

Southeast Missouri State University

Department of English

Course No. LI526

Title of Course: English Drama after 1800

Revision

New X

- I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course: A study of English drama from the early nineteenth century to the present. (3 cr.)
- II. Prerequisites: EN140 or equivalent and any 200-level literature course.
- III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:
- A. To offer for study a range of English drama beginning in the early nineteenth century with comedies of manners and Victorian melodrama through the twentieth century and contemporary playwrights and screenwriters.
 - B. To provide experiences in close reading and analysis of modern English drama and film.
 - C. To provide writing experiences which combine close reading with individual interpretation and which also provide opportunities for synthesis of both primary and critical reading materials.
 - D. To provide opportunities for original interpretations and research in the field.
- IV. Expectations of Students:
- A. To come prepared to discuss passages, scenes, and questions that are raised in the readings.
 - B. To complete frequent journal responses on the plays and their film adaptations.
 - C. To demonstrate the ability to do literary research and to choose sources wisely.
 - D. To produce their own interpretations of texts through close reading and analysis.
 - E. To integrate and synthesize their own interpretations with other critical sources.
 - F. To attend class regularly and to complete satisfactorily all work in the course.
 - G. To take three essay examinations.
- V. Course Content or Outline may vary, but a typical semester might include the following assignments, playwrights, and discussion topics:
- 1. The Early Nineteenth Century—six hours.
 - Closet Drama and Melodrama:
 - Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*
 - George Gordon, Lord Byron's *Manfred*
 - Selected Victorian Melodrama

2. The Late Nineteenth Century to the 1920s—six hours
 Noel Coward, *Private Lives*
 W.S. Gilbert, *Patience*
 Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband*
3. The Irish Renaissance—nine hours
 Lady Augusta Gregory, *The Workhouse Ward*
 John Millington Synge, *Playboy of the Western World*
 Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara*
4. The 1950s, Existentialism, Theater of the Absurd, and the “Angry Young Man”—six hours
 Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
 John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*
 Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*
5. The 1960s—nine hours
 Joe Orton, *What the Butler Saw*
 Peter Nichols, *Joe Egg*
 Edward Bond, *Lear*
6. Plays since the 1970s—nine hours
 Peter Shaffer, *Equus*
 Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9*
 David Hare, *Plenty*
 Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*

VI. Textbooks:

The following collection will be purchased in each section of the class:

McNamara, Brooks, ed. *Plays from the Contemporary British Theater*. New American Library/Mentor, 1992. (\$6.99)

In addition, the student will purchase several plays in inexpensive paperback form from the University Bookstore. There is no comprehensive anthology available of British playwrights since 1800. Should one appear in the near future, it could be placed in Textbook Rental Services. Items not available in paperback will be placed on reserve in Kent Library.

VII. Basis for Student Evaluation:

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| A. One 3-5 page close reading analysis of a primary text* | 10% |
| B. One 8-10 page critically-researched, interpretive essay** | 20% |
| C. Reader Response Journal | 15% |

D. Three Examinations	45%
E. Class Participation	10%

* Students seeking graduate credit for the course will be expected to write 5-7 pages for this assignment.

** Students seeking graduate credit for the course will be expected to write 12-15 pages for this assignment as well as to use more secondary sources.