

2408W. Modern Drama

3.00 credits

Prerequisites: ENGL 1007 or 1010 or 1011 or 2011.

Grading Basis: Graded

Modern British, American, and Continental drama, with the reading and discussion of some 15-20 representative plays

Course Outline

This course will ask students to consider the role theatre fulfils in modern society today by reading, discussing and seeing a range of British, American, and Continental plays from the late 19th century to the present day. The class will include both reading plays and watching streamed and live theatre productions. We will consider both canonical playwrights, like Chekhov, Ibsen, Tennessee Williams and Oscar Wilde, and new writing from emerging talents.

Course objectives and outcomes

- Exposure to various forms, scales and styles of theatrical production through live and streamed performance.
- Exposure to various forms and styles of dramatic literature through textual study.
- Development of critical and creative response to all aspects of modern drama through frequent practice of informal and formal writing/presentation/discussion.
- Study of social, cultural and political context of drama production.
- Demonstration of understanding of audience expectations, genres and conventions appropriate to communicating in dramatic literature and production.
- Development of appropriate critical writing skills, including the use of secondary sources.

Assessment

- **Two papers of 1000 and 2000 words (60%)**

Prompts will be released in advance. Students must choose one prompt and respond to all aspects of the prompt.

- **One In-Class Presentation (20%)**

The presentation can address any of the issues discussed in class or introduce new topics within the field of modern drama. It can be a personal reflection on your experiences or a more research-based presentation. You might, for instance, want to introduce or review a play, address an aspect of theatre production, or an individual theatre, director, writer or other practitioner. The presentation should be at least 15 minutes in length and may include digital support. Following the presentation, the student should lead a discussion of at least 10 minutes and be prepared to answer questions. If your presentation is on a play we have studied it must not be one you have discussed in a critical evaluation.

- **Class Participation (20%)**

You will be expected to contribute to class discussions, offer views on the plays, ask informed questions following presentations, respond to guest speakers etc.

Methods of Assessing Student Achievement:

The following rubrics will be used for grading your assessments.

Rubric for Grading Presentations:

1. The topic has been well *researched*.
2. The presentation includes strong *visuals*.
3. The speaker speaks *clearly* and enthusiastically.
4. The material is well *organized*.
5. The presentation includes an *interactive* element (quiz, discussion questions, task, game etc)
6. The presentation fits within the guidelines for *length*.
7. The presentation includes a *works cited* (make sure these are verified sources)
8. There is evidence of *collaboration*.

Rubric for Grading papers:

1. The opening effectively creates *interest* and clearly states the student's critical position.
2. It fits within the guidelines for *length*.
3. It contains close reference to the *play(s)* under discussion, including short quotes where applicable. Be specific.
4. It demonstrates an awareness of the play's original *context*.
5. It provides a strong personal *critical* perspective (critical is not necessarily the same as disparaging).
6. It finishes *emphatically*.
7. The writing is clear, concise, and essentially *error-free*.
8. The essay contains at least 2 *secondary sources* (journal articles, approved scholarly websites, class handouts, books, interviews etc).
9. All references to the production are in the *past tense* and all references to the play are in the *present tense*.
10. The essay is well *organized* and follows a logical progression.
11. It employs *precise vocabulary*.
12. It avoids *plot* summary.
13. The essay addresses all aspects of the *prompt*. The full prompt should be reproduced at the top of the essay before the title.
14. All references are cited using an acceptable scholarly *format* (MLA, Harvard, MHRA etc).

Texts and Course Resources

Theatre Performances

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Core Texts (required reading)

August Strindberg, *Miss Julie*
 Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*
 Anton Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*
 Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*
 George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*
 Federico García Lorca, *Yerma*
 Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*
 Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*
 Harold Pinter, *Betrayal*
 Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin In The Sun*

John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*
Shalagh Delaney, *A Taste Of Honey*
Sarah Kane, *4.48 Psychosis*
Michael Frayn, *Noises Off*
Sarah Ruhl, *Orlando*
Lucy Prebble, *The Effect*
James Graham, *Quiz*
Jackie Sibblies Drury, *Fairview*