

THR 215 – Dramatic Literature

Location: FAC - Theatre 101 (Green Room)

Credits: 3.0

Time: M/W/F 9:15-10:15 a.m.

Prerequisites: ENGL F111X or concurrent enrollment, or permission of instructor

Instructor: Dr. Brian Cook

Office: FAC – Theatre 104

Email: bcook25@alaska.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays from 1-3 p.m. or by appointment

Office phone: (907) 474-5253

Required texts

1. *Norton Anthology of Drama Second Shorter Edition*, J. Ellen Gainor, Stanton Garner, Jr., Martin Puchner, eds. [Please make sure you are getting the Shorter Second Edition, not the first edition.]

2. *Backwards and Forwards*, David Ball

Both required books are available on 2-hour reserve in the Rasmuson Library, though I recommend that you either rent or purchase the Norton so that you have a copy of the script with you in class.

Plus additional readings as provided by instructor.

Course Description

Reading, analyzing, and categorizing plays as maps for theatrical production. Students will be exposed to a broad range of plays from the classical and contemporary Western canon. Established theories and critical writings about the structure of plays will be explored and discussed to facilitate understanding of dramatic structure and dramaturgy.

Course Goals and Student Outcomes

This course focuses on how to read, understand and analyze, with an eye for performance, both classical and contemporary plays that demonstrate various techniques and strategies playwrights utilize when writing plays. In addition to reading plays, each student will undertake a dramaturgical research project of a specific play to learn techniques for deeply analyzing a text in order to both understand its meaning and bring it to life in production.

Throughout this course, students will:

- Gain a more complete knowledge of the range of plays which comprise the theatrical canon.
- Learn to identify different approaches to dramaturgical construction.
- Analyze numerous scripts from various approaches, including those of directors, designers and actors.
- Learn techniques for researching past productions in order to inform and enliven future productions of these plays that they may choose to undertake.
- Prepare and present dramaturgical research on a specific play for production.

Instructional methods

1. This is a reading-intensive course, with a full play due to be read for many class days. Students should make accommodations in their schedules to ensure completion of the readings.
2. Course days will consist largely of either small-group or full-class discussions of the play under consideration. Students should give thoughtful attention to the plays they read and be ready to discuss various aspects, including plot, structure, character, production methodology, and problematic scenes.
3. We will periodically perform and discuss scenes from the plays under study.

4. The majority of the scripts will be found in the Norton anthology; additional plays will be provided either through short-term checkout in the library or on Blackboard.
5. Additional in-class readings will be provided.
6. Students should be prepared to utilize various online technologies, including Blackboard and (possibly) Facebook for this course.

Course calendar (subject to change)

Reading listed on a given day is to be read PRIOR to that class meeting.

**** Indicates when notecards are due.**

F Sept. 5 - Syllabus, Introduction: What the heck is “dramatic literature?”
M Sept. 8 – What is “dramaturgy?” READ: Dramaturgy article pack (Blackboard) Discuss Dramaturgy project, pick plays
W Sept. 10 - READ: Stasis and Intrusion (Ball, p. 19-24), Greek and Roman Theatre (Norton, p. 1-16)
F Sept. 12 – READ: Euripides, <i>Medea</i> (Norton p. 135-174)**
M Sept. 15 – READ: Obstacles and Conflict (Ball, p. 25-31) Medieval European Theatre (Norton, p. 25-31)
W Sept. 17 – READ: Wakefield Master, <i>Second Shepherd’s Play</i> (Norton, p. 262-293)**
F Sept. 19 – Performances and discussion for <i>Medea</i> and <i>Second Shepherd’s Play</i>
M Sept. 22 – READ: Slow Revelation and Theatricality (Ball, p. 32-6) Theatre in Early Modern Europe and English Theatre, 1576-1642 (Norton, p. 31-42)
W Sept. 24 – READ: William Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i> (Norton, p. 471-534)**
F Sept. 26 – Performances and discussion for <i>Twelfth Night</i>
DUE: Sunday, Sept. 28 – 11:59 p.m. Preliminary List of Terms due via email
M Sept. 29 – READ: Exposition (Ball, p. 39-44) Forwards (Ball, p. 45-59) Romanticism and Melodrama, 1800-1880 (Norton, p. 54-60)
W Oct. 1 – READ: Henrik Ibsen, <i>A Doll House</i> (Norton, p. 718-769)**
F Oct. 3 - Performances and discussion for <i>A Doll House</i>
M Oct. 6 – READ: Missing Persons (Character) (Ball, p. 60-7) Image (Ball, p. 68-75) Modern Theatre, 1880-1945 (Norton, p. 60-68)
W Oct. 8 – READ: Sophie Treadwell, <i>Machinal</i> (Norton, p. 989-1049)**
F Oct. 10 - Performances and discussion for <i>Machinal</i>
DUE: Sunday, Oct. 12 – 11:59 p.m. Preliminary Bibliography and Annotations due via email
M Oct 13 – READ: Postwar Theatre, 1945-1970 (Norton, p. 68-82) Epic Theatre reading (Blackboard)
W Oct. 15 – READ: Bertolt Brecht, <i>The Good Woman of Setzuan</i> (Norton, p. 1050-1107)**

F Oct. 17 – Performances and discussion for <i>The Good Woman of Setzuan</i>
M Oct. 20 - Midterm Review
W Oct. 22 - Midterm Exam
F Oct. 24 - Beckett shorts / On Reviewing Theatre (In Class)
DUE: Sunday, Oct. 26 – 11:59 p.m. Preliminary Program Notes due via email
M Oct. 27 – READ: Tennessee Williams , <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (Norton, p. 1193-1262) ** Presentations:
W Oct. 29 – Continue discussion of <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>
F Oct. 31 – READ: George Brandt , <i>Grounded</i> (Blackboard)** Presentations:
M Nov. 3 – Continue discussion of <i>Grounded</i>
W Nov. 5 – Performances and discussion of <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> and <i>Grounded</i>
F Nov. 7 – READ: Lynne Nottage , <i>Ruined</i> (Blackboard)** Presentations:
An Inspector Calls opens in Salisbury Theatre
DUE: Sunday, Nov. 9 – 11:59 p.m. Preliminary Script Breakdown due via email
M Nov. 10 – Continue discussion of <i>Ruined</i>
W Nov. 12 – READ: Caryl Churchill , <i>Cloud Nine</i> (Norton, p. 1520-1574)**
F Nov. 14 - Continue discussion of <i>Cloud Nine</i>
M Nov. 17 – Performances and discussion of <i>Cloud Nine</i> and <i>Ruined</i>
W Nov. 19 – Daniel David Moses , <i>Almighty Voice and His Wife</i> (Norton, p. 1785-1819)** Presentations:
F Nov. 21 – Continue discussion of <i>Almighty Voice and His Wife</i>
M Nov. 24 - August Wilson , <i>Fences</i> (Norton, p. 1612-1665)** Presentations:
W Nov. 26 – Continue discussion of <i>Fences</i>
F Nov. 28 – No Class, Thanksgiving holiday
M Dec. 1 – Performances and discussion of <i>Almighty Voice and His Wife</i> and <i>Fences</i>
W Dec. 3 – READ: Tony Kushner , <i>Angels in America, Part I</i> (Norton, p. 1718-1784)** Presentations:
F Dec. 5 – Continue discussion of <i>Angels in America</i>
DUE: Sunday, Dec. 7 – 11:59 p.m. Preliminary Character Analysis due via email
M Dec 8 – Performances and discussion for <i>Angels in America</i>
W Dec. 10 - READ: Kitt and Yorkey , <i>Next to Normal</i> (Blackboard)** Presentations:
F Dec. 12 – Performances and discussion for <i>Next to Normal</i>
FINAL ‘EXAM’: W Dec. 17 8-10 a.m. – Final Dramaturgy Project due

Course policies

Participation: Students are expected to read the material assigned for each day’s class and to fully participate in class discussions. The instructor reserves the right to conduct pop quizzes or to assign short written papers if students regularly fail to complete reading assignments.

Policy on late work: Any written work turned in after the due date will be accepted for up to three days after the due date (i.e. if due on Friday, it can be turned in through Monday), but late work will be marked down 20% of the original total for each day beyond the due date. (For example, if an assignment is worth 100 points, on the first day after the due date, it will be worth a maximum of 80 points, etc.)

Attendance: Mandatory. However, students are allowed a total of *two absences* with no penalty. These absences do not need to be pre-approved and may be used for any reason, including appointments, illness, leaving early for a trip, other needs. But note: for every absence over two, *the student's final grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter grade.* Exceptions to this policy will be made in the case of a legitimate emergency family or medical absence. What qualifies as a legitimate absence will be determined by the instructor on a case-by-case basis, and students will be asked to demonstrate solid proof (i.e. – doctor's notes). Tardiness is also unacceptable; 3 tardies will equal one absence for attendance-tracking purposes.

Policy on in-class technology: This class is based around group discussion and activities. I ask you to limit your use of laptops, tablets and cell phones so that you and everyone around you are able to be engaged in what I hope are very lively and energetic conversations.

Academic Honesty (*from page 50 of the UAF 2014 -15 Course Catalog*):

Honesty is a primary responsibility of you and every other UAF student. The following are common guidelines regarding academic integrity:

1. Students will not collaborate on any quizzes, in-class exams, or take-home exams that contribute to their grade in a course, unless the course instructor grants permission. Only those materials permitted by the instructor may be used to assist in quizzes and examinations.
2. Students will not represent the work of others as their own. A student will attribute the source of information not original with himself or herself (direct quotes or paraphrases) in compositions, theses, and other reports.
3. No work submitted for one course may be submitted for credit in another course without the explicit approval of both instructors.

Alleged violations of the Code of Conduct will be reviewed in accordance with procedures specified in regents' policy, university regulations and UAF rules and procedures. For additional information and details about the Student Code of Conduct, contact the dean of students or visit www.alaska.edu/bor.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following assignments:

- Participation (40 days @ 5 points each) - 200 points (40%)
- Note Cards (13 @ 5 points each) – 65 points (13%)
- Midterm Exam - 70 points (14%)
- Quizzes (8 @ 5 points each) – 40 points (8%)
- Rough Draft Dramaturgy Elements (5 @ 5 points each) - 25 points (5%)
- Final Dramaturgy Book - 75 points (15%)
- In-Class Presentation – 25 points (5%)
- **Total: 500 points**

Final grades will be based on the number of points acquired and the following scale:

Explanation of Graded Items

Grades for all assignments are absolute and are not subject to a curve.

Participation (40 days @ 5 points per day = 200 points)

1. Students will be assessed daily in their participation in class. Points will be deducted for not engaging in discussions, using technology inappropriately (i.e. – sending text messages, checking Facebook), tardiness, etc.

Notecards (13 @ 5 points each = 65 points)

1. Students should come to class (on days noted in the course calendar) with at least TWO burning questions or thoughts about the readings and/or other topics related to the class written on a 3x5 notecard. For full credit, these questions should be both dramaturgical and probing. There are 14 opportunities to turn in notecards, you must do so on at least 13 occasions. Each notecard is worth 5 points.

Midterm Exam and Quizzes (70 points and 8 quizzes at 5 points each = 40 points)

1. The midterm exam will assess students halfway through the term on the history, plays, and dramatic conventions studied over the first 6 weeks of the semester.
2. Eight quizzes will be given at random across the semester to verify that students are completing their reading assignments.

Dramaturgy Book (75 points – plus 25 points for Rough Draft items)

1. Students will undertake a term-length research and script analysis project of one of the following plays:
 - a. *Grounded*
 - b. *A Streetcar Named Desire*
 - c. *Ruined*
 - d. *Cloud Nine*
 - e. *Fences*
 - f. *Almighty Voice and His Wife*
 - g. *Angels in America*
 - h. *Next to Normal*
2. Students will assemble, throughout the term, an organized binder with the following elements:
 - a. A list of words, people, historical events which are unfamiliar, with definitions
 - b. Photographs related to the play (as many as necessary, but at least 10)
 - c. Bibliography of articles, books, reviews, etc. that discuss the play or its playwright
 - d. Annotations of at least 3 items from your bibliography (i.e. – read and summarize their contents)
 - e. At least 5 newspaper reviews of previous productions
 - f. At least 3 photographs from different prior productions
 - g. A character analysis of one of the MAIN characters
 - h. A script breakdown by scene/character
 - i. Dramaturg's program notes
3. Early drafts of elements a, c/d, g, h, and i will be turned in throughout the term to receive instructor feedback. Each is worth 5 points.
4. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided to students during the second week of classes.

In-Class Presentation (25 points)

5. Each student also will do an in-class presentation on the day their play is read for class.

Support Services/Writing Center

UAF Student Support Services office is located in 514 Gruening Building, phone number 474-6844, website: <http://www.uaf.edu/sss> and e-mail: trio.sss@uaf.edu

The UAF Writing Center is in 801 Gruening Building, phone number 474-5314, website: <http://www.uaf.edu/english/writingcenter>. It offers one-on-one writing tutorials for any piece of writing

that a student brings in. Even if you are in the brainstorming phase of the writing process, tutors will work with you to begin developing ideas to turn into a fully-formed text. They also offer easy computer use and free printing.

Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services is located in Room 208 Whitaker Building, phone number 474-5655. Disability services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and ensures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. I will work with Disabilities Services to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities, though students should make arrangements early in the semester for any accommodations they require.