

Introduction to Drama

Professor Merrill Cole

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English 202, Section 001

Spring Semester 2020

Office: Simpkins 109

Hours: M, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

TTh, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

TTh, 2:00-3:15 p.m.

Simpkins 14

No prerequisites.

Texts

All texts for this course are available for download on WesternOnline. In class, students may either print out copies of the plays and other texts, or download them on electronic devices capable of navigating pdf documents.

Introduction

In Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Estragon complains, "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" In the plays for this course, a lot happens, lots of people come and go, and not everything is awful, not even in *Waiting for Godot*. This course offers broad introduction to drama, with an emphasis on drama from Ancient Greece, the English Renaissance, and more modern times. In addition to the plays, we will study formal topics crucial to understanding and writing about drama. The plays we read engage issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class, at the same time saying something about what it means to be alive as human beings.

Course Objectives

This course assists students in becoming engaged and competent readers of drama. At the same time, Introduction to Drama develops the ability to formulate and develop interpretive arguments, and to respond creatively. It brings issues of social justice to bear on the study of drama, including issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class, celebrating the diversity of both plays and people.

Requirements

Introduction to Drama involves three five-page essay assignments and two short creative assignments. You will receive instructions for each, and you will have the option of rewriting all except the last. *Upload all assignments and homework to WesternOnline.* If I don't have assignments at the beginning of class, they will be counted late; and late homework will receive zero credit. Writing should be paginated and double-spaced in a standard-sized font.

Students will be responsible for leading small group discussions on a rotating basis. When it is your turn, prepare four typed, double-spaced questions for discussion and send them to me *by email* before the beginning of the class. You need to have your own copy in class, electronic or print.

In addition, at various points in the course, student groups will be responsible for rehearsing scenes from the plays.

No headphones in class!

Absences will not be taken lightly, only excused with a doctor's note or other suitable documentation. Please refer to <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> for student rights and responsibilities. Everyone *must* actively participate. Lack of participation will damage your grade. This means doing the homework, completing the readings, and joining regularly in class discussion.

Grading

Participation	10%
Homework	10%
Discussion Questions	10%
Creative Assignments	20%
First Essay	10%
Second Essay	20%
Third Essay	20%

Unless excused, late essays receive a one-time, one-letter grade reduction (2:01 p.m. on the due date is late). I will grant an extension for almost any reason, but only if the student contacts me *at least 24 hours in advance*. Plagiarism will result in an "F", and I will report the student for academic discipline. See WIU's Policy on Academic Integrity at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>. *Unexcused absences will affect the participation grade, and four of them is an automatic "F" for the course.* Do not expect an "A" if you don't talk regularly in class.

Please take the opportunity to meet with me in Simpkins 109, during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings and your writing. If something about the course bothers you, please don't wait until the end, when it is too late to change it.

The Writing Center

The University Writing Center can assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The tutor's job is to add another voice in response to your writing. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center can help with generating ideas, suggesting organization, and even working through grammatical issues. The University Writing Center is located in Malpass Library (3rd Floor, West Side). It's also in Simpkins 326. Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. For more information on other locations, see www.wiu.edu/uwc.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Discrimination Policy

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Schedule

Week 1: January 14 & 16

Introduction to the course. Samuel Beckett, "Play without Words."
Lady Gregory, "The Rising of the Moon."

Week 2: January 21 & 23

Aeschylus, *The Agamemnon*.
Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*.

Week 3: January 28 & 30

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*.
Aristotle, *Poetics*.
Sigmund Freud on Oedipus (Freudipus).

Week 4: February 4 & 6

Sophocles, *Antigone*.

Week 5: February 11 & 13

First Creative Assignment due Tuesday, February 11.
Euripides, *Medea*.

Week 6: February 18 & 20

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

Week 7: February 25 & 27

First Essay Due on Tuesday, February 25.
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

Week 8: March 3 & 5

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*.

Spring Break

Week 9: March 17 & 19

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
Visit by actors from the WIU production of *Richard II*.

Week 10: March 24 & 26

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Week 11: March 31 & April 2

Second Essay Due on Tuesday, March 24.

Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Week 12: April 7 & 9

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Week 13: April 14 & 16

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*.

Week 14: April 21 & 23

Second Creative Assignment due Tuesday, November 19.

Cherríe Moraga, *Heroes and Saints*.

Week 15: April 28 & 30

Moisés Kaufman, *The Laramie Project*.

Final Exam Week

Final essay due on Monday, May 4 at 2:00 p.m.

(Due Friday, May 1 by midnight, if you want my comments.).