

**Saint Louis University**  
**Madrid Campus**  
**Department of English/Department of Fine & Performing Arts**

**ENGL 3340 Modern Literature: Drama**  
Spring Semester, 2016  
3 Credit Hours, TR 17:30-18:45

**Prof. Cary Barney, MFA**  
Office Hours MTWR 16:00-17:30  
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**DESCRIPTION:** This course offers a wide view of different tendencies in dramatic literature since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, through eleven plays selected for their eclectic use of the theatrical medium as well as their reflection of social, political, and economic contexts. Close attention will be paid to dramatic form, what makes the plays work as texts for performance, and how theatre transforms a written script into a living event. Students will read the plays, discuss them in class, and write short papers about each one, culminating in two longer critical papers.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** By the end of the course, students will:

- have a basic overview of what makes modern drama modern
- be able to read and discuss dramatic texts as literature, as examples of theater craft and as texts for performance
- have a basic understanding of the history and development of the theater over the last 150 years, in reference to plays written for specific theatrical contexts
- have a basic working understanding of dramatic theory and form, and be able to use key dramatic terms in discussion and writing
- have the ability to write about dramatic literature from a critical perspective
- understand drama and all literature as a reflection of human experience, and drama in particular as a communal effort to articulate this experience and find meaning within it (Oscar Wilde: "I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.")

**TEXTS:** Individual plays, all available in the bookstore. It's important that we all use the same edition, so that we're all on the same page. This is especially important with translations (accept no substitute for the Tony Kushner translation of *Mother Courage!*) If you are planning to use an electronic version of a translated play, make sure you're using the same translation as the rest of the class.

**EVALUATION:**

Short Papers: 15% (graded cumulatively, weighted toward improvement)  
First longer paper: 25%  
Second longer paper: 25%  
Exams: 20%  
Preparation/Participation: 15%

**ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS:** I expect you to attend class regularly and to be punctual. You are allowed (but by no means encouraged) to take three unexcused absences; any absences beyond that must be explained by a note from your doctor or your academic advisor or will lead to a lowered grade. Eight or more absences, for any reason, will result in automatic failure of the course. You are expected to keep up with all course contents. Lateness is cumulative. Abruptly coming and going is inconsiderate; don't do it. (If you must leave in the middle of class, inform me beforehand.)

**PARTICIPATION:** I will only talk if you do! You are expected to come to class prepared to talk knowledgeably about the play under discussion. There may be pop quizzes to test your knowledge of the plays, if I have any reason to doubt you've been keeping up with the reading. Participation is 15% of your final grade and is also what makes or breaks the class.

**QUESTIONS:** A different student will be assigned each class day to bring in, for the following class, at least three discussion questions on the day's reading. These must be submitted on

paper or by email prior to the class. These questions will be used to stimulate and guide classroom discussion. The quality of your questions figures into your grade for participation.

**MOBILE PHONES** must be turned off before you enter the classroom. (Mine will be too.) Class time is a time when you should consider yourself unreachable by phone, except in the case of extreme emergency, in which you will be reached through the front office.

**LAPTOP COMPUTERS, tablets, and other similar electronic devices** may be used only in the front row of the classroom, and only for purposes directly related with the classroom activity occurring at that moment. Students using them for any other purpose will be asked to leave the class and will be considered absent for that day.

**WRITING:** Students will write a short paper (1-2 pages) on each play we read, due in class the first class day after discussion of the play concludes, which should explore reactions to and/or questions about the play. These short papers will help focus on possible topics to develop for the two longer papers (5 pages minimum). Students are allowed to revise the first of these longer papers for a higher grade. The first paper will be on a play of each student's choice from the first half of the semester, the second on a play read after the midterm.

Two rules of thumb for writing about literature: 1) use the present tense to describe what happens and what the playwright does within the confines of the play (see the Verb Tense Exercise below); and 2) don't synopsise the text (I've read it). All papers must be typewritten and follow MLA format guidelines. If you are unsure about what's meant by that, visit [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) or consult your ENGL-1500/1900 handbook.

Finally, do **not** call the texts we are reading "books" "stories" or "novels" – they're **plays**.

**EXAMS:** The midterm exam will be a take-home exam made up of short answer and essay questions. The final exam will be all essay questions and will be given at our designated final exam time.

**PLAGIARISM: *Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form.*** All work submitted for this course must be your own and created for this class. We will review various types and degrees of plagiarism so there should be no confusion and no inadvertent plagiarism.

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT:** Please familiarize yourself with the Academic Honesty Policy in effect here at SLU, Madrid. These guidelines will be followed in case of any breach of academic honesty committed in this course. The policy is online at: [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies\\_&\\_procedures/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies_&_procedures/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf).

**ACCOMODATION:** In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor; and university-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning\\_resources.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 230, send an e-mail to [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu), or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

**ASSESSMENT:** Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to

conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of your work for this course, including any exams, oral presentations, assignments, submitted papers and/or portfolios, may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

### **Title IX Statement**

- Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 ([mmaruri@slu.edu](mailto:mmaruri@slu.edu); 915-54-5858 ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.
- If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall ([counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu); 915-54-5858 ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid ([www.sinews.es](http://www.sinews.es); 91-700-1979) To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address:  
[http://spain.slu.edu/student\\_life/docs/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/docs/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf).

## **SYLLABUS (subject to change):**

**Thurs. Jan. 14:** Introduction. What are plays for? Anatomy of a playscript. What is modern drama?

**Tues. Jan. 19:** Henrik Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler*

**Thurs. Jan. 21:** *Hedda Gabler*

**Tues. Jan. 26:** *Hedda Gabler*

**(Last Day to Drop a Class Without a Grade of W and /or Add a Class; Last Day to Choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Options)**

**Thurs. Jan. 28:** Anton Chekhov: *The Cherry Orchard*

**Tues. Feb. 2:** *The Cherry Orchard*

**Thurs. Feb. 4:** *The Cherry Orchard*

**Tues. Feb. 9:** Bernard Shaw: *Major Barbara*

**Thurs. Feb. 11:** *Major Barbara*

**Tues. Feb. 16:** *Major Barbara*

**Thurs. Feb. 18:** Bertolt Brecht: *Mother Courage and Her Children*

**Tues. Feb. 23:** *Mother Courage and Her Children*. **FIRST LONG PAPER DUE.**

**Thurs. Feb. 25: NO CLASS (Winter Break)**

**Tues. March 1:** *Mother Courage and Her Children*

**Thurs. March 3:** Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Tues. March 8:** *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Thurs. March 10:** *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**(Fri. March 11: Last Day to Drop a Class and Receive a Grade of W)**

**Tues. March 15:** Samuel Beckett: *Endgame*

**Thurs. March 17:** *Endgame*

**Tues. March 22-Thurs. March 24 SEMANA SANTA (no class)**

**Tues. March 29:** Harold Pinter: *The Homecoming*

**Thurs. March 31:** *The Homecoming*

**Tues. April 5:** Caryl Churchill: *Cloud Nine*

**(Weds. April 6: Registration begins for Fall 2016)**

**Thurs. April 7:** *Cloud Nine*

**Tues. April 12:** Timberlake Wertenbaker: *Our Country's Good*

**Thurs. April 14:** *Our Country's Good*

**Tues. April 19:** *Our Country's Good*

**Thurs. April 21:** David Mamet: *Oleanna*

**Tues. April 26:** *Oleanna*

**Thurs. April 28:** Sarah Ruhl: *Euridice*

**Tues. May 3:** *Euridice*. **SECOND LONG PAPER DUE (and revisions of the first).**

**Tues. May 10, 15:30-18:30: FINAL EXAM**

## ON READING ALOUD

Plays are written to be acted, not read silently. When you read silently, you miss the sound of the words, the rhythm of the dialogue and the voices of the characters. It's also a lot less fun. It is highly recommended that you get together with others in the class and read each play aloud. This way the reading becomes an enjoyable, communal experience, the next best thing to going to the theater. Tips:

- Organize a group within the class. Anywhere from four to seven readers is ideal; fewer makes it harder to divide roles, more can make it more difficult to involve everyone.
- Find a regular time to meet and read. You'll usually have a play a week to read, so meeting at the same time every week makes it easier to remember and plan around.
- Choose a comfortable place with as few distractions as possible. A bar or café is fine if you can hear each other, but limit your alcohol intake – you're studying!
- Don't read on autopilot; you'll miss everything important. Stop and talk. Ask questions, check footnotes, discuss, take notes, then continue.
- Switch roles. Everybody will want to be Hedda Gabler or Stanley Kowalski; take turns.
- Divide longer plays with denser language (*Major Barbara*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*) into two or more readings. Choose a good stopping place and resume another day.
- Act. If you find yourself morphing into the character you're reading, you'll enjoy the play more and understand it better. Have fun.

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**Verb Tense Exercise:** *Choose the correct verb forms in the paragraph below.*

When Shakespeare (**wrote, writes**) *Coriolanus* in 1608, King James the First (**is, was**) on the throne. James' preoccupation with avoiding war (**was, is**) reflected in the play's ironic treatment of its war hero protagonist. Shakespeare (**has, had**) Coriolanus slaughter an opposing army almost single-handed, but (**shows, showed**) him in peacetime as contemptuous of his people, whose tribunes he (**refused, refuses**) to honor. When the people (**turn, turned**) against him, Coriolanus (**switched, switches**) sides and (**attacks, attacked**) his own city with his former enemies. Here Shakespeare (**demonstrates, demonstrated**) how the military mindset (**can, could**) become an end in itself, dangerously independent of the public good. Coriolanus' thinly veiled homoerotic relationship with the enemy general, Aufidius, further (**compromised, compromises**) any idea that Coriolanus (**might be, might have been**) driven by patriotic zeal. This (**is, was**) emphasized in the 2007 Royal Shakespeare Company production of the play, in which Aufidius (**greeted, greets**) Coriolanus in a loose-fitting red silk dressing gown open to the waist.

## On Quoting Plays

It is assumed that you already know the basic rules about quoting and citing from previous writing courses. Now you have to quote plays. Here are a few simple guidelines.

If you're quoting a single, short line of dialogue (one sentence or, at the most, two short ones), embody it in your text with quotation marks but without the name of the character. For example, in Act Three, Barbara asks Undershaft, "Take me to the factory of death; and let me learn something more." (128) Or, in Act Two, Bill threatens, "See eah. Awve ed enaff o this." (85)

Longer excerpts, or those which include more than one speaker and/or stage directions, need to be block quoted, and their original formatting preserved. For example, at the end of Act One, Lady Britomart gives in to family pressure while Stephen does not:

LADY BRITOMART (*violently*): I won't be consoled, Stephen. There is nothing the matter with me. (*She rises and goes toward the door.*)

STEPHEN: Where are you going, mother?

LADY BRITOMART: To the drawing room, of course. (*She goes out. Onward, Christian Soldiers, on the concertina, with tambourine accompaniment, is heard when the door opens.*)

Are you coming, Stephen?

STEPHEN: No. Certainly not. (74)

Or, as Cusins explains in Act III, when the moment comes for him to make his fateful choice whether or not to take Undershaft's offer,

Until I met Barbara I thought myself in the main an honorable, truthful man, because I wanted the approval of my conscience more than I wanted anything else. But the moment I saw Barbara, I wanted her far more than the approval of my conscience. (134)

## Works Cited

Shaw, George Bernard. Major Barbara. London: Penguin Books, 1957.