

THR 151:001
DRAMA, STAGE & SOCIETY II
Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30-11:45 am
Krug Hall 7
Kristin Johnsen-Neshati
703.993.1122; kneshati@gmu.edu (preferred)
Office: De Laski PAB A407F

OFFICE HOURS

MWF 1:30-3:00 pm, or by appointment.
Please schedule an appointment with me after class or by email in advance.

Departmental Website: www.gmu.edu/depts/theater/
A copy of this syllabus may be found online: theater.gmu.edu/academics.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION & ADDITIONAL COURSE INFO.

Covers the development of Western drama and theater post-Shakespeare to present day.
Considers readings in dramatic literature and history of theater in social context.

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3
Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: None
Content Delivery: Lecture & discussion with some group work

- Satisfies Mason's General Education Requirement in the Arts
- Satisfies 3 of 6 theater history credits required for the Theater major
- Satisfies 3 of 18 credits required for a minor in Theater
- Generally required for admission to graduate Theater programs

(See "Requirements for the B.A. in Theater" and "Theater Minor Description" (at <http://www.gmu.edu/depts/theater/academics.html>.)

COURSE OUTLINE

What makes great theater? Do we need it? Who says so, and why? Students will consider these and other questions about the relationship among the playwright, theater, and audience as they discover how classical drama responded to the ever-changing needs of society. This course will introduce students to a varied selection of plays and theoretical examples ranging from the 19th century to the present. We will compare and contrast playwrights, theatrical spaces, performance innovations, and critical opinions as we move from one period to the next. Throughout the course, students will also be encouraged to draw connections with parallel contemporary trends in history, philosophy, literature, and the arts.

GOALS

As stated in the Requirements section of the General Education Website of the Office of the Provost, Mason's General Education Arts Courses "aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis." (See provost.gmu.edu/gened/requirements.html.)

In this course, students should expect to achieve all of the previous outcomes by learning to:

- (1) Identify and analyze the formal elements of classical plays from different parts of the world and historical periods, using vocabulary appropriate to each artistic, historical, and technological context
- (2) Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept by sharpening their skills in dramatic analysis to support their own artistic interpretations of texts on the page and in production;
- (3) Analyze and interpret classical plays and theater in their social, historical, and personal contexts through an understanding of how trends in dramatic content, dramaturgy, technology, and style reflect the artist's changing role in society;
- (4) Improve their communication skills, both orally and in writing;
- (5) Engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis, by synthesizing textual and theatrical elements, as any theater artist must do, to envision the full production in one's imagination.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- J. Ellen Gainor, Stanton B. Garner, Jr., and Martin Puchner (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Drama, Volume Two: The Nineteenth Century to the Present*

RECOMMENDED

- Strunk/White, *The Elements of Style*

ASSIGNMENTS

- 2 tests
- 1 midterm paper
- 1 theater history project (presented during final exam slot)
- Frequent extra credit opportunities (optional)

"Rather fail with honor than succeed by fraud."

—Sophocles

N.B.: Plagiarism is an Honor Code violation. Please consult your University Catalog for guidelines on how to avoid this serious offence. Honor Code rules pertain to all student assignments, both written and oral.

TESTS

The format for the test will include, but not be limited to, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple choice questions. Material covered will include introductions in the anthology, assigned plays, articles, and lecture material. Cell phones must be turned off and packed away during tests, and students will not be allowed to leave the classroom before they have handed in their tests for grading. Please use the rest room beforehand!

PAPER TOPICS

An original paper about one of the plays from our reading list, complete with bibliography and proper citations for at least 5 non-internet sources. (Sources that appear in print as well as online will count as “non-internet sources.”) The paper must be 1,500-2,000 words and demonstrate your mastery of the whole text (plot, character, language, theme, spectacle, music) in terms of one of the following. Papers should be submitted via Blackboard. More specific guidelines on each option will be provided in class.

1. actor’s character study
2. director’s approach
3. designer’s approach
4. dramaturg’s protocol

THEATER HISTORY PROJECT TOPICS

An original, concise and information-packed presentation on one of the following topics:

1. a playwright from one of the periods we’ve studied that appears in our anthology
2. a significant director from one of the periods we’ve studied
3. an important innovation in theater technology from one of the periods or traditions we’ve studied
4. a significant critic from one of the periods we’ve studied whose writings on drama and theater have influenced the course of theater history

Each presentation must include visuals, key information about your subject and how it fits into the larger context of theater history, and bibliography. Three-dimensional and otherwise creative projects are welcome.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is your responsibility. No unexcused absence will be permitted without a penalty to your grade. Arrival later than 10:40 will not count toward class attendance. NB: Chronic lateness and/or absences will substantially lower your grade. If an emergency arises and you must miss class, please email me before class time. Please check with a classmate for material you may have missed. Please note: Attendance is mandatory for the class final exam slot. Do not plan to leave campus early.

•As part of your attendance grade, you are expected to attend all Theater at Mason productions, and you should be prepared to discuss them in class. You are also encouraged to take advantage of the many arts events—play readings, dance and music concerts, as well as gallery exhibits and artist lectures—available on campus and in the Washington area. For more information on the free student ticket policy for George Mason events, please see the Center for the Arts brochure, or call the CFA box office at 993-8888.

BLACKBOARD

Students will be expected to check Blackboard daily, and all assignments should be posted via Blackboard, unless otherwise specified. Do not, however, use the Blackboard mail system to contact your instructor. All email should be sent to kneshati@gmu.edu.

PARTICIPATION

Students can participate in a variety of meaningful ways, such as:

- 1) making original, well-informed and relevant comments on the material under discussion; quality of comments is more important than quantity.
- 2) raising focused questions in class and/or directly to me over email
- 3) volunteering in class, as appropriate
- 4) offering constructive comments to students doing presentations
- 5) volunteering to do a short “capsule” presentations of 3-5 minutes on a topic assigned by your instructor

MIDTERM GRADES

Midterm grades posted online will reflect your grade for Test #1. Final grades will be calculated according to the grading breakdown below.

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit can be earned through the completion of specific short assignments to be posted on Blackboard, or voluntary attendance for 1 hour or more at a Mason Players light hang, light focus, load-in or strike. Students should document their attendance with an email marked “Extra Credit” in the

subject heading and a short note including the event, specific job, date and hour(s) spent working to be verified by the appropriate member of the production team.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Grades will be calculated according to the following system.

2 Tests (2 x 20% each)	40%
Midterm Paper	20%
Theater History Project	20%
Attendance/Participation*	20%

*Extra credit participation benefits this score.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

As a courtesy to others in the class, and in accordance with George Mason University policy, please turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. Also, please refrain from using Instant Messenger, surfing the Web, or checking email during class.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Faculty, staff, and students have the right to be treated with respect and professionalism by students and peers in all classes and activities sponsored by the Theater department. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. If, in the opinion of the responsible faculty member, a student becomes disruptive in class or rehearsal, faculty may exercise their judgment on how best to address the situation, be it by requiring the student to leave, calling Campus Police, or taking other steps deemed necessary for the safety and wellbeing of the class, rehearsal or group. Such action may affect the student's final grade and standing in the University.

MISSING CLASS FOR PRODUCTIONS

Under what circumstances is involvement with a Mason Players production justification for missing a class? Here are the general ground rules that we work with:

- 1) Students are never required to miss a class to participate in a Mason Players production. This includes rehearsals, load-ins, performances, etc.
- 2) Students are asked to provide their class schedule when auditioning or requesting an assignment as a designer, etc. When directors cast a show and assign production duties, they accept these conflicts.
- 3) Subject to the attendance policies of a given class, students may request permission of their instructors to miss a class or portion thereof to participate in critical activities. Such a request should be made rarely and is subject to the approval of each individual instructor. The syllabus policy on absences applies. Student academic success is our priority.

4) In the case of our Mainstage productions, including weekday matinees on Friday, because of the unique nature of the situation, the director of the production will provide an email confirming a student's participation in the performance (on stage, back stage, etc.). Excusing these absences remains at the discretion of each instructor. With at least 6 weeks' advance notice about production assignments, each student is responsible for confirming his or her availability to participate so that alternative arrangements can be made, if necessary.

Given the dual nature of our learning experience - in the classroom and in production - it is not surprising that schedules sometimes conflict. In the end, we are an academic institution, and our first priority is students' academic success.

GRADING

Letter grades will be assigned based on the George Mason University undergraduate grading system in which a letter grade of "A" is equal to 4.00 grade points, "A-" equals 3.67 grade points, etc. See the Academic Policies section of the *University Catalog* (available online at www.gmu.edu) for more information.

GRADING STANDARDS

What makes a project or other assignment an "A"? (B, C, D, F)

- A grade of "A" is given for superlative work that demonstrates a profound commitment to the course material, and further, employs this material as a springboard for independent thought and work.
- A grade of "B" is given for very good work that completely fulfills all the requirements of the course in a conscientious and dedicated manner, and that demonstrates mastery of the course content.
- A grade of "C" is given for work that fulfills all the requirements of the course in a satisfactory manner, but that falls short of demonstrating rigor and mastery.
- A grade of "D" is given for work that is unsatisfactory in content, but meets the standards of submission.
- A grade of "F" is given for work that fails to fulfill the requirements of the course.

MASON'S ADD/DROP POLICY

The last day to drop this class with no tuition liability is **1/31/2012**. The last day to drop this class without Dean's permission is **2/24/2012, by 5 pm**. The selective withdrawal period is 2/27/2012 – 3/30/2012. It is the student's responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled, as no credit will be awarded to students who are not.

HONOR CODE, COPYRIGHT & COMPUTER USE POLICIES

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

You are expected to adhere to all University policies and guidelines during your participation in this course. All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others is a George Mason University Honor Code violation. Please review the University's website for information on the following: Honor Code and Judicial Procedures; Copyright/Fair Use; and Responsible Use of Computing.

DISABILITY RESOURCES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and the specific accommodation will be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.

MASON EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. The Mason email accounts are the official accounts for this class. All communications regarding this course must occur via Mason email accounts.

WRITING CENTER

Students in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of the Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). These services are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

OTHER MASON RESOURCES

<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/freshman/resources.html>

University Policies: University Catalog can be accessed catalog.gmu.edu

University Libraries "Ask a Librarian" <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) caps.gmu.edu or (703) 993-2380

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

MASON ALERT SYSTEM

You are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>. Emergency information is posted in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises. Further information about emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert>. **NOTE:** Cell phones, pagers and alarms must be turned off in class. Exceptions will only be made in advance or in case of emergency.

<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23
Summer 2012 Graduation Intent Available via Patriot Web	Mon Jan 30
Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Tues Jan 31
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due	Tues Jan 31
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Tues Feb 14
Last day to drop with a 67% tuition penalty	Fri Feb 24
Last day to drop	Fri Feb 24
Last day to file your Spring 2012 Graduation Intent	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Tue Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	Mon Feb 20 - Fri Mar 23
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 - Fri Mar 30
Spring Break	Mon Mar 12 - Sun Mar 18
Incomplete work from Fall 2011 due to instructor**	Fri Mar 30
Incomplete grade changes from fall 2011 due to registrar**	Fri Apr 6
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline**	Fri May 4
Last day of classes	Sat May 5
Reading Days	Mon May 7 & Tue May 8
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 9 - Wed May 16
Commencement and Degree Conferral Date	May 19, 2012

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Supplementary readings may be assigned. Students are required to check for updates and announcements on Blackboard. Readings should be completed by dates listed below.

1. Introduction to Modern Theater (1/23, 1/25)
2. Büchner, *Woyzeck* (1/30); Brown, *The Escape* (2/1)
3. Strindberg, *Miss Julie* (2/6); Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (2/8)
4. Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler* (2/13); Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2/15)
5. Shaw, *Pygmalion* (2/20); Jarry, *Ubu the King* (2/22)
6. Synge, *Riders to the Sea* (2/27); CATCH-UP (2/29)
7. REVIEW (3/5); • TEST #1 (3/7)
8. Enjoy your Spring Break (3/12, 3/14)!
9. Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* (3/19); TBA (3/21)
10. • 1,500-2000-WORD PAPER DUE: 3/26. TOPIC MUST BE CHOSEN FROM WEEKS 1 THROUGH 7. Glaspell, *Trifles* (3/26); Brecht, *The Good Person of Szechwan* (3/28)
11. Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (4/2, 4/4)
12. O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (4/9); Al-Hakim, *Song of Death* (4/11)
13. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (4/16); • 200-WORD THEATER HISTORY ABSTRACT DUE (4/18)
14. Wilson, *Fences* (4/23); Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (4/25)
15. REVIEW & *OPTIONAL* EARLY THEATER HISTORY PRESENTATIONS (4/30) • TEST #2 (5/2)

Theater History Projects • TOPIC MUST BE CHOSEN FROM WEEKS 9 THROUGH 15 (presented during final exam slot): Wednesday, 5/9, 10:30 am-1:15 pm.