



Department of English & Writing Studies

Twentieth-Century Drama English 3556E (001) Fall/Winter 2013-14

Instructor: Amanda Di Ponio

Date/Time: Tuesday 9:30am-11:30am
Thursday 9:30am-10:30am

Location: University College 286

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite(s): English 2450E.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

The modern period is marked by a number of social, political, and aesthetic tensions. How does theatre remain relevant amidst these pressures, especially as the stage gives way first to the cinema, then to the TV screen, and now to the internet? We will look at both canonical and non-canonical, spanning 1890 to the present day, and analyze the ways in which countless scientific advances, two World Wars, and revolutionary changes in the perception of "otherness" have produced particular aesthetic and philosophical answers on stage. We will take a historical approach, trying to understand the organic development of dramatic forms from the late 19th century to the end of the 20th century.

Objectives:

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

- Analyze the text in performance;
- Show understanding of Twentieth-Century Drama by forming interpretive arguments of the plays using close reading;
- Participate in "poor" theatre productions, assuming the various roles therein, to engage with the texts in performance;
- Use a range of critical and theoretical perspectives to examine historical, literary, and/or cultural problems regarding the Twentieth Century;
- Incorporate evidence, both primary and secondary, in essay writing;
- Research supplementary material in support of arguments;
- Write essays that use and critically respond to secondary source materials effectively and present complex and debatable arguments;
- Apply principles of quotation integration using MLA documentation.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

The Longman Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Drama: A Global Perspective. Eds. Michael L. Greenwald, Roger Schultz, Roberto Dario Pomo. (Longman, 2003). This title is available new and used through Amazon.ca/co.uk/com. Please purchase it through these sites.

Nine Plays of the Modern Theater. Ed. Harold Clurman. (Grove Press, 1981; repr. 1994)

The Routledge Drama Anthology and Sourcebook: From Modernism to Contemporary Performance. Eds. Maggie B. Gale and John F. Deeney. (Routledge, 2010)

Some plays and critical materials not included in these anthologies will be distributed to students throughout the term, either through OWL powered by Sakai or in class.

Methods of Evaluation

Performance Analysis (1,000-1,500 words)	10%
Essay 1 (2,000-2,500 words)	15%
Essay 2 (3,000-3,500 words)	20%
Final Exam	35%
Participation/Performance Work	20%

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:

Term 1

- Week 1** Sept. 9-13: Introduction
19th Century Precursors; Main Aesthetic Movements; Historical Contexts
Library Research Tips
- Week 2** Sept. 16-20: Realism and Naturalism
Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Longman) and *When We Dead Awaken* (Routledge)
- Week 3** Sept. 23-27: Realism and Naturalism (Continued)
Anton Chekov, *The Cherry Orchard* (Longman) and *Three Sisters* (Routledge)
No class Thursday, September 26 - Stratford Trip: *Waiting for Godot* 2pm
- Week 4** Sept. 30-Oct. 4: Realism and Naturalism (Continued)
August Strindberg, *Miss Julie* (Routledge) + "Preface to *Miss Julie*" (Routledge)
Bernard Shaw, *Heartbreak House* (Longman)
The Company - Group 1

- Week 5** Oct. 7-11: Symbolism
Maurice Maeterlinck, *Interior* (Routledge); "The Modern Drama" + "Tragedy in Everyday Life" (Routledge)
The Company - Group 2
October 7: Thanksgiving
- Week 6** Oct. 14-21: Expressionism
August Strindberg, *The Ghost Sonata* (Longman) and *A Dream Play*
The Company - Group 3
Performance Analysis Due Thursday, October 20 (10%)
- Week 7** Oct. 21-25: Expressionism (Continued)
Oskar Kokoshka, *Murder, the Women's Hope* (Routledge)
Sophie Treadwell, *Machinal* (Longman)
Eugene O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*
The Company - Group 4
- Week 8** Oct. 28 - Nov. 1: Surrealism
Andre Breton, "The First Surrealist Manifesto" + "The Second Surrealist Manifesto" (Routledge)
Alfred Jarry, *King Ubu* (Routledge)
No class Thursday, October 31 - Fall study break
- Week 9** Nov. 4-8: Surrealism (Continued)
Guillaume Apollinaire, *Tiresias's Breasts* (Routledge)
The Company - Group 1
- Week 10** Nov. 11-15: The Theatre of Cruelty
Antonin Artaud, *The Spurt of Blood* (Routledge) + "No More Masterpieces"
"Theatre and the Plague" (Routledge)
The Company - Group 2
Discussion of Essay 1
- Week 11** Nov. 18-22: Gender Trouble
Jean Genet, *The Balcony* (9 Plays) and *The Maids*
Federico Garcia Lorca, *The Public* (Routledge)
The Company - Group 3
- Week 12** Nov. 25-29: Meta-Theatre
Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Longman) + "Showcase: The Prototype of the Relativist Drama: Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*" (Longman)
Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (9 Plays/Longman)
The Company - Group 4
- Week 13** Dec. 1-5: Midyear Review
Essay 1 Due Tuesday, December 2
No class Thursday, December 4
- Term 2**

- Week 1** Jan. 6-10: Epic Theatre
Berthold Brecht, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (9 Plays) + *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (Longman) + "A Street Scene" + "Theatre for Pleasure" (Routledge)
- Week 2** Jan. 13-17: Epic Theatre (Continued)
Friedrich Durrenmatt, *The Visit* (9 Plays)
- Week 3** Jan. 20-24: The Theatre of the Absurd
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (9 Plays)
The Company - Group 1
- Week 4** Jan. 27-31: The Theatre of the Absurd (Continued)
Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*
The Company - Group 2
- Week 5** Feb. 3-7: The Theatre of the Absurd (Continued)
Eugene Ionesco, *The Bald Soprano* and *Rhinoceros* (9 Plays)
Gao Xingjian, *The Bus Stop* (Longman)
The Company - Group 3
- Week 6** Feb. 10-14: New American Realism: The "Drama of the Little Man"
Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* + "Showcase: "A Great American Play: Arthur Miller and *Death of a Salesman.*" + Showcase: "Designing A Play: *Death of a Salesman*" by Jo Mielziner (Longman)
Eugene O'Neill, *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (Longman)
The Company - Group 4
- February 17-21: Reading Week**
- Week 7** Feb. 24-28: The Angry Young Men
Pinter, *The Birthday Party* (9 Plays) and *The Dumb Waiter* (Handout)
Discussion of Essay 2
- Week 8** Mar 3-7: Feminist Revisions: A Marxist Postcolonial Critique
Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9* (Handout), *Far Away* (Routledge) and *Top Girls* (Longman)
- Week 9** Mar 10-14: Feminist Revisions (Continued); A Theatre of Cruelty and the Absurd
Sarah Kane, *Blasted* and *4:48 Psychosis*
The Company - Group 1
- Week 10** Mar 17-21: Postcolonial Theatre
Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (Longman)
Brian Friel, *Translations* (Handout)
Griselda Gambaro, *Personal Effects* (Longman)
The Company - Group 2
- Week 11** Mar 24-28: Skin and the American Dream
Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit* (Longman)
David Henry Hwang, *The Dance and the Railroad* (Longman)
Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*, and *Topdog/Underdog* (Longman)
The Company - Group 3
- Week 12** Mar 31 - Apr 4: LGBTB Rights
Tony Kushner, *Angels in America I: The Millennium Approaches* (Longman)

The Company - Group 4

Week 13 Apr 7-11: Revision for Final Exam (April 8)
Essay 2 Due Tuesday, April 8 (last day of classes)

Assignments:

Stratford - Thursday, September 26, 2013 2pm

Students enrolled in English 3556B are invited to attend a performance of *Waiting for Godot* on Thursday, September 26 at 2pm. The ticket price is \$35 (including transportation), or \$25 (without transportation), and students will book their own tickets and transportation by phoning Stratford directly with a credit card. I will provide students with the phone number, booking instructions, and the promo code. The tickets will be held until Friday, September 13 for students to book. There are 45 tickets available; students should let me know of their interest in attending, and be prepared to book, by the end of week one. As the Performance Analysis assignment (10% see below) is attached to this performance, it is strongly encouraged that students do their best to attend.

Performance Analysis:

We will be seeing *Waiting for Godot* at Stratford this season. The purpose of this assignment is to strengthen your critical analysis of Twentieth-Century drama in performance. Write an essay of 1,000-1,500 words that analyses the Stratford production. If you're unable to attend the performance, please contact me.

While you will more than likely share whether or not you like the production, I am more interested in your analysis of it. Focus on a few production choices - such as costumes, set design, lighting and sound effects, gestures, staging if you consider important in how the Stratford company interpreted the play. In your essay, describe the production choices concisely, and then analyse how they shaped a certain interpretation of the action, perhaps in a way you haven't considered. You might analyse the choices in terms of the tone, power dynamics, characterizations, etc. I would recommend taking notes during the performance. You should also keep the theatre programme that you'll be given when you enter, as it will tell you who played which parts, who directed the show and wrote the music for it, and perhaps also provide some insight into what the company was trying to achieve. We will discuss the production in the following Tuesday's class, but as we won't formally be discussing the play until the second term. As such, I will provide background and notes on the play to help you complete your performance analysis assignment, but you should read the play in addition to some supplementary reading. MLA citation style is required.

Essay 1: A formal, extended critical review of one of the plays studied during the first term. The essay should engage with more than one possible interpretation of the play and endeavor to go beyond the simple exposition of ideas. Secondary research is required (at least 3 materials essays/articles from books/academic journals). Advanced essay-writing tips, as well as research tips (finding/evaluating materials), will be provided early on. MLA citation style is required.

Essay 2: A formal, extended discussion of a political issue as it is reflected in the plays of at least two of the playwrights we studied throughout the year. The essay should go beyond mere comparison and provide an in-depth discussion of the theatrical means of generating "meaning" and articulating a political position. Secondary research is required (at least 4 materials essays/articles from books/academic journals). MLA citation style is required. A list of suggested

essay topics will be provided in due time. All students who wish to choose a topic that is not on the list should send me a short description of their topic for approval.

Assignments should be handed in directly to me. Late assignments should be left in the English Department drop box outside of UC 173. Be sure you keep/make/have a copy for yourself. Please make sure that my name is on the assignment. Unless a student presents a valid excuse prior to the assignment due date, **late essays will incur a late penalty of 2% per day**, up to a maximum of 24% or two weeks. Assignments handed in late will not receive comments. Assignments submitted after the two-week period will not be accepted.

Final Exam: A combination of short answer and essay questions. The exam will be cumulative and will be written during the exam period (date, time and location TBA).

Participation/Performance Work: In class, beginning in our fourth full week together (Thursday, October 3), the formalities of a traditional university lecture will make way for in-class performance. I will be dividing the class into four groups of approximately ten students to take turns running the class.

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 any one of the listed plays of that week, 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 critical, close-reading - skills to the text and then offering options to the actors and/or director. My goal is for 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 not, challenge yourself to pull back a bit and let the other members of your group be in the limelight.

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. You should be prepared to meet outside of class for an hour or two, at least a couple of times, before each performance, and plan on communicating amongst yourselves via e-mail so that members of The Company know their roles for each performance. Part of the challenge is coordinating the schedules of a large group, which they should be as performance cannot happen with just a couple of people. Do your best to accommodate everyone. And it's my hope that you'll even get to be friends rather than just colleagues.

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. For this post-performance discussion, while The Company takes its break, the rest of the class will get into its 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; be prepared to talk about them with your group in preparing your questions. 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 investigate 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). Ultimately, colleague criticism should be helpful and respectful.

When the break is 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.

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, and on your willingness to push yourself in new directions. 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 Thursday discussions.

I do not permit the use of laptops or tablets in the classroom unless a student has an accommodation for its use. Phone use in class is also prohibited. Please turn off your phones before class begins.

Attendance:

Regular attendance and engagement are the keys to doing well at this assignment. 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 any Thursday, without prior leave, you will lose 1/20 marks. Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debarring a student from taking the final examination.

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.