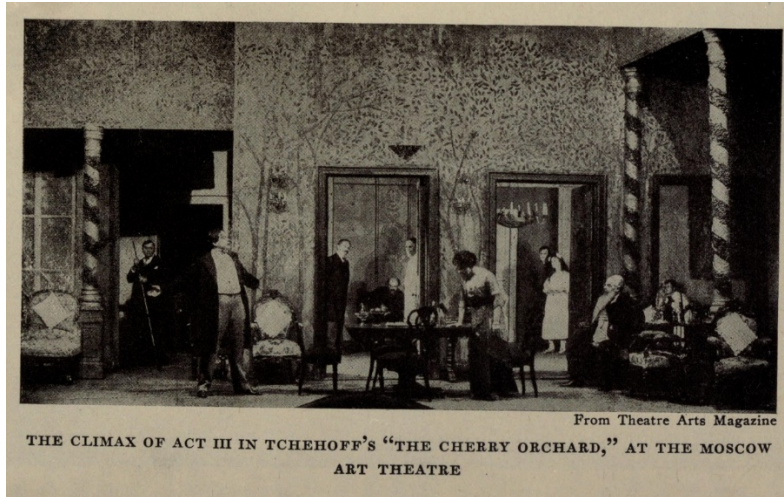


Department of English & Writing Studies

**English 2041F (001)**

**Special Topics in Drama: Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard***  
Fall 2023



### Course Description

In this course, students participating in a major Western University theatre production explore in theory and practice approaches to text in performance. Only students working as an actor, or in such major production roles as stage manager, assistant stage manager, lighting, props or costume maker may enroll. Permission of the Chair of Undergraduate Studies is required to enroll.

### **Objectives:**

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Perform a modern tragi-comedy
- Write a critically engaged essay about the play and its performance history
- Present logical and reasoned arguments about the play with a sophisticated use of evidence
- Demonstrate familiarity with the historical context of modern drama
- Show knowledge of the reception history of the play from its time to our present moment

### Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

First Essay (500-750 words) 10%  
Second Essay (2500 words) 30%  
Third Essay (750-1000 words) 20%  
Performance Evaluation (see below) 40%

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

### Essay Topics

#### **Essay 1: Scene Analysis (500-750 words) 10%: Due Oct. 12**

Choose ONE scene from the play, and in a 500-750-word essay analyze the scene in terms of such elements as theme, literary devices, and patterns of imagery, character development, staging techniques, and relationship to the play as a whole. **MLA 8 or 9 format**

#### **Essay 2: Research Essay (2000-2500 words) 30%: Due Nov. 30**

Create your own research topic about the performance history of this play. You might examine such topics as different styles of theatre and acting, adaptations for stage or film, designs for sets, costume, and props, music, or another performance element. Write a critically engaged essay of 2500 words. Use MLA format, and engage with at least THREE primary sources (e.g., plays, films, interviews, memoirs, reviews, programs, musical recordings) and at least THREE secondary sources (e.g., scholarly essays, articles, or chapters about the play, or books, articles about Chekhov and/or his theatre).

Be sure to talk to me at the beginning of the term about your ideas for this essay.

#### **Essay 3: Narrative Essay (750-1000 words) 20%: Due Dec. 14**

Write an essay of 750-1000 words explaining your role in the production and discussing the ways in which this experience has affected your understanding of the play. **MLA 8 or 9 format.**

### Performance Evaluation and Expectations

40% (subdivided below)

#### *Attendance and Punctuality (5%)*

You must attend all rehearsals, classes, meetings, and performances to which you are called. All members of cast and crew must be on time for each call you are given.

#### *Preparation (10%)*

Cast members must research and prepare their roles from the first read-through to final performance. Actors must take careful blocking notes and must observe the off-book deadline punctually. Technical and production staff should also research their work thoroughly and produce set designs and set pieces, properties, costumes, and other necessities in a timely fashion.

#### *Focus (5%)*

Attentiveness and effort during rehearsals and performance will be assessed.

#### *Innovation (5%)*

Contribution of ideas and initiatives will be noted, in the rehearsal process and through the run.

#### *General Progress and Improvement (5%)*

Your attention to the director's and the stage manager's notes and your effort at improving performance or production work will be assessed.

#### *Overall Professionalism (10%)*

Respect towards the entire company, UWO staff, and the physical theatre, properties, and equipment will be noted. Commitment to the production, willingness to assist with production matters, and overall work ethic will be assessed, along with flexibility and problem-solving abilities. Clear communication of concerns and ideas will count.

*Innovation (5%)*

Contribution of ideas and initiatives will be noted, in the rehearsal process and through the run.

*General Progress and Improvement (5%)*

Your attention to the director's and the stage manager's notes and your effort at improving performance or production work will be assessed.

*Overall Professionalism (10%)*

Respect towards the entire company, UWO staff, and the physical theatre, properties, and equipment will be noted. Commitment to the production, willingness to assist with production matters, and overall work ethic will be assessed, along with flexibility and problem-solving abilities. Clear communication of concerns and ideas will count.

Duties of Production Crew

*Stage Manager:* Attend all auditions, interviews, and rehearsals, as well as each performance. Write blocking notes, props notes, and technical cues into prompt script. Supervise two ASMs (see below). Give the calls to all cast members and needed production staff for rehearsals and run of show. Call the cues during the run of the show. Take charge of dressing rooms, green room, and stage during rehearsals and run. Head up technical crew during rehearsals and run.  
*Assistant Stage Managers (ASMs—two):* Work with Stage Manager on keeping blocking and technical notes, and on calling cast members for rehearsals and run. Head up the running crew for the run of the show. Assist with properties, costumes, costume changes, and other cues.

*Costume Designer:* In consultation with the director, design and build, rent and/or borrow costumes for the run. Measure all cast members and draw up costume plot. Provide rehearsal skirts for female cast members in early rehearsal period. Organize and supervise two costume assistants. Take charge of costumes during run. Ensure return of borrowed and rented costumes after closing night. Submit all receipts to Director.

*Costume Assistants:* Assist Costume Designer during design process, measuring, and rehearsals. Assist in building, sewing, and altering costumes. Help in any costume rental or borrowing. Assist with costumes during run—changes, repairs, laundry, etc. Help return costumes at end of run.

*Properties Designer:* In consultation with director, costume, and set designers, design and build, purchase, rent, or borrow props before production week. Locate and borrow needed furniture for run. Organize and supervise running, maintenance, storage, repair, and replacement of props during tech and dress rehearsals, as well as during run. Return props at end of run. Submit all receipts to Director.

*Composer/Music Director:* Compose incidental, pre-show, intermission, and after-show music.

*Choreographer:* Choreograph needed dances and movements in the show.

*Fight Choreographer:* Choreograph safe and effective fights and combat scenes.

*Production Photographer/Videographer/Web Designer:* Photograph cast and crew for programme and publicity stills to display on campus and elsewhere. Film rehearsal and/or show for record. Design and maintain production web site (linked to English department site).

*Publicity Manager and Programme Designer:* In consultation with director and producer, organize all publicity: flyers, teasers, posters, print and online advertising and media releases. Liaise with FIMS and with the USC and the *Gazette* and *Western News*, as well as London media, in order to set up television, newspaper, and online interviews and other coverage. With producer, organize pre-show ticket sales to large classes in English department and possibly other departments.

*Box Office Manager (depending on venue):* With Publicity Manager, organize and run selling of tickets pre-show to UWO classes, as well as at box office locations. Help manage box office during run. Look after box office receipts.

*Running Crew, Lighting Crew, Sound Crew:* Responsible for running technical elements of the show.

### 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](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. See <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

### **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>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

### 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.

Timetable

**Week**

Sept.7	Introduction, meet and greet, talk about the play
Sept.12-14	Table Talk; Script read
Sept.19-21	Table Talk; Block/Work Act 1
Sept.26-28	Block/Work Act 2
Oct. 3-5	Block/Work Act 3
Oct.10-12	Block/Work Act 4; <b>Essay 1 Due Oct.12</b>
Oct.17-19	First Stumble through
Oct.24-26	Work needed scenes
Oct.30-5	<b>Fall Reading Week</b>
Nov.7-9	Work needed scenes
Nov.14-16	Run whole show. <b>Nov.16 is OFF BOOK DEADLINE</b>
Nov.21-23	Work needed scenes
Nov.28-30	Run show with props and costumes; <b>Essay 2 Due Nov. 30</b>

**Production Week (all evenings):**

Mon. Dec.4	Load-in and tech
Tues. Dec.5	Dress rehearsal
Wed. Dec.6	Opening Night
Thurs. Dec. 7	Second Night
Fri. Dec. 8	Third Night
Sat. Dec.9	Closing Night
Tues. Dec. 12	<b>Essay 3 Due Dec. 14</b>