

Theater History III: Shaw to Kushner
Spring 2008-09

Instructor: **Dr. D. Ohlandt**

TTh 9:30am - 10:50am
Buchanan 200

Office: Buchanan 211

Phone: x6112

email: < ohlandt@lakeforest.edu >

office hours: T 1:30-3pm

W 10:30-11:30am

and by appointment

Course Goals & Objectives:

In terms of content, the goal of this course is to learn the history theater and drama by examining specific plays and productions. The course is designed so that, by the end of the term:

1. Students will be familiar with a representative cross-section of examples of 20th century drama and theater, with an admitted concentration on the US and Europe.
2. Students will be able to locate each play or production in the context of the socio-historical moment in which it was created.
3. Students will be able to discuss each play or production as an example of a particular genre, style, or movement.
4. Students will be able to articulate how each play, production, or movement was, at the time it was generated, a reaction to "what came before" – either a reaction to a historical event or atmosphere, or a reaction to the ways that other plays and productions have attempted to represent in performance what is "real."

In terms of process, the goal of this course is to develop students' skills in critical reading, writing, and thinking, as these skills are used in both cooperative and independent research. To this end, the course is designed so that, by the end of the term:

1. Students will have learned and practiced the skills specific to reading plays.
2. Students will have worked with their classmates on a cooperative research project resulting in an historical re-enactment.
3. Students will have practiced peer-to-peer learning by taking turns introducing each play or production and its historical context.
4. Students will have had an opportunity to guide the class towards critical issues of their own interest by setting discussion questions for the play they introduce.

Texts:

Wadsworth Anthology of Drama, 4th edition or later, edited by W.B. Worthen
The Hairy Ape by Eugene O'Neill (not ordered through bookstore)
The Maids and Deathwatch by Jean Genet
Art by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton
additional readings posted on Moodle

Regular Class Attendance:

When you are in class, you should be focused on class. *Bring with you any texts under discussion that day.* You are required to attend all class meetings, and to arrive on time, ready to work. Attendance will be taken every day (tardies will be noted). A number of unexcused absences or late arrivals will result in a lower grade for the course, at my discretion.

Excused absences will be granted for *verifiable* medical and family emergencies, as well as for observed religious holidays, if brought to my attention ahead of time.

Field Trip Attendance:

Going to Chicago to see professional performance is a hallmark of the Theater Program at Lake Forest College, and an educational opportunity unmatched at other colleges. Of necessity, many of these trips will take place outside of normal class meeting time.

Please note: There will be a fee of \$75 (payable to the business office) associated with the costs of attending performances in Chicago. Your attendance is mandatory on class field trips. I expect that you will adjust your schedule of non-College activities in order to attend these field trips. In the event that an unavoidable conflict arises with a class field trip, I may, at my discretion, agree to one of the following options for full credit:

- you may arrange at your own expense to attend the same event at a different time, as long as you do so in time to participate in class discussions and/or projects relating to the missed event
- you may propose an alternative event or project in line with the goals of the event, which (in my opinion) requires equal or greater work on your part, again to be completed in time to participate in class discussions and/or projects relating to the missed event

You will not, under any circumstances, be reimbursed for your ticket or travel expenses for a missed field trip. You may, however, sell or give your ticket to a friend if you must miss a field trip.

Special Accommodations:

Everyone is built a little differently, and it shouldn't be surprising that everyone has different needs when it comes to learning in the classroom. I am happy to provide large-print copies of any materials that I hand out, and I can also make available written outlines of the things that I have prepared to say in class. If you have concerns about mobility requirements for any assignment or physical access to the classroom, performance spaces, or any resources, please see me and we will work together to resolve the problem.

Assignments:

1) regular attendance, participation, and completion of daily reading assignments, as listed on the term schedule. For every play that we read, we will be focusing our discussion on two questions. The better prepared we are to answer these two questions, the better our discussions will be:

- a) What is happening in history at the time the play or a significant production of it was created, and in the time leading up to its creation? *Any event or attitude that might reasonably have been on an artist's mind is relevant.*
- b) How is the play or a significant production of it different from the plays and productions that people at the time would have already known? *Think about differences in style, genre and technique as well as differences in content, politics, and general philosophy.*

In addition to regular discussion, for some plays, you may be required to work outside of class to prepare scenes from the plays under discussion.

2) mini-presentation on play and its historical context: Each student will sign up to give a mini-presentation introducing one play (or set of plays, in some cases) that we are reading in class. This presentation should include: a) information about the playwright, b) information about the region where the play was written or where the playwright lived, c) information about what is going on in history at the time the play was written, d) information about the time period of the play (if it is specific and different

from the time the play was written), e) information about the stylistic movement with which the play is affiliated, if any.

I also encourage you to include additional kinds of material that will help us visualize or understand the play, such as production photographs, dramaturgical material, program notes, or staging of scenes. Note that these kinds of materials should not be the sole content of your mini-presentation.

This presentation may be informal (I'm looking for content, not a polished oral presentation) and it MUST end with 3-4 open-ended critical questions to begin class discussion on the play. These questions should be relevant to the two questions listed in #1 around which we will be focusing our discussion, but they cannot be those questions. Mini-presentations should not exceed 10 minutes, but they do not have to be that long.

Your mini-presentation and discussion facilitation will comprise 1/4 of your participation grade.

3) 10% – presentation on the Federal Theater Project: Each student will work alone or with a partner to prepare a presentation about a specific aspect of the Federal Theater Project, chosen by the student. If you choose to work with a partner, both partners will receive the same grade on the presentation, and how well you work together becomes part of the basis of your grade.

4) 10% – group re-enactment of the Wilson-Brustein debate: Each member of the class will have a specific, active role to play in a researched re-enactment of the Wilson-Brustein debate.

Theater is a collaborative art, and one of the objectives of this course is to develop cooperative research skills. To that end, you will not be graded only on the content or on the final presentation, but on how well the class works together on the project. That means, if it becomes obvious that one or two people did most of the work, or that each person did their own thing and the group never worked together outside of class, then *everyone's* grade will be lower. "So-and-so didn't do his/her work," or "we met, but so-and-so didn't come to our meetings," will not raise your grade, because it is the group's responsibility to ensure that everyone is working together. If you run into trouble, come and see Dr. Ohlandt ahead of time.

5) 20% – analytic paper, 4-5 pages: You may choose either of the two due dates for the analytic paper, but you may NOT choose the same due date for this paper as for the research paper. A list of topics will be distributed for each due date to correspond with the areas we have covered.

6) 20% – research paper, 6-8 pages: You may choose either of the two due dates for the research paper, but you may NOT choose the same due date for this paper as for the analytic paper. A list of topics will be distributed for each due date to correspond with the areas we have covered.

7) 20% – final exam: An essay-style take-home exam will be distributed on the last regular day of classes. The exam must be completed and turned in by the end of our scheduled exam slot.

Grading:

analytic paper – 20%

research paper – 20%

Federal Theater Project presentation – 10%

Wilson-Brustein debate re-enactment – 10%

final exam – 20%

participation (including discussion facilitation) – 20%

Professor Ohlandt's requirements for written work:

Papers are due in class on the dates they are due. If you choose to submit your paper electronically, it must be sent or uploaded before class begins that day.

Written work must be in MLA format, using MLA standards for citation, and be printed double-spaced in 11- or 12- pt font, with 1" margins. Your pages must be numbered, and the first page should have a header that includes a title (or "final exam" if it is the final exam), the course number, the date the paper was turned in, semester and year, and your name, in whatever arrangement you find aesthetically pleasing, *as long as the information is clear and logical.*

You should use parenthetical citations in the body of your paper, and you must include a works cited page with bibliographic entries at the end, under its own heading. *Your works cited page does not count towards your total page count!*

All ideas that are not your own must be cited (parenthetical citations are appropriate here), even if you do not quote them directly.

I encourage you to submit formal written work (research papers, analytical papers, outlines, etc) in electronic form via email <ohlandt@lakeforest.edu> or our class webpage on Moodle. Papers submitted electronically must be submitted as attachments, not as inline text. On receipt, I will convert your file to a .pdf document, and I will mark/grade it using a stylus input, so it will look like handwriting. I will save the marked paper as a different .pdf and return it to you in that format. You should be able to print .pdf files on any computer with the free Adobe reader installed.

If you choose to submit your papers in hard copy, you may print on both sides of the page—*however*, if your last page is printed on both sides, please staple a blank page on the end for me to write my comments. You *must* staple your pages together if you submit a hard copy—paper clips are not acceptable.

If you choose to submit your papers electronically, the formatting and citation standards apply.

Grammatical, spelling, and formatting errors will absolutely lower your grade. *If it seems that you have not proofread your paper at all, I will return it to you for proofreading and accept it again within 24 hours for half credit.*