

Utica College  
THE 375A / ENG 375A: Literature of the Theatre  
Fall 2018

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Class Meeting Times:** MWF 9:30-10:20am

**Prerequisites:** ENG 102

**Instructor:** Rachel M. E. Wolfe

**e-mail:** ENGAGE mail, or [rmwolfe@utica.edu](mailto:rmwolfe@utica.edu) as a last resort

**Office:** DePerno 103

**Office Hours:** TT 3-5pm

Welcome to Literature of the Theatre! In this class, we will bridge the gap between theatre and English by exploring the literary side of play analysis and examining plays as a unique form of literature. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Analyze the literary aspects of playscripts
- Demonstrate an understanding of literature in its time and culture
- Articulate ideas about texts with the use of close reading
- Detail the conditions which may change the literary aspects of playscripts and explain how they do so
- Demonstrate basic understanding of the various perspectives from which literary analysis of playscripts is undertaken
- Effectively express their own interpretations of plays both orally and in writing

Our main focus in this course is on reading, discussing, and writing about plays. Students should expect to do a lot of reading for every class period, and are encouraged to come to class armed with questions, opinions, and observations about it. Class periods will alternate between lecture and discussion.

### REQUIRED READING

- Barranger, Milly S. *Understanding Plays, Third Edition*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. (2004). ISBN: 0-205-38190-1. **Available in the UC bookstore.**
- Frayn, Michael. *Noises Off*. London: Bloomsbury (2017). ISBN: 9781350013346. **Purchase ebook at <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/noises-off-9781350013346/#> . Alternate editions are acceptable.**
- Stein, Gertrude. "How Writing is Written" and *What Happened: A Five Act Play*. **Available for free on ENGAGE course page.**
- *Writing About Drama* Ebook. Norton Anthology of Drama online resource. **Sign up online at <https://digital.wwnorton.com/drama3> for free.**
- One alternate translation of *Oedipus* as individually assigned and handed out by me. **Distributed by email on Wednesday, September 19.**

## REQUIRED VIEWING

- Syracuse Stage, *Noises Off*. Runs September 12-30, Tuesday-Sunday (times variable—see course calendar in ENGAGE). **Buy tickets at <https://www.syracusestage.org/> ASAP. UC has access to group rate (\$15) tickets for the 3PM performance on Saturday, September 15. Laura Salvaggio and myself will both be attending this performance and can arrange carpooling on that day. Talk to one or both of us if interested.**

## GRADE BREAKDOWN AND ASSIGNMENTS

Grades for this course will be calculated as follows:

Attendance and Participation	20% total (0.5% per class)
Reading Responses	20% total (1% each)
Writing Exercises	30% total (5% each)
Midterm Presentation	10%
Final Paper	20%

Specifics for each of these components is detailed below.

### Attendance and Participation:

Attendance in this class is very important. While the readings should be informative and thought-provoking, they do not contain any of the overarching frameworks we will be using to understand plays in this class. To get that information, you must attend lectures and discussions with your classmates. Moreover, we will be using discussion in this class to develop our ideas and to rehearse the skills needed for the number-one place where play analysis happens: the production meeting. As such, you should consider attendance and participation the component of your grade that measures the “oral expression” skills goal of this course.

**Each class period is worth 5 points (0.5% of your final grade).** You get one point just for showing up to class. You get another point for showing up to class on time. You get another for staying to the end of the period. Speaking up in class, even just once per class period, gets you another. The fifth point is a “Wow! Good job!” point reserved for students who contribute meaningfully to class discussion by making insightful comments, formulating excellent responses to others’ ideas, proposing new directions for discussion, or really keeping the ball rolling by contributing a lot.

**You get one free absence.** At the end of the semester, I will drop the one class period with the lowest number of points. This means that you may be absent ONCE with no grade penalty at all. All absences after this will count as zeros. I do grant “excused” absences for illness with doctor’s note, scheduled out-of-town sporting events with coach’s note, and emergency situations with explanatory e-mail. Excused absences are worth 3 points.

**Respectful engagement is mandatory.** The free and critical exchange of ideas is largely what a university education is all about, and there is no topic that is off-limits in this class. Because the plays that we will be reading engage with many aspects of the human experience (some of which may be sensitive or politicized), it is vital that we approach all class discussions

with respect for one another. While it is perfectly acceptable to disagree with ideas expressed by your classmates—and to refute those ideas with your own points—you must always direct your criticisms toward the points made and not toward the speaker. There is a difference between a disagreement and a personal attack, and personal attacks or insults toward a classmate will not be tolerated. Nor will derogatory remarks or slurs aimed at a larger social group (i.e. a particular race, gender, religion, etc.). It is important that you do participate in class discussion and engage with your classmates, but equally important that you do so in a manner that fosters respectful dialogue.

### **Reading Responses:**

The first step in all literary analysis is reading, and the second is formulating your own response. Reading responses—a free-form, informal writing assignment due each time we read a play—will ensure that you get grade credit for reading and practice with formulating your own responses in writing. Toward the beginning of the semester, we will go over a number of quick, easy methods for beginning to jot down your ideas about a play. Throughout the semester, you will experiment with these methods in practice by employing one of them (of your choice) for each play we read and turning it in.

**There are 20 reading responses due this semester, worth 1% each.** We will be reading 19 plays as a class, and you will do a reading response for each of them. In addition, you will select one of the plays to serve as the basis for your final paper. You will do one additional reading response on your final play, for a total of two. These two reading responses may not be of the same type (EX: if you already did a bullet list for your regular response to your final play, you might do a freewrite for your second response, but cannot make another bullet list).

**Reading responses are due on ENGAGE before the start of class on the day we are discussing the play in question, and WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE.** Reading responses are meant to help you formulate your own ideas about the play and figure out what kinds of unique contributions you can make to the upcoming class discussion. Writing a reading response *after* participating in a class discussion about that play will likely change what you write and show the influence of others' ideas more than your own immediate gut reactions. Because of this, I will not accept reading responses submitted after class discussion begins. There are two exceptions to this rule: the extra reading response you do for your final play (which may be turned in at any time), and a late response after an *excused* absence during which you missed class discussion (illness or emergency ONLY).

**Reading responses may earn zero points, half points, or full points.** Because they are informal and do not require correct usage, I do not give letter grades or fine point gradations for reading responses. You get zero points for a response you don't turn in. You get half points for a response you technically did but clearly did not take seriously (EX: a brainstorm with only two things written down). You get full points for turning in an assignment that demonstrates thought.

### **Writing Exercises:**

Throughout the semester, we will be doing a series of writing exercises designed to develop your writing skills and prepare you for the final paper. These exercises vary quite a bit in type, structure, and required length, so detailed instructions will be issued separately for each as

it comes up. **Each is worth 5% of your final grade, and is letter-graded.** Each should be submitted on **ENGAGE as a Word document by the start of class** on the indicated day:

- 1) *Noises Off* on the page response exercise. **Due Wednesday, September 12.**
- 2) *Oedipus* translation comparison exercise. **Due Monday, September 24.**
- 3) *Noises Off* performance analysis. **Due Wednesday, October 3.**
- 4) *Hedda Gabler* annotated bibliography. **Due Wednesday, October 24.**
- 5) Thesis statement and annotated bibliography for final paper. **Due Friday, November 9.**
- 6) Outline for final paper. **Due Friday, November 30.**

### **Midterm Presentation:**

During midterm week, you will demonstrate your ability to express your ideas about dramatic literature orally by giving a pitch presentation on a play of your choice, selected from among the plays we have read so far in the semester. For your pitch, you will adopt the point of view of one of the jobs which most often studies the literary aspect of plays (director, dramaturg, producer, or academic). Depending on the job you choose, the format of your presentation will vary accordingly to match the type most commonly given in that role. We will be covering these roles near the beginning of the semester and the format of the presentations closer to midterms.

**Your presentation should run about 10 minutes long, and will be given on Wednesday, October 10 or Friday, October 12.** If you know you will be absent for one of these days or simply have a preference that will make your midterm schedule easier, please let me know. If you can, however, do try to make it both days in order to support your classmates. **Presentations earn points out of 100 based on a rubric I will distribute closer to midterms. This presentation is worth 10% of your final grade.**

### **Final Paper:**

As your final for this course, you will write a critical essay on one of the plays we have read for the semester. The play, the topic, and the argument you make will be up to you, but whatever you choose should be based in a substantial amount of independent research. We will be developing some of the preliminary work on this paper in class, but I will not see a full draft until the final. **Submit as a Word document via ENGAGE by Friday, December 14 at 12PM. This assignment is letter-graded, and is worth 20% of your final grade.**

<b>Undergraduate Grading Scale</b>			
A	94 – 100	C	74 – 76.99
A-	90 – 93.99	C-	70 – 73.99
B+	87 – 89.99	D+	67 – 69.99
B	84 – 86.99	D	60 - 66.99
B-	80 – 83.99	F	0 - 59.99
C+	77 - 79.99		

## **POLICIES**

### **Turning in work:**

**All coursework is to be turned in electronically via the ENGAGE course page.** I prefer to receive papers as Word documents for ease of grading. Please include your own name in the title of the document. I will return corrected papers electronically on ENGAGE.

**Except for reading responses, I do accept late work.** Each student may take one no-questions-asked two-day grace period to turn in an assignment of their choice during the semester. If more than two days have passed, or you have already used your freebie, and you need a further extension, please come see me during office hours so we can work out an alternate deadline appropriate to your situation. That said, however, deadlines exist so that your work will be spread out over the semester and not wind up snowballing into the world's biggest stress-fest at the end of the semester, so it is in your own best interests to meet them. And of course, any work not turned in by the end of the semester will earn a zero and negatively impact your grade.

**Work is due by the start of class time on the due date.** This timing is designed so that you won't have to miss my class because you're still working on the paper for my class. If you're not done by the start of class on the due date, put the assignment aside and come to class. It's already late, and will not incur extra penalties because you took an hour out to attend.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Academic honesty and plagiarism prevention are topics that I take very seriously and teach in this course. Students are warned right from the outset, however, to review the Utica College academic honesty policy: <http://www.utica.edu/academic/facultyinfo/honestypolicy.cfm> . Please take particular note that **FAILURE TO CITE SOURCES COUNTS AS PLAGIARISM**. If I find an instance of plagiarism, the student will receive a zero on the assignment in question and be reported to the Provost, who may impose further penalties.

### **Emergency Preparedness:**

Students are advised to review the campus safety information and procedures available at <http://www.utica.edu/finance/environment/safety/> , particularly the sections on lockdown and shelter-in-place procedures. In addition, any student with safety-related special circumstances to report (EpiPen, evacuation assistance, etc.) should come to office hours early in the semester to create an emergency plan with me. All students should be aware of the locations of the first aid kit and fire extinguisher nearest to the classroom. I am Red Cross certified in first aid and CPR. If you have any emergency training or certifications, please let us know!

**In case of inclement weather that prevents our meeting in-person as a class, we may hold an electronic class session through ENGAGE instead.** In the event that a snowstorm or other weather emergency prevents me from getting to campus, I will post an announcement to the coursepage informing the class of the switch to an e-class for the day. During an e-class, you are expected to be logged in to ENGAGE during the regular class hour for the entire time. If we were scheduled for a lecture class, I will deliver my lecture webinar-style via Skype. If we were scheduled for a class discussion, I will begin a message board where students are expected to post their ideas and actively respond to others for the duration of the class period.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

**I am committed to creating a supportive learning environment for students with disabilities.** Any student who has need of special accommodations in this class due to a documented disability should speak with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class (my office hours are at the top of this syllabus). You should also contact the **Director of the Office of Learning Services (315-792-3032)** in order to determine eligibility for services and to receive an accommodation letter. We will work with you to help you in your efforts to master the course content in an effective and appropriate way.

**I am equally committed to safeguarding my students' mental health.** If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed and this class is contributing to your having unacceptable levels of stress, please come talk to me during office hours, so we can work out an alternate plan for your coursework that will enable you to be both healthy and productive. Also, don't be afraid to take advantage of the resources available through the on-campus **Counseling Center (315-792-3094):** <https://www.utica.edu/student/development/counseling/> .

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Week One: Course Intro**

Aug

27 M – Course intro

29 W – What is dramatic literature and who studies it?

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-13) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 1-2: “What is Academic Writing?” and pp. 26-30: “Reading Drama / Imagining Theater”

31 F – Play structure

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 2 front matter (pp. 15-21) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 33-43: “Generating Ideas”

### **Week Two: Playwriting**

Sept

3 M – Discussion: *Hamlet*

Reading: *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* and back matter (pp. 22-96)

5 W – Character

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 3 front matter (pp. 97-103) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 3-9: “Constructing an Informed Argument”

7 F – Discussion: *The Glass Menagerie*

Reading: *The Glass Menagerie* and back matter (pp. 104-145)

### **Week Three: Performance**

10 M – Page to stage

Reading: Frayn, *Noises Off* AND *Writing About Drama* p. 31: “Going to the Theater”

12 W – Language

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 4 front matter (pp. 147-154) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 18-19: “Performance Analysis”

**Due: *Noises Off* on the page response exercise**

14 F – Discussion: *The Cherry Orchard*

Reading: *The Cherry Orchard* and back matter (pp. 155-189)

#### **Week Four: Translation**

17 M – Translating tragedy

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 5 front matter (pp. 193-197) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 15-17: “Play Analysis”

19 W – Discussion: *Oedipus the King*

Reading: *Oedipus the King* and back matter (pp. 198-232)

21 F – Discussion: alternate translations

Reading: individually assigned *Oedipus* translation

#### **Week Five: Dramaturgy**

24 M – Comedy

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 6 front matter (pp. 233-236)

**Due: *Oedipus* translation comparison exercise**

26 W – Discussion: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Reading: *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Play for Serious People* and back matter (pp. 237-277)

28 F – Farce and Satire

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 7 front matter (pp. 279-282) AND *Writing About Drama* p. 89-99: “Revising: Cultivating a Critical Eye” and “Proofreading and Formatting”

#### **Week 6: Scholarship**

Oct

1 M – Discussion: *The Colored Museum*

Reading: *The Colored Museum* and back matter (pp. 283-310)

3 W – Tragicomedy

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 8 front matter (pp. 311-314)

**Due: *Noises Off* performance analysis**

5 F – Discussion: *Angels in America*

Reading: *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One: Millennium Approaches* and back matter (pp. 315-363)

#### **Week 7: Midterms**

8 M – FALL BREAK

10 W – **Midterm Presentations**

12 F – **Midterm Presentations**

**Week 8: Psychological Analysis**

15 M – Modernism

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 9 front matter (pp. 367-370) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 20-22: “Papers About Political, Cultural, or Social Issues”

17 W – Discussion: *Hedda Gabler*

Reading: *Hedda Gabler* and back matter (pp. 371-418)

19 F – Realism

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 10 front matter (pp. 419-424) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 50-56: “Using Sources”

**Week 9: Formal Analysis**

22 M – Discussion: *Fences*

Reading: *Fences* and back matter (pp. 425-467)

24 W – Epic Theatre

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 11 front matter (pp. 471-473)

**Due: *Hedda Gabler* annotated bibliography**

26 F – Discussion: *Galileo*

Reading: *Galileo* and back matter (pp. 474-513)

**Week 10: Interpretation**

29 M – Minimalism and the Absurd

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 12 front matter (pp. 515-517) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 44-48: “Focusing Your Ideas”

31 W – Discussion: *Footfalls*

Reading: *Footfalls* and back matter (pp. 518-526)

Nov

2 F – Literary Cubism

Reading: Stein, “How Writing is Written” and *What Happened: A Five Act Play*

**Week 11: The Canon and its Discontents**

5 M – Feminist Drama

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 13 front matter (pp. 527-533) AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 57-58: “Developing Your Thesis”

7 W – Discussion: *How I Learned to Drive*

Reading: *How I Learned to Drive* and back matter (pp. 534-566)

9 F – Interculturalism

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 16 front matter (pp. 641-644)

**Due: Thesis statement and annotated bibliography for final paper**

**Week 12: The Canon and its Discontents Continued**



12 M – Discussion: *Broken Eggs*

Reading: *Broken Eggs* and back matter (pp. 645-672)

14 W – Orientalism

Reading: *Understanding Plays* “Asian American Playwrighting” (pp. 673-674)

AND *Writing About Drama* pp. 61-65: “Considering Structure and Organization”

16 F – Discussion: *Golden Child*

Reading: *Golden Child* and back matter (pp. 675-706)

### **Week 13: Forum Time!**

19 M – NO CLASS (Prof. Wolfe traveling for conference). Students will use classtime log into ENGAGE forum and hold a discussion in writing on the large-scale issues of canonization we have been discussing the past two weeks.

21 W – THANKSGIVING BREAK

23 F – THANKSGIVING BREAK

### **Week 14: New Forms**

26 M – Docudrama

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 14 front matter (pp. 567-573) AND

*Writing About Drama* pp. 66-73: “Constructing Paragraphs” and pp. 74-77:

“Introductions and Conclusions”

28 W – Discussion: *The Laramie Project*

Reading: *The Laramie Project* and back matter (pp. 574-616)

30 F – Solo Performance

Reading: *Understanding Plays* Chapter 15 front matter (pp. 617-623)

**Due: Outline for final paper**

### **Week 15: New Forms Continued and Course Wrap-Up**

Dec

3 M – Discussion: *Of Mice, Bugs and Women*

Reading: *Of Mice, Bugs and Women: The Secaucus Monologue* and back matter (pp. 624-640)

5 W – Catch-up day

7 F – Course wrap-up and review

**FINAL PAPERS DUE TO THE ENGAGE COURSEPAGE BY NOON ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14. THERE WILL BE NO SIT-DOWN FINAL.**