

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
LONDON CANADA  
Department of English and Writing Studies

Theatre Studies 2204- Forms and Genres:  
The Greeks to Shakespeare  
Tuesday 12:30-1:30 Thursday 12:30-2:30 UCC 63



The Revenger's Tragedy, Live, 2011: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENVhbugig64>

**PROFESSOR:**

Dr. Jo Devereux

Office: UC 4433

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 or by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will introduce students to the range of plays and theatre practices that shaped the first two millennia of theatre. Landmarks will be studied in the context of the diverse theatre scene.

to being 3 hours, 0.5 course

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

The Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama, edited by Christina M. Fitzgerald and John T. Sebastian Broadview, 2012. ISBN 9781554810567 / 1554810566



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) assess the aesthetic, ethical, social, economic, and political dimensions of theatrical

Two group scenes, each worth 10%, for a total of 20%, see below for dates

Attendance: 5%

Final Exam, April 2023 35%

### **Attendance**

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

## 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 February 2 we will forgo the formalities of a traditional university lecture and get down to the business of performance. We will be dividing the class into four groups, and each week you, 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 of the week's plays 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 the scene/play, and then be prepared to defend and explore your choices in class. This thought work is the most important component of your presentation!
- Those who aren't acting or directing in any given week contribute behind the scenes, by helping to imagine potential visions for the scene, by imagining a design (be prepared to explain and discuss it!), or by applying dramaturgical (that is, critical, close-reading) skills to the text and then offering options to the actors and/or director.
- I would like each of you to try different roles over the course of the term: if you are shy, challenge yourself to try act.

- After each performance, and a short break, the Company will be asked to get back on stage and participate in a question-answer period. Each member of the Company should try to contribute something during the Q&A, especially those whose work has been primarily behind-the-scenes. This is the time for you to explore in depth, with your colleagues, the terrific thought work that has gone into your presentation!
- The final part of the class will involve a performance talkback or discussion.
- When the week's performance is over, the Company will take their break while the rest of us get into our designated groups. You will be given 10-15 minutes in your group to discuss the performance you've just seen, and to prepare two or three good challenging questions about the company's performance choices.
- In order to ensure that your group's discussion runs smoothly, each of you will need to take some notes during the Company's performance, bring those notes with you to your group's huddle, and be prepared to talk about them.
- NOTE that the questions you develop must delve below the surface of what the Company is doing. Colleague-critics are reviewers with a difference: your task is to explore what worked and what didn't, to probe the effects of the Company's choices, to offer alternative readings, and to examine how others in the class received the performance (it's a good idea to address some questions to your fellow audience members as well). The important proviso: colleague criticism is designed to be helpful and respectful, not hurtful and derogatory.
- We hope to get a lively discussion going and will bounce from group to group until either our time or your notes are exhausted. Support a strong, engaged class discussion!

#### 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. (a)10.5 (r)-,6.6 (i)4.t-6.6 (6e (i)2.66

1. Discuss the role of the chorus **ON**E play on the course.
2. Explore the construction of masculinity **OR** femininity **ON**E play on the course
3. Consider the importance of specific prop or costume **ON**E play on the course.
4. Examine the function of fate or divine power **ON**E play on the course.

As you research your essay, **start** by reading **two** critics on your subject and noting their arguments. Then examine the play closely and develop your own ideas about the passages the critics examine in their articles, so that you can show clearly how your ideas differ from those of the critics.

Length: 1500 words

Format: MLA 8<sup>th</sup> edition for undergraduate research essays

Worth: 15%

**Due: Feb. 16**

**Method of Submission: attachment on OWL, Word doc, NOT PDF**

**Essay 2:** Choose **TWO different plays** from the one you examined in Essay 1. As with the first essay, choose **ONE** of the broad topics listed below (which you must narrow down very specifically to construct a clear argument).

Again: do some preliminary research on this topic with reference to the play you are exploring.

**You must cover TWO different plays from the one you examined in Essay 1.**

As you research your essay, **start** by reading **four** critics on your subject and noting their arguments. Then examine the play closely and develop your own ideas about the passages the critics examine in their articles, so that you can show clearly how your ideas differ from those of the critics.

Length: 2500 words

Format: MLA 8<sup>th</sup> edition for undergraduate research essays

Worth: 20%

**Due: April 6**

Possible Broad Topics, which you must narrow and focus

1. Compare and contrast the possibility of nihilism in **TWO** plays on the course.
2. Discuss the idea of failure in **TWO** plays on the course.
3. Examine the treatment of time **OR** of labor in **TWO** plays on the course.
4. Explore the idea of control of self or others in **TWO** plays on the course

**Method of Submission: attachment on OWL, Word doc, NOT PDF**

**Schedule Winter 2023**

**(G = Group, P = Performance)**

Jan.10-12 Introduction (no readings yet)

Jan.17-19 Sophocles, Oedipus the King

Jan.24-26 Aristophanes, Lysistrata

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