritings, cinematic adaptations and, most recently, environmental criticism.

In the first part of this seminar you will be introduced to relevant early modern cultural contexts of Shakespeare’s play. Against this historical background you will engage in close readings both of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and John Dryden and William Davenant’s influential version of the play, entitled *The Tempest, or, The Enchanted Island* (1667/1670). The second part of the classes will shift the attention to the later adaptations, cutting across poetry that highlights and interprets individual characters of the play, film versions of the last three decades by Derek Jarman, Peter Greenaway and Julie Taymor, and Margaret Atwood’s recent novelization *Hag-Seed* (2016). Last but not least, we will watch the up-coming production of *The Tempest* at the Thalia Theater in Hamburg. The seminar will deepen your understanding of literary history in the context of both cultural history and critical discourse and it will improve your close reading skills across different genres and media.


Course requirements:
Regular attendance, excellent knowledge of the texts, course assignments during the semester and (to receive the maximum credit points) a term paper.