

Utica College
THE 300C: Special Topics in Theatre
Dramaturgy of *Arcadia*
Fall 2018

Credit Hours: 1

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Times: MWF 10:30-11:20am

Instructor: Rachel M. E. Wolfe

Office: DePerno 103

e-mail: ENGAGE mail, or rmwolfe@utica.edu as a last resort

Office Hours: TT 3-5pm

Welcome to Dramaturgy of *Arcadia*! In this class, we will learn the practical art of production dramaturgy by doing the dramaturgy work for the upcoming departmental production of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Name and perform the various jobs of production dramaturgy
- Undertake effective historical and contextual research
- Create helpful materials for the theatrical production of a set playtext

Our main focus in this course is on gaining, distilling, and disseminating knowledge. As such, you should expect to use this course to hone your skills in research, writing, oral presentation, and critical thinking, all of which are the central components of production dramaturgy.

REQUIRED READING

- Fuchs, Elinor. "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play." In *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, Magda Romanska, ed. London and New York: Taylor & Francis Group (2014). **Read for free online at http://web.mit.edu/jscheib/Public/foundations_06/ef_smallplanet.pdf** .
- Stoppard, Tom. *Arcadia*. New York: Samuel French, Inc. (2011). **Available at the UC campus bookstore.**
- Wolfe, Rachel M. E. Example program notes (various productions):
 - "The Great Depression in the Jim Crow South." In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* Book-It Repertory Theatre production program. **View for free under the "PROGRAM" tab at <http://book-it.org/about/production-history/i-know-why-the-caged-bird-sings-2/>** . Flip through digital program until you see the title of the article.
 - "A Note from the Dramaturg." In *She Stoops to Conquer* UCSB production program. **View for free at https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/038425_b5fa3ccc411c4cac90bbba79165b8fdf.pdf** .

- “Note from the Dramaturg/Assistant Director.” In *Cloud 9* UCSB production program. **View for free at** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/038425_bf9589926029459b8aa6e8302bfcfd18.pdf.
- Various internet reading / library research of your own choosing.

GRADE BREAKDOWN AND ASSIGNMENTS

Grades for this course will be calculated as follows:

Attendance and Participation	12% total (1% per class)
In-Class Presentations	20% total (10% each)
Writing Assignments	40% total (10% each)
Final Dramaturgy File	28%

Specifics for each of these components is detailed below.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance in this class is very important. Virtually all information on dramaturgy as a practice will be delivered by me in-person during classtime, not via the readings. Additionally, several of the assignments for this class are in-class presentations that require your attendance. As such, you should plan on being in class every day of our short time together.

Each class period is worth 5 points (1% 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. I 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 of this, 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.

In-Class Presentations:

You will do two informal in-class presentations as a part of this course:

1. An informal sharing of your contextual research with your classmates, who researched other aspects of the context than you did. This may take any form, but should fulfill the objective of clearly communicating the most important findings of your research. **Given in class on Wednesday, November 14.**
2. A pitch for what you think the lobby display for *Arcadia* should consist of and look like. You may bring visual aids if you wish and think they are helpful, but they are not required. Any presentation that effectively communicates thoughtful, considered ideas for the lobby display will earn a good grade. **Given in class on Monday, December 3.**

Presentations earn letter grades on the basis of clarity, effectiveness, and content. **Each presentation is worth 10% of your final grade, for a total of 20%.**

Writing Assignments:

You will do four short writing assignments in this class:

1. **First Impressions:** an informal freewrite on “the world of the play” for *Arcadia* inspired by the considerations laid out in Elinor Fuchs’ “Visit to a Small Planet.” Spelling, grammar, and organization will not be considered in the grading of this assignment, only thought. **Due Friday, November 9.**
2. **Glossary:** a glossary of potentially unfamiliar terms in the script of *Arcadia*. Only the word and a simple definition is needed for each entry. Pictures may be included if you find them helpful, but are not required. Try to include not only terms that you did not know, but also words that others are likely to find unfamiliar (especially discipline-specific technical terms). Correct spelling and grammar are encouraged, but do not factor into your grade at this stage. **Due Monday, November 12.**
3. **Departmental Advertising Blurb:** an advertising pitch for a department on campus whose discipline is relevant to the show (excluding Performing & Fine Arts). This should be brief, to-the-point, attention-grabbing, and make a strong case for why non-theatre people from this other department should care about and come to see *Arcadia*. Spelling, grammar, and organization count. **Due Monday, November 19.**
4. **Program Notes:** a 1-5 paragraph spiel for the audience to be included in the program for *Arcadia*. This should inform the audience of any context they need to know in order to get a fuller experience of the play and understand its central themes. Spelling, grammar, and organization count. **Due Friday, November 30.**

Each of these assignments will earn a letter grade. Everything except the First Impressions write-up will be polished and included in your final dramaturgy file (and even then, you’re welcome to steal from your own First Impressions write-up for other sections as you see fit). So don’t stress too much about the initial assignments. Consider them first drafts of the final versions you will turn in at the end of the semester. **Each writing assignment is worth 10% of your final grade, for a total of 40%.**

Final Dramaturgy File:

As your final for this course, you will collect and revise all the work you have done for this course into a single, polished dramaturgy file that will be used in the upcoming production

of *Arcadia* in the Spring semester. You will need to do serious revision, including write-ups of the content of your in-class presentations, in order to complete the final file. Your file should demonstrate improvement from previous versions and mastery of production dramaturgy as a practice. **Submit as a Word document via ENGAGE by Monday, December 10 at 12PM. This assignment is letter-graded, and is worth 28% of your final grade.**

Undergraduate Grading Scale			
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. I will return corrected papers electronically on ENGAGE.

I 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 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. Students are warned to review the Utica College academic honesty policy: <http://www.utica.edu/academic/facultyinfo/honestypolicy.cfm> . 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 1: Defining Dramaturgy

Nov 5 M – Course Intro and What is Dramaturgy?

7 W – The World of the Play

Reading: Fuchs, “Visit to a Small Planet”

9 F – *Arcadia*

Reading: Stoppard, *Arcadia*

Due: First Impressions

Week 2: Research

12 M – The Actor Packet

Due: Glossary

14 W – Context

Reading: whatever you can find on assigned context

Due in-class: Short Context Presentation

16 F – Content

Reading: whatever you can find on assigned branch of knowledge

Week 3: Community Outreach

19 M – NO CLASS (Prof. Wolfe traveling for conference)

Due: Departmental Advertising Blurb

21 W – THANKSGIVING BREAK

23 F – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 4: Audience Education

26 M – Holistic Dramaturgy

Reading: Stoppard, *Arcadia* (yes, again)

28 W – The Program

Reading: Wolfe, example program notes

30 F – Lobby Displays

Due: Program Notes

Week 5: Course Wrap-Up

Dec

3 M – Production Dramaturgy

Due in-class: Lobby Display Concept

5 W – Catch-up day

7 F – Course wrap-up and review

COMPLETE, REVISED DRAMATURGY PACKETS DUE BY NOON ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 10. THERE WILL BE NO SIT-DOWN FINAL.