English 105—Introduction to Drama

Instructor: Sarah Stoeckl  
Email (best): sstoeckl@uoregon.edu
Class time: MWF 3–3:50pm
Classroom: Chapman 204  
Office: PLC 105
Fall 2011  
Office Hours: Monday 1-3pm; Wednesday 2-3pm;
CRN: 12623  
and by appointment
Phone: 6-1519

Writing Associate for ENG 105: Chris Stimac, cstimac@uoregon.edu
Contact Chris for tutoring help with writing and conceiving your papers.

Course Description: Because this is an English class, we will first focus on drama as literature and read, think, and discuss it as writing. However, given the performative and collaborative nature of drama, we will also think of these plays more broadly as “texts” that can and should be interpreted in dynamic ways. This is an introductory course but rather than doing a survey of drama throughout its history we focus primarily on “modern” dramas. We begin by defining modern drama as dramatic texts from the early to mid-20th century that aim to be experimental in form, content, or both. We will also question and complicate the term “modern” by looking at an “early modern” (or “Renaissance”) play and a “post-modern” play. Because this course teaches you to understand and interpret literary drama, assignments including class discussion, papers, and exams will all help you to learn the material and show your mastery of the concepts and ideas discussed in class. After completing this course, you will be able to read drama critically and closely in order to gain a sense of how it works as literature but also what it may be doing or saying about the world and human experience. You will also be taught and expected to write clearly and coherently about drama. These are skills that you can use when reading literary work or college work; watching movies, commercials, and TV; reading/viewing internet content; and when doing complex thinking about projects in school, life, and work.

Required texts:
The Threepenny Opera, Bertolt Brecht
Trifles, Susan Glaspell
Five Plays, Langston Hughes
Playboy of the Western World, John Millington Synge
R.U.R., Karl Capek
The Children’s Hour, Lilian Helman
Hamlet, William Shakespeare
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Tom Stoppard

Glossary of key literary terms relating to drama: I will post weekly lists of key terms that you should look up relating to the class discussion. These terms will also show up on exams and can and should inform your papers, projects, and discussion of the texts.
http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/drama_glossary.html
Assignments: Full and attentive reading of all assigned stories and essays; participation in class discussion; three short analysis papers, a midterm examination, a final paper or project; and a final examination.

Course Points:
- Class participation/reading: 10 points
- Short Analysis Papers: 10 points each, 30 points total
- Midterm: 10 points
- Final Project/Paper: 30 points
- Final Examination: 20 points.
- Total: 100 points

Assignment descriptions:

Paper #1: Analysis of three versions of the song “Mack the Knife” from The Threepenny Opera. 2 pages. The goal of this paper is to compare/contrast different interpretations of the same source material and to take a critical argumentative stance. What were the key differences you saw between each version? Which did you think was the best interpretation and why? Is there anything you would do differently if you were staging the play now as regards this song? Links and further info available on Blackboard under “Assignments.”

Paper #2: Close Reading. 3-4 pages. Do a close reading of a single scene or a single thematic component of The Threepenny Opera, Trifles, or Soul Gone Home (note: you may not do the “Mack the Knife” scene from Threepenny). Carefully analyze the theme or the scene for its individual meaning and its relevance to the larger play. Aim to make an argument about the play/scene. You should use quotes but you should make sure that you adequately unpack them. Do not do outside research for this assignment; do your own analysis and articulate your thoughts.

Paper #3: Review. 3-4 pages. Write a review of either a. a film version of one of the plays from this class or b. a theater review of a live theater production that you attend this term (does not have to be of one of our plays). In your review, account for interpretive decisions made in the directing, acting, set design, costuming, music, lighting, etc. Give your opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of the production.

Creative Project/Final Essay: For this assignment, you may either write a 5-6 page essay drawing on any one of the plays that we read for the quarter, or you may (either independently or in a small group) design a “creative” project. Creative projects will be accompanied by a 3 page “justification” paper, but will focus on the project itself, which may be a scene performance, sketches of costume designs or staging, a script rewriting a key scene from a play, recording a soundtrack, and so forth. These projects will be shared with the class during week 10. Essays must expand on the basic close-reading technique developed in the first essays (but cannot be on the same play), and connect passages from two individual plays, using key terms and contextual cues learned throughout class discussions and lectures. Those interested in doing a creative project must clear it with me no later than Friday of week 8.

Assignment Policy: Assignments are due at the start of class time on the date given in the syllabus unless otherwise notified. As a general policy, I will not give full credit for late work; to do so would be unfair to students who turn in their work on time. My standard policy is a third of a grade drop for each day an assignment is late. (Thus, an assignment that would receive a “B” but is two days late will receive a “C+,” etc.). However, I do realize that some excuses for late
papers are valid and I will consider those on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions for late work will be extremely rare. Remember that you can always turn in papers early. You may not email work unless I give explicit permission, and a hard copy must still be turned in to me at the next class period. If you have to miss class when an assignment is due, please turn it in early, turn it in under my office door before the start of class, or give it to a friend to turn in for you.

Attendance: Attendance in this course is mandatory and I will take attendance every day. Since much of the learning in this class occurs during class discussions and exercises, it is very important you don’t miss class. Your success requires commitment and attendance, and you cannot “make up” missed class time. You are responsible for all information given in class, even if you are absent. 3 absences are allowed; after 3, your grade will be dropped 3% for each subsequent absence. 3 tardy marks will count as 1 absence. If you are going be more than 10 minutes late for class, do not come; it is disruptive and disrespectful, and will be counted as an absence.

Contacting me: Email is by far the best way to contact me as I check it regularly and generally respond promptly. However, be sure to check the syllabus or assignment descriptions before emailing me questions that may be answered by them. If you don’t hear from me, it’s likely that the answer to your question can be found in the syllabus or assignment description. I also encourage you to talk with me during office hours (or by appointment) about ideas, drafts, questions, etc.

Class Conduct: Disruptions are not acceptable. Cell phones, pagers, mp3 players, or other noise-making items must be turned to silent before class begins. Never read or send text messages, answer calls, or check/write email/facebook/etc. during class. This is a simple matter of respect. While you’re in class, you should focus on class. If I see you texting, checking email, listening to an mp3 player, etc. I will count you absent for the day. Regarding laptops, if you want to take notes on a laptop during class, you must email me your notes that day.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is a form of cheating that is taken very seriously at the University of Oregon, as at all other institutions of higher learning. Plagiarism is passing off someone else’s ideas or words as your own, whether through direct copying or by not acknowledging (by citing sources) where the ideas came from. Let me emphasize again: this is cheating and will be treated as such! All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Student Judicial Affairs website, <http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/index.htm>. Cheating on exams will also not be tolerated. In a first case where plagiarism or cheating has been established, you will receive an “F”/0 points for the assignment; in any subsequent cases you will fail the course. All cheating will be reported to the university and will go on your student record. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Access for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability (physical, psychological, or learning) that you think may affect your ability to succeed in this class, please see me during the
first week of the term so we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to all classroom activities.
*I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule or to assignments at any time.*

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<tr>
<th>Week 1: September 26, 28, 30</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Brecht: Introduction and Act 1</td>
<td>Brecht: Act 2</td>
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<td>Week 2: October 3, 5, 7</td>
<td>Brecht: Act 3</td>
<td>No Class: Paper #1 due by 4pm; email to Sarah</td>
<td>Glaspell: All Guest Lecturer</td>
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<td>Week 3: October 10, 12, 14</td>
<td>Glaspe: Continued</td>
<td>Hughes: <em>Soul Gone Home</em>: All</td>
<td>Hughes: <em>Little Ham</em> Act I</td>
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<td>Week 4: October 17, 19, 21</td>
<td><strong>Close Reading</strong> Paper (#2) Due; Hughes: <em>Little Ham</em>: Acts 2 and 3</td>
<td>Synge: Act 1</td>
<td>Synge: Act 2</td>
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<td>Week 5: October 24, 26, 28</td>
<td>Synge: Act 3</td>
<td><strong>Midterm</strong></td>
<td>Capek: Prologue and Act 1</td>
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<td>Week 6: October 31, November 2, 4</td>
<td>Capek: Act 2</td>
<td>Capek: Act 3</td>
<td>Helman: Act 1</td>
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<td>Week 7: November 7, 9, 11</td>
<td>Helman: Act 2</td>
<td>Helman: Act 3</td>
<td>Shakespeare, <em>Hamlet</em>: Act 1, 3-37</td>
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<td>Week 9: November 21, 23, 25</td>
<td>Stoppard: Act 1</td>
<td>Stoppard: Act 2</td>
<td><strong>No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday</strong></td>
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<td>Week 10: November 28, 30, December 2</td>
<td>Stoppard: Act 3</td>
<td>Creative/Final Project Presentations</td>
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<td>Finals Week: December 5–9</td>
<td>Final: 3:15pm</td>
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