

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

Dramatic Forms and Genres

English 2400E (001)

Fall/Winter 2013-14

Instructor: Dr. Jo Devereux

Date/Time: Thursday 3:30pm-4:30pm

Location: Physics & Astronomy Building 34

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the major forms and genres of dramatic literature through the study of a selection of plays. Attention will also be given to the history of the physical space of the theatre and its relation to dramatic forms. We will study the playwrights and their work in order to come to a better understanding of the body of plays under consideration through careful readings and performances of the texts at hand. This course is intensive and will demand your participation on a number of levels. Each week, lectures will be supplemented by student-driven performance, debate, and critique. These activities are mandatory and there will be room for all levels of comfort with public speaking and performance.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Explore dramatic literature as performance;
- Discuss and debate points about the texts and performances in a creative and constructive forum;
- Explore your own interests whenever possible;
- Have fun! The class will be a supportive and encouraging environment in which to try out many ways of performing and interpreting drama.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama. Sixth Edition.

Ibsen, Henrik. *An Enemy of the People, The Wild Duck, Rosmersholm*. Trans. and Intro. James McFarlane. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1960; 2009.

William Shakespeare, *King Lear*. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (Folger Shakespeare Library Edition, 1993)

Drew Hayden Taylor, *In a World Created by a Drunken God* (Talon Books, 2006)

PLAYS TO BE STUDIED

First term:

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (c. 431 BCE)

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (411 BCE)

Anon, *The York Crucifixion* (15th C)

Anon., *Everyman* (c. 1485)

Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1589)

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600)

Shakespeare, *King Lear* (1608)

Calderon, *Life is a Dream* (1636)

Moliere, *Tartuffe* (1669)

Behn, *The Rover* (1677)

Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer* (1706)

Second term:

Ibsen, *A Doll House* (1879)

---., *The Wild Duck* (1884)

Jarry, *Ubu Roi* (1896)

Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* (1904)

Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939)

Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)

Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

Beckett, *Endgame* (1957)

Pinter, *The Homecoming* (1965)

Churchill, *Cloud Nine* (1979)

Shepard, *True West* (1980)

Drew Hayden Taylor, *In a World Created by a*

Drunken God (2006)

Methods of Evaluation

Two essays, one in each term 15% and 30%

Performance and Participation 20%

Final Exam April 2014 35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

Sept 10-Introduction to the course, aims and objectives, general business

Sept 12-Classical Tragedy: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (c. 431 BCE)

Further Reading: Wadsworth 13-20; 153-61 (from Aristotle's *Poetics*)

Sept 17-19-*Oedipus* continued and also Greek Old Comedy: Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (411BCE)

Further Reading: Wadsworth 165-69 (Case, "Classic Drag")

Sept 24-26-Medieval Mystery Plays: *The York Crucifixion* (15th C)

Further Reading: Wadsworth 253-54; 277-78

Oct 1-3-Medieval Morality Plays: *Everyman* (c. 1485)

Group 1 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 255-58; 283

Oct 8-10-Elizabethan Tragedy: Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1589)

Group 2 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 258-76; 294-95

Oct 15-17-Elizabethan Comedy: Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600)

Group 3 = The Company

Further reading: Wadsworth 321-24; 431-38 (Hawkes, "Meaning by Shakespeare")

Oct 22-24-- Jacobean Tragedy: Shakespeare, *King Lear* (1608) **Group 4 = The Company**

Oct 29-31-TBA

Nov 5-7- Spanish Golden Age Theatre: Caldéron, *Life is a Dream* (1636)

Group 1 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 447-63

Nov 12-14-Seventeenth-Century French Theatre: Moliere, *Tartuffe* (1669)

Group 2 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 488-95

Nov 19-21-Restoration Comedy: Behn, *The Rover* (1677)

Group 3 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 536-37; 622-26 (Maus, “Playhouse Flesh and Blood”)

Nov 26-28-Early Eighteenth-Century Theatre: Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer* (1706)

Group 4 = The Company

Dec. 3-**ESSAY 1 DUE**

Second Term Schedule

Jan 8-10-Ibsen, *A Doll House* (1879)

Further Reading: Wadsworth 633-43; 666-68; 1061-64 (Nietzsche, from *The Birth of Tragedy*)

Jan 14-16-Ibsen, *The Wild Duck* (1884)

Further Reading: Wadsworth 1064-69 (Zola, from *Naturalism in the Theatre*)

Jan 21-23-Jarry, *Ubu Roi* (1896)

Group 1 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 1084-90 (Artaud, from *The Theatre and Its Double*)

Jan 28-30-Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* (1904)

Group 2 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 1070-74 (Stanislavski on Acting)

Feb 4-6-Brecht, *Mother Courage* (1939)

Group 3 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 857-60; 1075-84 (Brecht on Epic Theatre)

Feb 11-13- Modern American Theatre; Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)

Group 4 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 1121-1140; 1214-16

Feb 18-20-READING WEEK

Feb 25-27-Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

Further Reading: Wadsworth 1240-41; 1485-86 (Miller, from “Tragedy and the Common Man”); 1498-1505 (Meiziner, “On Design”)

Mar 4-6-Beckett, *Endgame* (1957)

Group 1 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 918-20; 1105-17 (“On Directing”)

Mar 11-13-Pinter, *The Homecoming* (1965)

Group 2 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 942-43; 1091 -93 (Esslin, from “Theatre of the Absurd”)

Mar 18-20-Churchill, *Cloud Nine* (1979)

Group 3 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 975-78; 1094-1104 (Jameson and Lehmann)

Mar 25-27-Shepard, *True West* (1980)

Group 4 = The Company

Further Reading: Wadsworth 1292-93

Apr 1-3-Canadian Theatre; Hayden Taylor, *In a World Created by a Drunken God* (2006)

Further Reading: TBA; **ESSAY 2 DUE THURS APRIL 3**

Apr 8-Review

Assignments:

ESSAY 1:

Length: 1500-2000 words

Worth: 15%

Due: Tues. Dec. 3, 2013

You may use other primary sources (historical documents, other plays, pieces of literature, letters, memoirs, accounts of productions, filmed versions of plays, interviews with actors and directors, etc.) and secondary sources (critical and scholarly articles and books) to focus your argument on ONE of the following topics. Document VERY CAREFULLY using current MLA style documentation:

1. Examine the representation of masculinity and/or femininity in ONE play from this term.
2. Discuss the function of disguise or trickery in ONE play from this term.
3. Discuss the use of allegorical or emblematic characters in ONE play from this term.
4. Present an argument about the most important prop in ONE play from this term.
5. Examine the mode of tragedy OR of comedy in ONE play from this term.

ESSAY 2:

Length: 2500-3000 words

Worth: 30%

Due: Thurs. April 3, 2014

Choose ONE of the following topics and use it to compare and contrast TWO plays from the course (either or both terms). Use at least TWO secondary sources in your research for this essay. Demonstrate some familiarity with the historical context that produced each play. Acknowledge all sources meticulously, using correct MLA format documentation:

1. Compare and contrast TWO plays from the course in terms of the representation of power struggles. Consider the master-slave relationship in the two plays. Can you trace a shift in power from beginning to end of each play? How do the plays differ in their treatment of this theme?
2. Compare and contrast TWO plays from the course in terms of their physical settings. How does each play use the space of the stage to explore the imagined space in which the play is set?

3. Compare and contrast TWO plays in terms of their challenge to conventional morality or widely held belief systems or ideology. To what degree does each play conform to or resist received views?
4. Compare and contrast the idea of transformation in TWO plays from the course. How are characters and situations transformed? How do the two plays transform the social or historical context in which they were produced and/or the one to which they are responding?
5. Compare and contrast the use of frames in TWO plays on the course. Consider both physical frames and metaphorical ones in your argument.

Essay Policy:

You should hand your essays to me directly or place them in the English Department Essay Drop Boxes to the right of UC 173 (the English Department Office). ALWAYS KEEP A COPY OF YOUR ESSAY.

LATE ESSAYS will be penalized 2% per day.

Participation/Performance Work (20%)

In Thursday's class beginning in our fourth full week together, we will forgo the formalities of a traditional university lecture and get down to the business of performance. I will be dividing the class into four groups, and each week you, the students, will run our final hour.

Our performance hour will begin with a scene study presentation by the group designated, for that week, as THE COMPANY.

- It will be the Company's job to stage a scene from that week's play, and to take up roles such as actors, director, dramaturge, and designers. The scenes you perform will be "poor" theatre in the best sense of the word: not a formal, heavily rehearsed performance, although you are free to bring props and costumes as you choose. Your primary task will be to work together to select a specific approach to the scene, and then be prepared to defend and explore your choices in class. This "thought work" is the most important component of your presentation!
- Those who aren't acting or directing in any given week must contribute behind the scenes, by helping to imagine potential visions for the scene, by imagining a design (be prepared to explain and discuss it!), or by applying dramaturgical (that is, critical, close-reading) skills to the text and then offering options to the actors and/or director.
- I would like each of you to try different roles over the course of the term: if you are shy, challenge yourself to try acting once; if you're a raging extrovert, challenge yourself to pull back a bit and let the quieter members of your group shine.
- The Company will need to read ahead, and agree on a scene (or scenes) to perform in advance of their scheduled Thursdays. You need not clear your scene selection with me in advance, but please choose something that will take approximately 10 minutes to perform.
- Be prepared to meet outside of class for an hour or two, at least a couple of times, before each performance, and establish an informal email discussion list among yourselves in order to hammer out your basic choices and ensure everyone knows their jobs.
- Your group will be large (about 12 members each!), so coordinating your schedules will not be easy. In fact, it's part of the challenge. But your groups are large because performance cannot happen with just a couple of people: theatre is made in the messy coordination between different personalities with different schedules and different needs.

Do your best to accommodate everyone, to get to know one another, and to support one another; by the end of the term, you'll be glad these people are your colleagues; they may even be your friends!

- After each performance, and a short break, the Company will be asked to get back on stage and participate in a question-and-answer period. Each member of the Company should try to contribute something during the Q&A, especially those whose work has been primarily behind the scenes. This is the time for you to explore in depth, with your colleagues, the terrific thought work that has gone into your presentation!
- The final part of the hour will involve a post-performance “talk-back” or discussion. When the week’s performance is over, the Company will take their break while the rest of us get into our designated groups. You will be given 10-15 minutes in your group to discuss the performance you’ve just seen, and to prepare two or three good challenging questions about the Company’s performance choices.
- In order to ensure that your group’s discussion runs smoothly, each of you will need to take some notes during the Company’s performance, bring those notes with you to your group’s “huddle,” and be prepared to talk about them.
- Once in your groups, designate a discussion leader for that day. This role should revolve. In order to make sure that the discussion is fair to all, your discussion leader should begin by going from group member to group member, asking for a quick observation, question or concern about the performance from each of you. From those initial observations, you can begin to build discussion topics and questions to pose to the Company.
- NOTE that the questions you develop must delve below the surface of what The Company is doing. Colleague-critics are reviewers with a difference: your task is to explore what worked and what didn’t, to probe the critical effects of The Company’s choices, to offer alternative readings, and to examine how others in the class received the performance (it’s a good idea to address some questions to your fellow audience members as well). One important proviso: colleague criticism is designed to be helpful and respectful, not hurtful and derogatory.
- When your 10 minutes are up, I will reconvene the class and ask each group’s discussion leader to speak, in turn, to one of your questions. We hope to get a lively discussion going, and will bounce from group to group until either our time or your notes are exhausted. Support a strong, engaged class discussion!

Assessment:

- Your group work is the core component of your participation grade; you will be judged on the amount of effort you put into the work NOT on your acting skills-and on your willingness to push yourself in new directions, beyond your comfort zone. Note that you need not play a major role in each presentation: balance your commitments to the group work as needed, but ensure that you are contributing helpfully in some way each time your group is The Company, and that you challenge yourself to contribute during your group’s frequent Thursday discussions.

Attendance. One of the keys to doing well at this assignment is attending regularly; the other key is being engaged when you attend. Each time you miss a performance during which your group is The Company without prior leave you will lose 5/20 marks. Attendance will be taken. Even if your group is not performing, your attendance is still required and appreciated. Each time you miss an “ordinary” Thursday without prior leave, you will lose 1/20 marks

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.