

English 2390

Introduction to Drama: Drama Queens, Then & Now

Fall 2017

"We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing."
Mrs. Hale from Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*

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Office Hours TR, 2:30-4:30; F, 12:00-3:00; by appointment is always best
Class Details TR, 12:15-1:30, Irby 313

Course Description Welcome to Intro to Drama! In this course, we will carefully and critically read, discuss, and write about drama and its development from Greek tragedy through the present. In particular, we will explore the ways in which drama has historically created, reflected, and resisted various forms of meaning from religious, cultural, artistic, political, and literary perspectives. How does drama function as a mediator of meaning in terms of the complex emotions and facets of the human experience it explores? How do dramatists use the tools at their disposal to shape plays for different purposes? And in what specific ways do audience members and readers alike perceive meaning through stories fashioned for the stage? This semester's theme, "Drama Queens: Then & Now," has determined the parameters of reading list—plays in which the power of women is explored, asserted, and/or challenged. But this theme will not limit our discussion topics, which are open to whatever you find most compelling in the plays!

Read This!

In our reading and discussions this semester, we will encounter material and ideas you may find challenging. If you choose to take this course, you are choosing to consider in a mature and constructive manner religious, political, and ethical perspectives that differ from your own. I will do the same.

Course Objectives Our objectives for the semester are:

- To develop a working knowledge of drama as a genre.
- To explore the selected plays from a variety of critical viewpoints.
- To discover connections and contradictions within and between the plays.
- To detect cultural assumptions underlying the plays of each period, and in the process become aware of our own cultural assumptions.
- To develop and present ideas logically and effectively in order to enhance communication and collaboration with diverse individuals and groups.
- To participate in our own acts of performance, through reading, analysis, discussion, writing—and perhaps even some performing.

Required Text Gainor, J. Ellen, Stanton B. Garner, and Martin Puchner, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Drama: Shorter Second Edition*. W.W. Norton & Co: New York, 2014.

Any other readings will be provided by the instructor via Blackboard. *You must be able to access Blackboard to receive important course materials.*

Course Readings

You are responsible for reading all of your assignments prior to the class period during which we will discuss them. This should be clear on the schedule of readings and assignments. *If ever in doubt about what to read or write for the next class, please e-mail the professor in plenty of time to ask.* As you read, keep track of questions and ideas. I will welcome and respect all informed opinions and statements. I aim to structure the class around your contributions—questions and commentaries—as much as possible.

Course Grade

Participation	10%
Exam 1	15 %
Exam 2	15%
Performance Presentation	15%
Performance Reviews 1 & 2	15%
Reading Responses, Quizzes, & Other	30%

Examinations

You will take two exams. On each exam, you may be asked to identify and write substantially about quotations from the works and respond briefly to short answer questions. Material covered in exams will include readings, discussions, and lectures. You are required to write legibly—if I cannot read your exam, I cannot grade it. *An exam may be rescheduled only due to dire circumstances and only when documented appropriately.*

Performance Presentations

You will sign up to work on a presentation in a small group. Your group's task is to perform a short section of one of the plays we read this semester.

Part 1: Performance

Your performance should be no less than ten minutes, and no longer than fifteen (you may choose an entire scene, a portion of a scene, or excerpts of multiple scenes—as long as your selection fits within this time limit). Your performance may be live or filmed (note that filmed performances will be held to standards as high as those for live performances—your final product should not look like a high school project on YouTube). Actors in your performance must have lines memorized (even if filmed).

Part 2: Talkback

After each performance, we will have a “talkback.” Preparing for this aspect of the assignment is as important as the performance itself. In the talkback, the audience will have a chance to ask questions about your performance and, as a group, you will have a chance to discuss what ideas shaped your approach, the process of rehearsal, what surprised you in performance, and what you learned about some aspect of the play through your work with it. Further, in the talkback, each group member should have prepared **one open-ended Discuss in class question** to ask the class.

Part 3: Portfolio

On the day of your presentation, your group will hand in a portfolio documenting your group's process. It must include:

- A description of each group member's role and your responsibilities in that role (as agreed upon by all), along with a log of meeting activities outside of class (1 page).
- A brief explanation of why your group chose this particular scene (or scenes), your vision for the scene, and your justification for the medium you have chosen (stage or film) (2-3 pages).
- Your assertion of the scene's significance to the play as a whole (2-3 pages)
- Your explanation of design choices and casting decisions, with any examples you deem appropriate (photos, material samples, drawings, etc.) (2-3 pages). Please consider: theme (decide on the one theme/problem that your staging will address and put it into a sentence—can be a phrase from the work, or something that your

group writes); casting (you may limit your Discuss in class to the group members portraying the roles for the project or you may choose from public figures—actors, singers, athletes, politicians, and other popular culture icons, living or dead, past or present—to hypothetically cast as the main characters); protagonist (whose story does your version of the scene tell?); genre (is your staging part of a Broadway production of the play, a traditional period version of the play, or an experimental black box theatre production? Is it part of an artsy indie film, a Hollywood summer blockbuster or a horror flick?). Who is your anticipated audience, and why does this matter?

- At least 1 discussion question per group member relevant to the scene and your particular interpretation of it. These questions should be open-ended and aimed at fostering discussion in class (thus you should avoid questions that merely ask for content summary or invite “yes” or “no” responses). You will use these questions to lead the class in a brief discussion during your presentation.
- Please use a folder of some kind for the portfolio.

Not all members of your group are required to be actors (unless you pick a scene that demands it). There are other essential roles in this project, such as director, dramaturg, technical, and Discuss in class facilitator. No single group member should compile the portfolio in isolation. Each group member must have a clearly defined role, and you must all become equally invested in the presentation. Your grade for this performance will be a group grade—you will succeed or fail together. It is therefore essential that you work together to overcome the challenges posed by conflicting schedules, conflicting ideas, and different experience levels. We will discuss this assignment further in class next week.

Performance Reviews 1 & 2

In this course, we will spend a great deal of time reading, discussing, and writing about drama. In order to enrich your experience in the classroom, you will attend at least 2 live theatre performances of your choosing at some point during the semester. You will write a 3-5 page critical review of each production and hand it in along with a ticket stub (or a selfie that proves your attendance at the play). In each review, describe the performance and evaluate its effectiveness. What key insights or ideas in the play was the director trying to develop? How can you tell? Describe your feelings and reactions as an audience member, as well as any significant reactions of those around you. You will find the conversation in this class more interesting and relevant for having recently experienced a couple of live performances for yourself. You may choose any local (or non-local, if you have the opportunity) university, professional, semi-professional, or community theatre productions. A few (free, on-campus) suggestions:

- *Dutchman*, Bridges/Larson Theatre, Snow Fine Arts, UCA
September 5, 6, 7, & 8 at 7:30 pm and September 9 at 2:00 pm
Tickets are available through UCA Ticket Central located in the box office at Reynolds Performance Hall.
*Admission is free, but tickets are required.
- *Original Devised Work*, Bridges/Larson Theatre, Snow Fine Arts, UCA
October 26, 27, November 2, & 3 at 7:30 pm and November 4 at 2:00 pm
Tickets are available through UCA Ticket Central located in the box office at Reynolds Performance Hall.
*Admission is free, but tickets are required.
- *Festival of One-Act Plays*, Bridges/Larson Theatre, Snow Fine Arts, UCA
December 4, 5, 6 & 7 at 7:30 pm
Tickets are available through UCA Ticket Central located in the box office at Reynolds Performance Hall.
*Admission is free, but tickets are required.

- Check out the amazing season at Reynolds Performance Hall on campus: <http://uca.edu/publicappearances/>

You may wish to visit the websites of the following theatre companies to see ticket information for other local productions this fall: Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Weekend Theatre, The Studio Theatre, Murry's Dinner Playhouse, & the Lantern Theatre.

Reading Responses

You will have the opportunity to write 5 one-page reading responses this term. For each response, focus on one specific element (a character, scene, image, theatrical device, etc.) related to the play we are currently Read before class. All responses should:

- Be typed in Times New Roman or Garamond 12-point font.
- Be double-spaced, on an 8.5 x 11 inch sheet, with margins of one inch or less.
- Be as free of errors as possible (use spell and grammar check, and edit responses carefully before turning in).
- Be one full page (no more, no less).
- Include a proper heading (your name, course, my name, date, and a title).
- Include at least TWO citations from the play. That is, you should incorporate two direct quotations from the play's dialogue or stage directions into your response.
- Always do more than summarize the material—pick a particular aspect of the work that interests you, think about why it interests you, and articulate your thoughts in writing.

Reading responses are meant to prepare you for class discussions, deepen your understanding of the texts, and encourage you to make connections among the various texts we read. *You will receive credit only if the response meets the above technical requirements and fulfills the given assignment. Assignments inadequate in length will not be graded.*

Quizzes and Other Assignments

For the plays on which you do not write a reading response, you will complete a brief quiz (5 total). **Quizzes will happen at the start of class, 12:15.** If late or absent, you forfeit your opportunity to take the quiz. Also, you will be asked to complete an e-mail assignment and possibly additional assignments both in and out of class. Requirements for each assignment will be specified on separate handouts provided.

Participation

The most crucial thing you bring to this class is your desire to actively participate. I invite you to take control of your own education in this course—think about what it is you want to learn and work at it. Participation comes in various forms, and below I have listed several important factors contributing to your participation grade for this course. Take note that your final grade may be swayed by the *quality* of your participation.

- **Discussion:** you must speak in class if you hope to be successful. Please come to class having read all of the assigned material and be prepared to engage in a meaningful discussion of the issues it raises. Keep track of questions as you read, and be ready to share those with the class. Commenting on the texts in class is a crucial part of learning to analytically think, read, and write about literature.
- **Conduct:** please be on time, stay awake, and refrain from carrying on private conversations, tweeting, texting, or working on other coursework during class. Respect, trust, and courteous classroom conduct are essential in this course. Please silence cell phones and *remove them from your desk or lap.* Laptop use is not permitted during class. Bringing a beverage to class is acceptable; bringing food is not. Failure to behave in an appropriate manner will result in the lowering of your participation grade. In extreme cases, I will ask you to leave the class.
- **Commitment:** you must attend class to be an active participant. If your schedule has constraints that will not allow you to attend regularly or to come to class

prepared to participate, you may choose not to join us this semester. *If you decide to take this course, you are deciding to attend the class every time it meets.* In return, I am promising you that I will do my part to make class meetings meaningful learning experiences. *You will be unable to pass the course if you are absent more than four times* (this includes both excused and unexcused absences—written excuses are not necessary). *If you must miss a class,* it is your responsibility to check in with a classmate to find out what was covered. You should exchange email addresses with at least two of your classmates so that you might contact them should you miss a class.

Name/Email Address: _____

Name/Email Address: _____

Everyone is late every once in a while. To be consistently late to this course will be problematic, however, since **3 late arrivals will count as 1 absence.**

- **Text:** in order to fully participate, *you must purchase your own copy of the text and you must bring it to class with you.* We will use it every day. Failure to regularly bring your text to class will result in the lowering of your participation grade. **Further, you may be marked absent if you come to class without your text.**

Grade Calculation	100-90 =	A	69-60 =	D
	89-80 =	B	Below 60 =	F
	79-70 =	C		

Academic Integrity The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

Read this!

If caught plagiarizing, you will be dismissed with an “F” in the course. Using unauthorized assistance of any kind in taking exams is also grounds for failing the course. If ever tempted to plagiarize or cheat, come talk with me. This will be far more productive than plagiarism.

Open Door Policy Feel free to come see me whenever you need to discuss anything about the course. It is best to make an appointment with me during office hours or reach me by e-mail. *When you e-mail me, be sure to include the topic of the message in the subject line and include your name at the end of the message. Always include a full explanation, and please do so in a professional manner.*

Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450.3135.

Sexual Harassment Policy Please consult the current UCA *Student Handbook* for university policies regarding sexual harassment.

**Title IX
Disclosure**

If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>.

**Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**Building Emergency
Plan**

An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

Readings and Assignments (subject to change)

Week 1	August 24	Discuss in class:	Introduction to the Course
Week 2	August 29	Discuss in class:	Sign up for Presentations; Discuss Character Assignment; Discuss E-mail Assignment 1 (“I read the syllabus!”); Reading Response Workshop; Defining Academic Dishonesty
		Read before class:	Review syllabus
		Due at start of class:	Any questions you have about syllabus
	August 31	Discuss in class:	The Power of Empathy; Susan Glaspell, <i>Trifles</i> (1916)
		Read before class:	Introduction in your textbook, pages 1-4 and 82-85; <i>Trifles</i> (read entire play)
		Due at start of class:	Character Assignment: <i>Trifles</i>
Week 3	September 5	Discuss in class:	Euripides, <i>Medea</i> (431 B.C.E.)
		Read before class:	<i>Medea</i> (read entire play)
		Due at start of class:	Reading Response 1
	September 7	Discuss in class:	Finish <i>Medea</i> (431 B.C.E.)
		Read before class:	<i>Medea</i> (review entire play)
Week 4	September 12	Discuss in class:	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i>
		Read before class:	<i>Lysistrata</i> (read entire play)
		Due at start of class:	Reading Response 2
	September 14	Discuss in class:	Finish <i>Lysistrata</i>
		Read before class:	<i>Lysistrata</i> (review entire play)
Week 5	September 19	Discuss in class:	Group Presentation Conferences;
		Due at start of class:	E-mail Assignment 1 (or, “I read the syllabus!”) must be sent before class
		Due at END of class:	Presentation Conference Handout (so don’t miss this!)
	September 21	Discuss in class:	Anonymous, <i>Everyman</i>
		Read before class:	<i>Everyman</i> (read entire play)
		Due at start of class:	Quiz 1
Week 6	September 26	Discuss in class:	William Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i> (1600-01)
		Read before class:	<i>Hamlet</i> , Acts 1 & 2
	September 28	Discuss in class:	<i>Hamlet</i> , continued
		Read before class:	<i>Hamlet</i> , Acts 3-5
		Due at start of class:	Quiz 2
Week 7	October 3	No class:	Please use the time to work on group presentations

	October 5	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin), <i>Tartuffe</i> (1664-9) <i>Tartuffe</i> (read entire play) Quiz 3
Week 8	October 10	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	Henrik Ibsen, <i>A Doll House</i> (1879) <i>A Doll House</i> (read entire play) Reading Response 3
	October 12	Discuss in class: Read before class:	<i>A Doll House</i> , continued Review <i>A Doll House</i>
Week 9	October 17	Exam 1	
	October 19	Fall Break!	
Week 10	October 24	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	Tennessee Williams, <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (1947) <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (read entire play) Reading Response 4
	October 26	No class	
Week 11	October 31	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> , continued Review <i>Streetcar</i> Performance Review 1
	November 2	Discuss in class: Read before class: Presentation:	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> , continued Review <i>Streetcar</i> Groups 1 & 2
Week 12	November 7	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	Arthur Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> (1949) <i>Death of a Salesman</i> (read entire play) Quiz 4
	November 9	Discuss in class: Read before class: Presentation:	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> , continued Review <i>Salesman</i> Groups 3 & 4
Week 13	November 14	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	August Wilson, <i>Fences</i> (1985) <i>Fences</i> (read entire play) Reading Response 5
	November 16	Discuss in class: Read before class: Presentation:	<i>Fences</i> , continued Review <i>Fences</i> Groups 5 & 6
Week 14	November 21	TBD	
	November 23	Thanksgiving!	

Week 15	November 28	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	John Patrick Shanley, <i>Doubt</i> (2008) <i>Doubt</i> (read entire play) Quiz 5
	November 30	Discuss in class: Read before class: Presentation:	<i>Doubt</i> , continued Review <i>Doubt</i> Groups 7 & 8
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Week 16	December 5	Discuss in class: Read before class: Due at start of class:	<i>Doubt</i> , continued Nothing new Performance Review 2
	December 7	Exam 2	