

## English 105: Introduction to Drama

Spring 2015  
CRN 32004  
MWF 1:00pm - 1:50pm  
Anstett Hall 191  
Office Hours MWF 2-3pm

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### Course Description

ENG 105 is an introduction to drama, one of the major genres in literary studies. This is, therefore, a literature course, and we will approach these theatrical texts as literature and will read, discuss, and analyze plays in order to become familiar with the major styles, techniques, and conventions that characterize both dramatic literature and literature in a broader sense.

Readings will include texts that meet our expectations of what theatre is, as well as texts that may challenge those assumptions; our job will be, therefore, to figure out what makes these texts *drama* instead of ... something else. What counts as theatre? What *feels* like theatre? What stories can theatre tell that other forms can't and, conversely, are there stories that cannot be told through a theatrical apparatus? To answer (or, more accurately, attempt to answer) these questions, we will need to balance our interpretation and analysis of dramatic texts as texts – as literature on a page – with our exploration of their performative dimensions – as words in performance. This will necessitate your active and enthusiastic participation in class as we discuss, read, and (yes) act out these plays.

As a basic introduction to texts, issues and questions that are central to the study of dramatic literature, this course satisfies the university's Group Requirement in the Arts and Letters category. It does not count for credit in the English Major; English Majors are required to enroll in the department's more historically oriented and comprehensive Introduction to the English Major sequence, ENG 220 & 222.

### Required Texts

1. *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles [must be Robert Fagles translation]
2. *A Doll's House*, Henrik Ibsen [must be Peter Watts translation]
3. *A Number*, Carol Churchill
4. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Luigi Pirandello
5. *Collected Shorter Plays*, Samuel Beckett (CSP)
6. *The Sound of Music* (1965) – available on reserve in the library, or it can be rented digitally via Google Play (or procured however else you choose)
7. Selection of short avant-garde and experimental plays via Blackboard – you must print this supplement out and bring a copy to class on the days we read these texts

→ I would prefer that you rely upon the exact texts listed (see the bookstore for all the relevant details), but since dramatic texts are cited by the line, other versions are acceptable.

### Glossary of key literary terms:

In order to introduce you to the key theoretical terms and concepts of dramatic literature, I will draw from the glossary of drama terms linked below. I will reference these in class; it will be your responsibility to compile your own list of the definitions as they are presented in lecture.

[http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student\\_view0/drama\\_glossary.html](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/drama_glossary.html)

## Assignments

Full assignment sheets for each assignment will be provided in advance of deadlines and will be available via Blackboard.

### **Weekly Quiz**

Expect roughly one short answer reading quiz per week; there will be a total of 8 quizzes. The goal of these quizzes is to show your engagement with the text at hand and the key literary concepts we will be discussing in class. Quiz dates will not be announced in advance, but will comprise the first 10 minutes of class one day per week. Tardy students will not be given extra time to complete quizzes and quizzes cannot be made up, but you may **either** miss one quiz *or* drop your lowest score.

### **Extra Credit**

Because plays live not only between the pages of our course books but also on the stage, you have the opportunity to gain extra points for going to see a theatrical performance during the term. In order to reap this exciting benefit, you must attend a play, provide a copy of the program, and write a one page review of the show that *not only* summarizes what you saw but also provides a brief analysis of the show *and* applies at least one theoretical term or concept (in **bold**, please) to that analysis. Extra credit gives you the chance to *either* drop your lowest quiz score or erase a missed class; extra credit is available one time per student and must be turned in during office hours no more than one week following the production.

### **Project #1: Scene Kit**

Most “kits” provide materials and instructions for you to construct an object (a model plane, a bicycle, a dollhouse). This “scene kit” assignment asks you to *deconstruct* a single scene from a play, analyze its various parts, and then *reconstruct* its meaning. For our first assignment, you will deeply analyze one scene and perform a number of tasks to deconstruct how it generates its meaning. With this project, you will learn how to spot essential theatrical elements in a scene as well as apply important terminology to a text.

### **Project #2: Your Choice Project**

During week 5, you will be instructed to bring in texts from outside of class that you believe can be treated as theatre. Think about political protests, reality TV, flash mobs, public proposals, practical jokes, improv everywhere, etc. On Monday, I will bring some examples to share and we will discuss. On Wednesday, each student will bring in an example of their own; you will write up a 2-3 page summary of this example, explaining what the text is, why you think it should be treated as a theatrical text, and what its cultural significance is. On Friday, we will break into groups to examine some of these examples, exploring the way each text presents plot, setting, characters, major themes, staging, etc.

### **Project #3: Creative Analysis**

This final essay will be 3-4 pages in length and will ask you to consider how the theoretical terms and concepts of the first half of class are at work in one of the texts. You have three options for this paper:

1. Set Design: using the theoretical terms and concepts we’ve discussed so far, explain how you would design the set for one of our plays.
2. Blocking: using the theoretical terms and concepts we’ve discussed so far, explain how you would direct or block a crucial scene from one of our plays.

3. **Performative Direction:** using the theoretical terms and concepts we've discussed so far, explain how you would direct one of the characters from one of our plays.

You **may not** simply describe the set design, blocking, or performative direction of your chosen text; instead, you must describe your creative interpretation *and* use our theoretical terms and concepts to justify these choices.

### Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will take place in class during week seven. This exam will require you to both answer the kind of questions you've been practicing on our weekly quizzes and also to place these texts in conversation with one another in a short answer format. You will therefore be asked to consider how the kinds of plays we've been working with are related to each other, to the theoretical terms and concepts, and to the theatrical movements out of which they arise. The midterm exam will cover the plays and concepts presented in the first half of the course.

### Grade Breakdown

Weekly Quizzes	10%
Project 1	15%
Project 2	25%
Project 3	30%
Midterm Exam	20%

## Course Policies

### Late Assignment Policy

All assigned work is due at the beginning of class. If you must miss class, turn in your work before our class meeting to receive credit. Late work will drop one letter grade for each day that it is late; work will not be accepted over one week late. I do not accept work via email.

### Attendance

Attendance is required. You may miss the equivalent of one week of class meetings (3 classes) for any reason – I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Additional absences will each lower your course grade 1/3 of a letter grade each. Any absence after two full weeks of missed class *may* result in course failure. Any absence after three full weeks of missed class *will* result in course failure.

You are responsible for anything you miss if you are not in class. Make friends with your peers and prepare to contact them to borrow any materials, notes, or life-changing revelations you may have missed if you are absent.

In order to be considered present in class, you must show up on time. Tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful and as such, three tardies will be counted as one absence. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to tell me after class that you were tardy or you will be marked absent.

### Class Conduct and Technology Use

Cell phones and personal computers are highly disruptive to an in-class environment. Phones must be turned on silent before the start of class and you may not text, answer, or make calls in the classroom. Any use of a cell phone – talking, texting, or Snapchatting– during class time will

result in an automatic absence for the day. Unless you have a documented access requirement, computers are not allowed in the classroom. I reserve the right to either ask you to leave class or mark you absent without notice if I see you using cell phones, etc., in my class.

You must arrive in class having already prepared any required assignment, reading, or preparatory work to be considered present. You must bring the assigned texts to class.

Class time spent texting, computing, reading outside material, chatting, sleeping, staring off into middle distance, or drooling on your desk does not constitute attendance and I reserve the right to mark you absent for such behavior. Rude, disrespectful, or distracting behavior will likewise cause you to be marked absent.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work submitted in this course must be your own, must be written exclusively for this course, and must follow formatting guidelines. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented using MLA citation format. Please refer to the summary of the Code of Student Conduct on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>. In cases where academic dishonesty has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course is the standard practice of the Composition Program. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

### **Accessibility**

If you have a disability (physical, psychological, or learning) that you think may affect your ability to participate in this class, please see me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements for your full access to all classroom activities. The UO and I are fully committed to creating inclusive learning environments; if you feel you need assistance accessing additional resources in order to make your time in my classroom and at this university successful, contact me and I will do my best to help. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoac@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoac@uoregon.edu).

### **Contact**

Your success in this class is your responsibility, not mine. Be communicative and reach out to me. If for any reason you have to miss class, be late, turn in work late, etc., speak to me AHEAD OF TIME. I am almost always willing to work with you if you speak to me in advance. If you are not proactive and do not get in touch with me, I will abide by the letter of the above policies; if you are proactive and, say, drop by my office hours, not only will you probably solve your problems, but I might also make you coffee or give you a mint.

A note about emails: I will do my best to respond to your emails as quickly as I can, though it may take me up to 48 hours to respond depending on the circumstances. Last minute questions may not garner you last minute responses – plan accordingly.

**Your ongoing enrollment in this course indicates that you have read this syllabus and accept the requirements and expectations it states.**

**Tentative Schedule of Assignments** (subject to change)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Theme</b>		<b>Assignments</b>
<b>1</b>	The Classics	M	Introductions
		W	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> (pgs 159-187, lns 1-572)
		F	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> (pgs 188-210, lns 573-997)
<b>2</b>	Realism and Naturalism	M	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> (pgs 211-251, lns 998-end)
		W	<i>A Doll's House</i> (Act I)
		F	<i>A Doll's House</i> (Act II)
<b>3</b>	Contemporary Drama	M	<i>A Doll's House</i> (Act III)
		W	<i>A Number</i> Paper #1
		F	<i>A Number</i> (acts 1-2)
<b>4</b>	Meta-theatre	M	<i>A Number</i> (acts 3-5)
		W	<i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i> (act 1)
		F	<i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i> (act 2)
<b>5</b>	Representations: Your Choice Week	M	Your choice (day 1): alternative theatre examples
		W	Your choice (day 2): Your Choice Project
		F	Your choice (day 3): in-class analysis
<b>6</b>	Narrative and Linearity	M	"Krapp's Last Tape" (CSP)
		W	"Play" and "Come and Go" (CSP)
		F	"Not I" and "Footfalls" (CSP)
<b>7</b>	Review	M	<i>The Sound of Music</i>
		W	Midterm review
		F	Midterm
<b>8</b>		M	"King Ubu" Acts I-III (PDF)

	Absurdity	W	“King Ubu” Acts IV-V (PDF)
		F	“Feet” and “Detonation” (PDF)
<b>9</b>	The Avant-Garde	M	“The Spurt of Blood” (PDF)
		W	“Gas Heart” (PDF)
		F	“The Yellow Sound” (PDF)
<b>10</b>	Experimentation	M	“Act Without Words I” and “ Act Without Words II” (CSP)
		W	“Rockaby” (CSP)
		F	“Breath” (CSP) Paper #3