Themes in *Macbeth*

1. **If the rightful ruler is deposed/ killed, chaos rules**
    - The Great Chain of Being
    - Hierarchy with God at the head of everything
    - Moves up the chain could be achieved through natural inheritance or as a reward for loyalty and service to the position above
    - The 17th century notion that every person has a specific place in life and to rise above said position unnaturally throws everything out of wack
    - Both human life and nature are disrupted

2. **Violence begets violence**
    - Once Macbeth starts killing, he must continue in order to keep his position
    - The initial murder brings about violence, not only from the Macbeths, but also other characters in the play (Macduff, etc)

3. **Excess of ambition can make a man ruthless in his search for power**
    - Wants to be king (queen) won't let anything stand in way
    - Lady Macbeth most ambitious at beginning
    - After, Macbeth sees nothing wrong with killing his friend (Banquo) if it means securing his position
    - Kills innocent and unarmed women and children in Macduff's house

4. **Absolute power as a corrupting force**
    - Macbeth doesn't seem bad to begin with
    - Witches spark ambitious ideas in Macbeth's mind
    - Lady Macbeth helps spur him on when he has doubts
    - Once becomes king lets **nothing** stand in his way
    - No longer cares about morality, friends or wife
    - All lost to his need for power and securing his power