


English 108: Reading Drama

Fall 2020

<p>Dr. Dejan Kuzmanovic dkuzmano@uwsp.com</p> <p>Zoom Office Hours: by appointment (request by email)</p>		<p>Zoom class meetings: Mondays, 5:30-8:00 p.m.</p> <p>Group 1: 5:30-6:15 p.m. Group 2: 6:20-7:05 p.m. Group 3: 7:10-7:55 p.m.</p>
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PURPOSE: This course will help you explore techniques for reading drama as literature. We will read a variety of plays in diverse styles from different historical periods in order to understand their formal elements, how they draw from their cultural contexts, and how they relate to us as 21st century readers.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As a course that satisfies the GEP Humanities requirement, this course will enhance your ability to:

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than your own.

More specific course learning outcomes relate to your growing ability to:

- Analyze plays from diverse cultural contexts, both as dramatic literature and in performance, using appropriate aesthetic criteria, critical tools, and disciplinary terminology.
- Explain differences between key dramatic genres, and between drama and other literary genres.
- Describe how dramatic texts are shaped by their social, historical, and cultural contexts, but also reflect on perennial issues, still of concern to present-day readers and viewers.
- Understand motivations, values, and worldviews of dramatic characters very different from you.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (text rental):

The Bedford Introduction to Drama, 8th Edition, Lee A. Jacobus, Bedford St. Martin's, 2018.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

- Weekly Work (quizzes, discussions, participation) 20%
- Three Short Essays (2-3 pages) 30% (10% per essay)
- Exam 20%
- Presentation 10%
- Final Project 20%

Honors students will prepare a second presentation and complete a longer, more complex final project.

In order to pass the course, you must:

- Turn in the final project, the exam, and at least two short essays.
- Miss no more than 3 Zoom meetings.
- Miss no more than 5 quizzes/discussions.
- Avoid not participating in any class activities for two or more consecutive weeks.

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NOTE: If you find yourself in a situation that might make it difficult for you to meet the requirements, please talk to me right away. We can discuss potential extensions, make-up work, and the rest. But if you disappear for 2-3 weeks without letting me know what is going on, I may not be able to help you.

I. Weekly Work (20% of final grade):

Discussion: Most weeks throughout the semester, you will engage in ongoing Canvas Discussions with your discussion group on various questions and issues emerging from the readings. Initially, you will respond to my discussion questions, but later you will formulate your own.

You should post 2 comments about each week's readings, one before and one after our Zoom meeting:

- **Post 1 is due by midnight on Saturdays.** This will be your initial thoughts on what you read by that time, encouraging you not to wait until Monday to do a whole week's worth of reading.
- **Post 2 is due by midnight on Wednesdays.** This will be your response to points made by at least two classmates, reflecting what was discussed in Canvas and at the Zoom meeting.

Each post should be at least 200 words in length and go beyond vague or cursory statements. They can be informal, but they should be clear and readable, without excessive spelling or punctuation errors. They should demonstrate that you have read attentively and reflected thoughtfully on the readings. There will be a rubric for grading the posts, which I will share with you soon.

Quizzes: In most weeks, there will be a simple multiple-choice reading quiz, making sure that you have completed the readings for the week. They will be **due by 5:30 p.m. on Mondays**.

Participation: Zoom meetings will be opportunities for discussion, not lecturing. I will expect you to come prepared and contribute: ask and answer questions, share insights, respond to presentations, etc. There is no need to feel insecure. No one expects you to be an expert; we will just have conversations about the readings, and any relevant comment or question will be appreciated. If you feel lost, please talk to me and I will do my best to help you with strategies to feel more comfortable with the material.

II. Three Short Essays (30% of final grade, 10% per essay)

Each short essays (2-3 pages) will be in response to one of several suggested topics or prompts. They will belong to three different categories. You must choose a different category for each of your essays.

Analytical Essay: The prompt might be to analyze a character, or a scene, or a conflict, or some other specific component of one of the readings. The goal will be to tease out its meaning and significance.

Creative Essay: The prompt might ask you to imagine a dialogue between characters from two different plays, to rewrite a scene from another character's point of view or place it in another setting, to write a plausible additional scene, or to transpose a scene from a play into a present-day situation.

Review: Throughout the semester, I will tell you about film versions of famous plays that we will not discuss. You will watch at least one of them and pretend that you are reviewing it for a local paper.

There will be detailed instructions for each of these categories when you receive specific topics/prompts. General rules: all papers should have titles, be double spaced, written in a standard 12-size font, with one-inch margins, and turned in on time. Late papers will be penalized, unless you ask for an extension.

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III. Exam (20% of final grade):

The exam will take place in Canvas, probably due on November 13. Part One will be a terminology quiz; we will develop a list of terms you should learn as we move from week to week. Part Two will consist of passage identifications and questions about the meaning and significance of the quoted passages. Detailed instructions with a study guide will be distributed well in advance of the exam.

IV. Group Presentation (10% of final grade):

These presentations will be distributed over the course of the semester beginning in Week 5. You will work in pairs to prepare a brief presentation (15-20 minutes) about a central conflict between two characters in the play discussed that week. The presentation will be part of the Monday Zoom meeting. You will receive more detailed instructions and a grading rubric before the first scheduled presentation.

Honors students will prepare a second presentation on a different topic, which will be determined later. There will be separate instructions for these extra presentations

V. Final Project (20% of final grade):

There will be several options for the final project. **Honors students may not select Option 1, while the other students are encouraged to take it**, even though they may choose another option, if they prefer. You will receive detailed instructions, a rubric, and some pointers for each option later in the semester.

Option 1: Write a Reflection Essay (4-5 pages) developing some of your observations from Canvas and Zoom discussions. Your essay should bring together several readings and reflect on things they have in common, how they resonate at the present time, or how they expand our sense of what drama means.

Option 2: Write a Research Essay (4-5 pages) analyzing a specific topic related to one of the readings (a character, a theme, the use of symbolism, insights about gender, sexual, or race identities, or anything else that interests you). You may also choose to compare how two readings address a certain issue.

Option 3: Imagine that you are a dramaturg, whose job is to explore and clarify aspects of a play. Select three aspects of one of the plays we read (for example, historical context, social environment, racial or gender identity, etc.), research them in-depth, and prepare a study guide (4-5 pages) for high school students that will help them contextualize and understand a performance of this play.

Option 4: Imagine that you are Artistic Director of a theater who wants to put together a coherent season consisting of four plays that have something in common or speak to each other in some way. Choose three plays we have read in class *and* one play that we have not (you will read it and research it independently; I can make suggestions) and write a compelling proposal (4-5 pages) meant to convince the theater's Board to produce these four plays as a season in Spring 2021 (if the pandemic subsides). Some questions you may want to address: What themes do these plays address? Why would they work well together as a coherent season? Why would contemporary audiences be interested in seeing them? Why is it important to stage them now (Spring 2021)? What will they contribute to your community?

Whichever option you choose, your paper should be double-spaced, with a 12 point font, 1" margins, and MLA style citations, especially if your project involves secondary sources from your research.

Students who wish to develop an alternative project of their devising should ask for my permission.

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COURSE POLICIES:

Etiquette: Whether in a classroom or online, a college class must be a safe space for all students. Showing respect for every individual – regardless of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, religious or political opinions, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other forms of difference – is essential for everyone’s success and wellbeing. The Golden Rule: treat others as you expect to be treated.

Drama can deal with sensitive and controversial subjects, so it is crucial that we create a climate of safe and open discussion. Do your best to engage with the material with an open mind and a critical lens. Feel free to express your views, but also listen respectfully to what others have to say, though you may disagree. Try to understand where others come from and empathize with their experiences.

Zoom Meetings: Our Monday Zoom meetings are class sessions, just as if we were in a classroom. Therefore, you should be attentive and participate, and not be distracted by your cell phone or do unrelated things on your computer during the session. Even though our class is in the evening, you should not be eating during the meeting. Your camera should be on because we all prefer to see the face of the person we are talking to. You don’t have to be at a desk or worry about the lighting and such, but avoid being in a noisy, distracting, or inappropriate place. You should not be lying in bed, for example.

If you have a concern about this or a strong reason to turn your camera off during a meeting, please talk to me. If you live on campus, however, it should be easy to find a quiet space for these meetings.

Email: I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours (except on weekends). However, you should not email me to ask for information that can be easily found on the syllabus or in Canvas. Also, you should not expect me to summarize in an email what you missed when you were not in class. Quick and simple questions I can answer by email, but if you want to have a conversation about anything related to the class, please do not hesitate to make an appointment for a personal Zoom meeting. I have no pre-set office hours, but will be happy to set up a Zoom session with you at a mutually agreed time.

Rights and Responsibilities: As a Pointer, you should be familiar with UWSP policies regarding student conduct: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct are serious violations. Read about academic integrity: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>

If unsure whether certain actions are appropriate or not, please feel free to talk to me about it.

Physical or verbal harassment is unacceptable at UWSP. Be aware of UWSP policies for such incidents (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/sexualassault/Pages/victims-bill-of-rights.aspx>) and of our Bias/Hate Incident Reporting (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Bias-Hate-Incident.aspx>).

Students with documented disabilities or temporary impairments have a right to accommodations. Contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center as soon as possible at 715-346-3365 or DATC@uwsp.edu. For more information, see <https://www.uwsp.edu/datc/Pages/default.asp>.

Copyright Note: All lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property. Students may use the materials and recordings only for their personal use related to participation in this class. Copying or sharing lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting them on internet sites or selling them to commercial entities would constitute illegal copyright infringement and a violation of university policies.

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COURSE CALENDAR

This schedule is tentative and may change. All readings are from our textbook. The plays are indicated by the title, other texts by page numbers. Additional readings may be posted in Canvas.

The schedule shows which texts will be discussed during a **Zoom meeting** on any particular Monday. Typically you will view **at least two mini lectures** about each play, one before the Zoom meeting (background information) and one after the meeting (play analysis). You will also post comments in **Canvas Discussion** about each play, both before and after it was discussed at the Zoom meeting.

Week	Focus of Discussion	Assignments & Deadlines
3 Sept. 14	Analyzing a Play through the Elements of Drama, including <i>The Rising of the Moon</i> (19-32) Glaspell, <i>Trifles</i>	
4 Sept. 21	Introduction: Thinking about Drama (1-6) Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> and Commentary (1178-1181)	
5 Sept. 28	Greek Drama (33-42) Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i>	Presentations begin
6 Oct. 5	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i>	Oct. 9: Essay 1 due
7 Oct. 12	Medieval drama (202-209) Hrosvitha, <i>Dulcitius</i> and Commentary (219-221) Anonymous, <i>Everyman</i>	
8 Oct. 19	Renaissance Drama (252-262) Theater in England: The Restoration (445-448) Sherdian, <i>The Rivals</i>	
9 Oct. 26	Nineteenth-Century Drama (594-605) Ibsen, <i>A Doll House</i> and Commentary (647-648)	Oct. 30: Essay 2 due
10 Nov. 2	Drama in the Early and Mid-Twentieth Century (797-810) Pirandello, <i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i>	
11 Nov. 9	Contemporary Drama (1200-1218) Fornés, <i>Fefu and Her Friends</i>	Nov. 13: Exam (in Canvas)
12 Nov. 16	Churchill, <i>Cloud Nine</i>	
13 Nov. 23	Kushner, <i>Angels in America</i>	
14 Nov. 30	Nottage, <i>Ruined</i> and Commentary (1608-1614)	Dec. 4: Essay 3 due
15 Dec. 7	Akhtar, <i>Disgraced</i>	
Finals Dec. 14	Optional Zoom meeting to discuss Final Projects	Dec. 18: Final Project due