

Department of English & Writing Studies
Theatre Studies Program

Theatre Studies 2205G (001)
Forms and Genres: The Modern Context
Winter 2024

Course Description

This course traces developments in playwriting, acting, and playhouse design from the Restoration to the present day. This introductory course will explore the theatrical innovations and political interventions of the work of such dramatists as Henrik Ibsen, Sophie Treadwell, Lorraine Hansberry, Harold Pinter, and Suzan-Lori Parks.

Objectives:

This course aims to:

- 1) give students an opportunity to consider modern theatre in its historic, local, and global contexts
- 2) foreground gender, sexuality, intersectionality, race, colonization, etc. as they relate to key texts studied
- 3) give students the opportunity to reflect on their own varied and intersecting positionalities and/or to think critically about ways in which the discipline reproduces existing power structures

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) analyze a range of mainstream and alternative theatrical forms and genres in terms of their cultural production
- 2)

Course Information

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected for all classes. Absenteeism may result in debarment from the final exam and, thus, failure of the course.

Here is the sliding scale that will make up the attendance marking for the course:

Days missed	Grade.
0-2	5/5
3-5	4/5
6-7	3/5
8-9	2/5
10	1/5
>10	0/5

Essay Due dates, Late policy, Extensions, Plagiarism

All overdue essays will receive a penalty of 1% per day late.

Essays must follow current MLA format and must include a list of Works Cited at the end (see *MLA Handbook* for details).

Essays must be on works studied in **this** section of the course.

IT IS ADVISABLE TO RETAIN AT LEAST ONE COPY OF THE ESSAY IN THE EVENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE TO THE ORIGINAL.

Method of Submission: attachments in Word (**NOT PDF**) via OWL

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Email Policy

Email is meant for brief inquiries only. Please allow a day or two for a response. Email received over the weekend will be answered the following week.

Participation/Performance Work (20%)

Each Thursday, starting Feb.1, we will forgo the formalities of a traditional university lecture and get down to the business of performance. I will be dividing the class into four groups, and each week you, the students, will run the first hour.

Our performance hour will begin with a scene study presentation by the group designated, for that week, as THE COMPANY.

- It will be the Company's job to stage a scene based on one from the week's play, and to take up roles such as actors, director, dramaturge, and designers. The scenes you perform will be "poor" theatre in the best sense of the word: not a formal, heavily rehearsed performance, although you are free to bring props and costumes as you choose. Your primary task will be to work together to select a specific approach to

Assessment:

- Your group work is the core component of your participation grade; you will be judged on the amount of effort you put into the work—NOT on your acting skills—and on your willingness to push yourself in new directions, beyond your comfort zone. Note that you need not play a major role in each presentation: balance your commitments to the group work as needed, but ensure that you are contributing helpfully in some way each time your group is The Company, and that you challenge yourself to contribute during your group's discussions.
- Attendance. One of the keys to doing well at this assignment is attending regularly; the other key is being engaged when you attend. Attendance will be taken. Even if your group is not performing, your attendance is still required and appreciated.

Essay 1: Choose ONE play and write an argumentative essay that focuses on one of the following ten topics listed below. Be sure to narrow and refine your topic so that it is very specific and clear. Do early research on the topic so that you can develop your essay gradually, rather than writing it at the last minute. Engage with at least three secondary sources to help contextualize your argument.

Length: 1500 words

Format: MLA 8th edition for undergraduate research essays

Worth: 15%

Due: Feb. 15, 2024

Possible Topics:

Schedule Winter Term 2024

(G = Group, P = Performance)

Jan.9-11	Introduction
Jan.16-18	Nottage, <i>Ruined</i> (2007)
Jan.23-25	Hayden Taylor, <i>In a World Created by a Drunken God</i> (2006)
Jan.30-Feb.1	Parks, <i>The America Play</i> (1994): G1, P1
Feb.6-8	Wilson, <i>Fences</i> (1985): G2, P1
Feb.13-15	Pinter, <i>The Homecoming</i> (1964): G3, P1; Essay 1 Due Feb.15
Feb.20-22	READING WEEK
Feb.27-29	Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (1959): G4, P1
Mar.5-7	Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> (1949): G1, P2
Mar.12-14	Treadwell, <i>Machinal</i> (1928): G2, P2
Mar.19-21	Glaspell, <i>Trifles</i> (1916): G3, P2
Mar.26-28	Ibsen, <i>A Doll's House</i> (1879): G4, P2
Apr.2-4	Conclusion; Essay 2 Due Apr.4
Apr.TBA	Final Exam (2 hours)