“The theatre is a place where one has time for the
problems of people to whom one would show the door
if they came to one's office for a job.”

-Tennessee Williams

This famous photograph of the Paterson Strike Pageant provides a visual corollary for the theme of this class. In
this picture, the silk workers, members of the radical labor union the International Workers of the World or the
“Wobblies” as they were called, who had been on strike in Paterson, New Jersey, held a massive pageant in
Madison Square Garden. The workers performed the part of themselves, and the pageant recreated the police
brutality in the killing of Valentino Modestino on stage
before an audience of over 15,000 New Yorkers.

In this class, we will read modern plays which thematize
various controversial topics and combine the world of art
and politics. Focusing on the way different dramatic
productions explore the relationship of the individual to
culture, sexuality, racial identity, religious beliefs, capitalism, the nation, and literary form, we will consider
“politics” in broad terms. At the same time, we will learn the essential concepts and methods that are central to
the study of modern drama as a literary discipline. This course will familiarize you with the basic skills to
analyze a text closely through your own reading and writing and the vocabulary to discuss these plays with your classmates.
### Required Texts

J.M. Synge, *Playboy of the Western World* (1907)
Eugene O’Neill, *Emperor Jones* (1920)
Zora Neale Hurston, “Color Struck,” *Fire!!* (PDF, 1926)
Lillian Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (1934)
Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage* (1939)
Printed from Blackboard: Glossary of Dramatic Terms from *The Norton Anthology of Drama*

### Assignments and Evaluation (Papers Submitted Via Blackboard)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td><strong>Little Magazine Project (3-4 pages):</strong></td>
<td>Read the play “Color Struck” in <em>Fire!!</em> and consider its context within the magazine. What other items appear in that issue? How might they complicate or alter your reading of the play? How do the editors set up the layout of the issue? Look up one historical fact that relates to the play. How does that help your reading? Your essay should make an argument based on these various elements.</td>
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| **Drama Critic: (3-4 pages):**                                           | We will attend a play as a class on May 2
d at 8 PM at the University Theatre (bring your student ID). Imagine you are a drama critic. Part 1: After we see the play, write up a one-page review, considering all the elements of the play we’ve seen. How did a live performance alter your experience? Which staging elements worked for you? Which didn’t? Part 2: Drawing on your review, imagine you are responsible for producing one of the plays we’ve read. How would you stage it? Write up a two-page production manual describing how you would put on the play. Include as much detail as you can and be creative. |
| **Analysis Paper (3-4 pages):**                                          | Choose a play from the texts we’ve read and write a close reading analysis of the play using the terminology and skills you’ve learned this term. OR Creative Performance: In lieu of writing a final paper, you may opt to perform a pre-approved scene from one of the plays we’ve read this term in front of the class and write up a two-page report on the process. Because this will require preparation and group work, I will be sending around a sign-up sheet for this option early in the term. |
| **Quizzes:**                                                              | Weekly quizzes will test your reading for that day and may occur on any class day. These quizzes are substantial. |
| **Blog:**                                                                 | I will send you an invite for the class blog. Every week, you will post at least one comment to the blog by Friday afternoon or respond to one other comment in a substantial way. The content of these posts can be whatever you want as long as the comments relate to the class. You could post about film versions of the plays we read, films of other plays, paper ideas, or class concepts. I want you to be creative with your posts. Participation: Because your success in this class requires participation in the classroom, you will only be subtracted points based on failure to participate. Don’t be afraid to add your opinion on a text. You will go much further with bravery than apathy. Not participating is not a wise strategy. |
| **Incompletes:**                                                          | Incompletes will only be granted in rare cases of serious documented illness or injury; all incompletes will be arranged through the Office of the Dean or the Office of Academic Advising. |
Academic Honesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Learning Outcomes for the English Department:
1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
4. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis.

Attendance: You are allowed three absences before your absence will be reflected in the final grade. Four absences will lower your final grade by 1/3 of a letter, five by a whole letter, six will equal automatic fail.

Late Work: Work handed in late will be reduced by one third of a letter grade for each day late. For example, a B+ essay that has been turned in a day late will earn a B grade. If you are absent from class due to illness, an electronic submission sent by the time class regularly begins will be accepted. Otherwise, the assignment will be considered late unless you've made prior arrangements with me.

Grading and Expectations: “Introductory” and “100-level” does not mean “easy.” You will be held to English department standards in terms of your in-class participation, your display of course mastery on exams and quizzes, and the structure, argument, grammar, and mechanics of your writing. The reading and written work for this course may be heavy at times. The English department's grading policy is on Blackboard.

Access:
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoacc@uoregon.edu.
Course Schedule (Subject to Change): Readings are due ON the day they are listed.

**Week 1 Politics of the Nation**
- Mon 3-31 Introductions: What is Literature, and Why Should We Study It?
- Wed 4-2 Synge, *Playboy of the Western World* (Act 1-1.5)
- Fri 4-4 Synge, *Playboy of the Western World* (Act 1.5-2)

**Week 2**
- Mon 4-7 Synge, *Playboy of the Western World* (Act 2-2.5)
- Wed 4-9 Synge, *Playboy of the Western World* (Act 2.5-3)
- Fri 4-11 Synge, *Playboy of the Western World* (Act 3)

**Week 3 Politics of Race**
- Mon 4-14 Hurston, “Color Struck” (Act 1)
- Wed 4-16 Hurston, “Color Struck” (Act 2)
- Fri 4-18 O’Neill, *Emperor Jones* (Scene 1)

**Week 4**
- Mon 4-21 O’Neill, *Emperor Jones* (Scenes 2 and 3), **Little Magazines Paper Due**
- Wed 4-23 O’Neill, *Emperor Jones* (Scenes 4, 5, and 6)
- Fri 4-25 O’Neill, *Emperor Jones* (Scenes 7 and 8)

**Week 5 Politics of Sexuality**
- Mon 4-28 Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (Act 1)
- Wed 4-30 Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (Act 2)
- Fri 5-2 Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (Act 3)

**Week 6**
- Mon 5-5 Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (Act 3), Review for Exam
- Wed 5-7 **Midterm Exam (in class)**
- Fri 5-9 *Mother Courage* (Scenes 1 and 2), Attend UO Theatre’s Performance of Wedekind’s *Spring Awakening* at 7 PM

**Week 7 Politics of War and Capitalism**
- Mon 5-12 Brecht, *Mother Courage* (Scenes 3 and 4)
- Wed 5-14 Brecht, *Mother Courage* (Scenes 5 and 6)
- Fri 5-16 Brecht, *Mother Courage* (Scenes 7 and 8)

**Week 8**
- Mon 5-19 Brecht, *Mother Courage* (Scenes 9 and 10)
- Wed 5-21 Brecht, *Mother Courage* (Scenes 11 and 12)
- Fri 5-23 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Act 1), **Drama Critic Paper Due**

**Week 9 Politics of Form**
- Mon 5-26 Memorial Day NO CLASS
- Fri 5-30 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Act 2), Potential Performances

**Week 10**
- Fri 6-6 **Analysis Paper Due**

**Images**
- Figure 1 “Paterson Strike Pageant” retrieved from artemagazine.com
- Figure 2 “Waiting for Godot” retrieved from broadwaytectera.blogspot.com
- Figure 3 “Mother Courage” retrieved from rankopedenia.com
- Figure 4 “Defiance from Emperor Jones” retrieved from amistadresearchcentre.org
- Figure 5 “Emperor Jones 1933 Movie Poster” retrieved from weirdwildworld.com