



*Joint Presentation School of English  
and the Emerging Strategic Research Theme in  
“Law, Literature, Language.”*

*Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong*

## **Professor Gary Watt**

*The University of Warwick*

5:00 pm

Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Faculty of Arts Conference Room

Room 4.36, Run Run Shaw Tower

Centennial Campus

The University of Hong Kong



# Shakespeare's Testamentary Performance

**Abstract:** Professor Watt draws on many years' experience delivering rhetoric workshops for the Royal Shakespeare Company to show that Shakespeare is playful with legal technicality rather than obedient to it. He demonstrates how Shakespeare transformed lawyers' manual book rhetoric into powerful drama through a stirring combination of word, metre, movement and physical stage material, producing a mode of performance that was truly testamentary in its power to engage the witnessing public. Building on monographs on law and literature, law and dress, and the co-edited collection *Shakespeare and the Law*, Professor Watt offers thoughts from *Shakespeare's Act of Will: Law, Testament and Properties of Performance* which will be published by Bloomsbury (The Arden Shakespeare) in 2016 on the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's will.

### **Biography:**

Gary Watt is Professor of Law at The University of Warwick.

He is the co-founding editor of the journal, *Law and Humanities*, and his books on law and literature include *Equity Stirring: The Story of Justice Beyond Law* (Oxford: Hart, 2009) and the collection *Shakespeare and the Law* (Oxford: Hart, 2008, co-edited with P. Raffield). He has also written for the *Times Literary Supplement* and BBC Radio 3.

Recent papers include 'Falstaff and the Highwaymen: Equity as Outlaw', *Journal of Law, Literature and Culture* (2008); 'The Character of Social Connection in Law and Literature: Lessons from Bleak House', *International Journal of Law in Context* (2009); 'The Origin of Jarndyce and Jarndyce', *TLS* (2009); and 'Hard cases, hard times and the humanity of law in Jonathan Bate (ed.) *The Public Value of The Humanities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011). He is the author of core texts in law, including *Trusts and Equity* 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: OUP, 2012)