

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

**ENGL 4930 Masterpieces of Western Literature (Drama)**  
Spring Semester, 2017  
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 asks the question, what is a masterpiece? We will interrogate the term by examining ten works from the field of drama, from ancient Greece to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these plays have long been considered certified masterpieces; others, perhaps, should be, depending on how we define the word. In some cases we may well find the term misleading, creating either false expectations or distorted views. In all cases we will explore the texts within their social, political, and economic contexts. Close attention will also 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 a short paper on each. These short papers will suggest topics for the two longer papers.

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

- be able to articulate a strong critical perspective on any work of literature
- be able to critically evaluate the reputation of a work of literature, in its own time and in various later times, taking into account changes in cultural contexts
- Produce sophisticated close readings that attend to multiple dimensions of textual complexity.
- Generate analyses that situate texts within their historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts, as well as within literary and theoretical traditions
- Compose clear and original spoken and written arguments that demonstrate facility with critical approaches and research methods.
- 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 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. 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 (one per play, graded cumulatively): 15%  
First long paper: 25%  
Second long paper: 25%  
Exams: 15%  
Preparation/Participation: 20%

**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.

**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 of the plays read for the course, as a way of exploring possible themes for the two longer papers (at least 6 pages each). The first longer paper will be due at midterm and may be revised for a higher grade; the second will be due at the end of the term. Both longer papers must be argumentative in nature and make use of outside sources and full citation.

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 word processed, carefully proofread, and must 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**.

**GRADING PAPERS:** Here is a brief guideline to how papers are graded in this class:

**an A paper**

- shows deep, thoughtful engagement with the play
- has a strong, specific thesis
- demonstrates comprehensive and insightful understanding of the play
- offers an original, highly developed interpretation of the play
- builds on, and goes beyond, classroom discussion
- includes thorough and convincing textual support
- makes excellent use of quotes and outside sources
- is clearly and engagingly written

**a B paper**

- shows thoughtful engagement with the play
- has a clear thesis
- demonstrates clear understanding of the play
- demonstrates a sound interpretation of the play
- makes good use of classroom discussion
- offers good textual support for its arguments
- makes good use of quotes
- is clearly written

**a C paper**

- shows sporadic engagement with the play
- has a very general, obvious or somewhat confused thesis
- demonstrates a basic, though perhaps flawed, understanding of the play
- offers a confused or under-supported interpretation of the play

- includes overly general, sometimes irrelevant textual support
- is padded with unnecessary synopsis and/or decorative quoting
- may be unclearly written in places

#### **a D paper**

- engages only superficially with the play, with no interpretation
- demonstrates serious misunderstanding of the play
- ignores or fails to use classroom discussion
- has no discernible thesis
- offers no relevant textual support
- shows carelessness in writing

#### **an F paper**

- fails to engage with the play on any level
- consists of or contains plagiarism (two papers containing plagiarism means an F for the course.) See note on **Academic Conduct** below.

**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. In the instance of a suspicion of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty it should be remembered that the instructor has the right to require the student to prove (by quiz, interview, or other means) that they are the author of submitted work. Inability to do so will result in a report to the committee for academic dishonesty.

**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. 12 Intro – “No More Masterpieces”

Tues. Jan. 17 Sophocles: *Oedipus Rex*

Thurs. Jan. 19 *Oedipus Rex*; Aristotle: *Poetics*

Tues. Jan. 24 Shakespeare: *Hamlet*

- Last day to drop a class without a grade W and /or add a class
- Last day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options

Thurs. Jan. 26 *Hamlet*

Tues. Jan. 31 *Hamlet*

Thurs. Feb. 2 *Hamlet*

Tues. Feb. 7 *Hamlet*

Thurs. Feb. 9 Molière: *The Misanthrope*

Tues. Feb. 14 *The Misanthrope*

Thurs. Feb. 16 Wycherley: *The Country Wife*

Tues. Feb. 21 *The Country Wife*

- First paper due (on *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet* or *The Misanthrope*)

**Thurs. Feb. 23 Winter Break (no class)**

Tues. Feb. 28 *The Country Wife*

Thurs. March 2 Ibsen: *Peer Gynt*

Tues. March 7 *Peer Gynt*

Thurs. March 9 *Peer Gynt*

- Friday, March 10: Last day to drop a class and receive a grade of W

Tues. March 14 Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler*

Thurs. March 16 *Hedda Gabler*

Tues. March 21 Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Thurs. March 23 *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Tues. March 28 Chekhov: *The Cherry Orchard*

Thurs. March 30 *The Cherry Orchard*

Tues. April 4 Theatre production. An introduction to the play (TBA).

Thurs. April 6 Theatre production. Attendance at play mandatory.

**Tues. April 11 – Thurs. April 13 Semana Santa**

Tues. April 18 Brecht: *The Life of Galileo*

Thurs. April 20 *The Life of Galileo*

Tues. April 25 Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Thurs. April 27 *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- Second paper due (on any play from *The Country Wife* on)

Thurs. May 4, 3:30-6:30: 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 (*Hamlet*, *The Country Wife*, *Peer Gynt*) 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.

\* \* \*

**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, greeted**) 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)

When dealing with Shakespeare or verse from any other play, divide the lines in short quotes with slashes. For example, Juliet says of Paris, “I wonder at this haste, that I must wed / Ere he that should be husband comes to woo.” (3.5 118-9) The cite in this case gives the Act and Scene numbers and line numbers, which you should use if your text has them. Longer verse quotes should be block quoted, and verse format preserved, as when Juliet cries,

O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
From off the battlements of any tower,  
Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk  
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears,  
Or hide me nightly in a charnel-house,  
O’ercover’d quite with dead men’s rattling bones... (4.1 77-82)

As you should already know, don’t quote any more than you have to! Nothing makes a paper look lazier than a lot of lengthy, irrelevant quotes. Also, don’t forget to list your sources by the edition you are using in the Works Cited at the end of your paper.

#### Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. Romeo and Juliet. In Evans, et. al. (eds.), The Riverside Shakespeare 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

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