

Department of English & Writing Studies  
Theatre Studies Program

**Theatre Studies 2204F (001)/English 2402F (001)**  
**Dramatic Forms and Genres: The Greeks to Shakespeare**  
Fall 2026

**Instructor:** Dr M. J. Kidnie  
mjkidnie@uwo.ca

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 2:30-3:30, and  
by appointment (Zoom) mjkidnie@uwo.ca

**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of any 1000-level or above “E” or combination of two 1000-level or above “F/G” courses from any department in the following Faculties: Arts and Humanities, School of Humanities (Brescia), Information and Media Studies (FIMS), or Music; or from any of the following additional Departments: Anthropology, English (King’s), English and Cultural Studies (Huron), History (Main and Affiliates), Philosophy (Affiliates), Political Science (Main and Affiliates), the Religious Studies (Affiliates), or permission of the Department.

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.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the range of plays and theatre practices that shaped the first two millennia of theatre. Landmark texts will be studied in the context of the diverse theatre spaces, festivals, and political cultures in which the drama first came into being. 3 hours, 0.5 course.

**Objectives:**

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

- analyze a range of mainstream and alternative theatrical forms and genres in terms of their cultural production
- assess the aesthetic, ethical, social, economic, and political dimensions of theatrical works using a range of critical approaches
- conceptualize, design, communicate, and implement creative academic projects, both alone and in collaboration with diverse others.

Course Materials (all texts are required and are available at the Bookstore. You need physical copies of the Greek plays for the in-class assignment and I highly recommend purchasing physical copies of all of these texts)

Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, ed. Robert Fagles (\$26)

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, ed. Alan Sommerstein (\$16)

Broadview Anthology, customized to contain Anon., *Everyman*; The Wakefield Master, *The Second Shepherd's Play*; The Chester *Play of Noah's Flood*; Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (\$25.84)

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (\$12.99)

We're also seeing a live performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Stratford Festival on Saturday, September 26 at 8:00 p.m.! Tickets are \$25+tax, \$34+tax, or \$45+tax. The return bus, per student, will cost \$20. It will leave at 6pm from Lambton Drive, near Alumni Hall at Western University and return to the same spot.

Note that we're attending closing night of a hugely popular show so tickets will sell out. Please book your theatre ticket and return bus (if needed) *today*. To book, go to <https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/offer/UWO-Offer>. Make sure that you have your ticket sent to you by email and that you purchase a bus ticket at the same time.

Plays We Will Study (all of these are required reading):

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

Aeschylus, *The Libation-Bearers*

Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*

Anon., *Everyman*

The Wakefield Master, *The Second Shepherd's Play*

The Chester *Play of Noah's Flood*

Preston, *Cambises*

Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Methods of Evaluation

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

1500-word essay – a performance analysis of the Stratford *Dream*. (20%).

3 in-class quizzes (your best two count towards your grade) – 5%

Scene staging – 20%

Scene staging write-up (1000 words) – 10%

Final exam – 35%

Participation – 10%

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website.

### Additional Information

#### **Late Paper Policy**

If you submit a paper after the due date, the paper will be counted as late. The grade will be reduced by a penalty of two marks (2%) for each calendar day that it is late.

Extensions will only be considered if supported by a request for accommodation sent by students' Academic Counsellors in their home faculty (see below, "Academic Consideration").

### Statements

#### **Academic Consideration**

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
  - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
  - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
  - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term per course**.

Instructors may designate one assignment or assessment as exempt from this allowance. In this course, requests for academic consideration pertaining to the Scene Staging **must** be accompanied by supporting documentation.

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

#### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

### **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence**

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **Intellectual Property/Copyright**

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

### **Accommodation Policies**

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

### **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.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of AI tools such as ChatGPT to create content that is submitted as one's own. In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. Students must however critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, however students are expected to

uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

### **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/>

Academic Support & Engagement <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.

### Schedule of Classes and Assignments

1500-word essay – 20% (due October 9)  
3 in-class quizzes – 5% (your best two count towards your grade)  
Scene staging – 20% (November 30 and December 2)  
Scene staging write-up (1000 words) – 10% (due December 9)  
Final exam – 35%  
Participation (quantity and quality of input) – 10%

#### **Timetable**

##### **SEPTEMBER**

9 Introduction

14 Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

16 Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

21 Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

23 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

*Dream* at Stratford – Saturday, September 26 at 8:00 p.m.

28 Class discussion of *Dream*. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

30 No class – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

##### **OCTOBER**

5 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*. In-class quiz.

7 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*.

Staging analysis of *Dream* due October 9.

October 10-18 – THANKSGIVING AND READING WEEK

19 Aeschylus, *The Libation-Bearers*

21 Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*

26 Anon., *Everyman*

28 Anon., *Everyman*. In-class quiz.

##### **NOVEMBER**

2 The Wakefield Master, *The Second Shepherd's Play*

4 The Chester *Play of Noah's Flood*

9 Preston, *Cambises*

11 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*. In-class quiz.

16 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*

18 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*

23 Studio Week

25 Studio Week

##### **NOVEMBER/DECEMBER**

30 Stagings

## 2 Stagings

7 Review

9 Review – Staging write-ups due today

### PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

We will be seeing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Stratford Festival on Saturday, September 26 at 8pm. The purpose of this assignment is to strengthen your critical analysis of Shakespeare in performance. Write an essay of 1,500 words that analyzes the Stratford production. If you're unable to attend the *Dream* trip, please contact the instructor to discuss an alternative performance-oriented assignment.

I'm not especially interested to know whether or not you liked the production. This sort of evaluative judgement will probably emerge over the course of your essay, but the primary emphasis must be on *analysis*. Think about some aspect of *Dream* that you found interesting or troubling or otherwise remarkable as you read the play. When you turn to your essay, focus on one or two production choices from the show that you consider especially important in terms of how the Stratford company interpreted the play. You might be struck by choreography, lighting and sound effects, striking gestures or props, costuming decisions, or unexpected emphases introduced by actors that introduced a reading of the play that hadn't occurred to you. In your essay, describe the production choice(s) concisely, and then analyse how it or they shaped a certain interpretation of the action, either in terms of the overall action, or in that particular scene. You might analyze the choices in terms of the tone of the production (happy, melancholy), power dynamics between characters on stage, individual characterisations, homoerotic tensions, the treatment of revenge – the potential interpretive significances are up to you.

Your essay will be graded according to the following criteria:

An ability to notice and build into your analysis significant production details;

An ability to construct an argument that analyses how these staging choices shaped a particular interpretation of the play;

An ability to communicate your insights effectively: I will be looking for grammatically correct sentences, coherent essay structure, and careful presentation (no typos, titles italicized, pages numbered, essay titled, footnotes and bibliography presented according to MLA guidelines, etc).

I would recommend taking a notepad and pen into the theatre with you, so you can discreetly jot down striking details as they occur: you might otherwise have trouble remembering how exactly a scene or moment was played. 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'll discuss the production in class on September 28, and your essays are due on October 9.

The price of the theatre ticket is listed above in the Course Materials section and return bus transportation from Western is \$20.

To book your Stratford theatre tickets and bus transportation visit <https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/offer/UWO-Offer>. Make sure you get your theatre and transportation tickets emailed to you (don't collect them at the box office).