



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI

Mid-Semester Examination, Jan–May 2024

BTech (Semester VIII)

Course Name: Modern Western Drama

Course No.: HS202

Date: 05.05.2024

Total Time: 3 hours (02 p.m.–05 p.m.)

Total Marks: 40

A. Answer the following (15):

1. *Machinal* is a _____ word that means _____. (0.5+0.5=1)
2. Sophie Treadwell is known for her plays. What was her other profession? _____ (1)
3. What is the name of Young Woman? In which episode do we learn her name? (0.5+0.5=1)
4. Which among the following is NOT a central theme in *Machinal*? A. loss of individuality B. dehumanization of society C. economic inequality ☒ D. alienation from the self (1)
5. "Modernist plays consider human relationships unimportant." true or false? (1) *False*
6. Is dark humour tragic, comic or both? Which of the 3 plays that you have studied does NOT use it? (0.5+0.5=1) *Neither to the two.*
7. Which of the 3 plays that you have studied highlights the unreliability of human memory? (1) *Waiting for Godot*
8. "Modernist plays consider background sound to be as important as dialogue." true or false? (1) *True*
9. How many episodes are there in *Machinal*? (1) *9*
10. "The trio of musclemen, biceps overflowing parked all 642 lbs. on the aisle and waited for the girls and funny stuff. When this didn't appear they audibly fumed and audibly decided to wait until the house lights dimmed before escaping. They made one error. They listened and looked two minutes too long—and stayed. Left at the end. All shook...." which production of which play does this comment refer to? (0.5+1.5=2) *Waiting for Godot.*
11. Identify the odd term in the following: Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, ☒ Marxism, Surrealism. (1)
12. Estragon's relationship with his boot is equivalent to Vladimir's with his _____. (1)
13. Lucky's speech in *Waiting for Godot* is a parody of: ☒ A. poetic/sentimental discourse B. philosophical/academic/religious discourse C. political discourse D. stand-up comedy (1)
14. Why does Young Woman change her plea in the courtroom scene in *Machinal*? Answer in 1-2 sentences. (1) *announcement of judgment.*

B. Attempt an essay on **ONE** of the following. Provide a proper introduction, body, and conclusion. Essay length must be minimum 5 sides of the answer booklet (25):

1. The image below is a reproduction of a German poster of an 1895 lithograph by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch of the iconic composition known as *The Scream* (1893), which you have seen in class. The Norwegian name for it is *Skræk* ("Shriek"), and the German title under which it was first exhibited is *Der Schrei der Natur* ("The Scream of Nature"). A poem hand-painted by Munch on the frame of the 1895 pastel version says:



"I was walking along the road with two friends—the sun was setting—suddenly the sky turned blood red—I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence—there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city—my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety—and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature."

Write an essay responding to the image and the above quote, and relate it to Sophie Treadwell's play *Machinal* (1928). You **MAY** or **MAY NOT** use your knowledge of modernist aesthetic movements to connect the two pieces. Give **REASONS** for your answer. **DO NOT** write a plot summary of the play.

2. Samuel Beckett described *Waiting for Godot* (1955, originally published in 1952 in French as *En Attendant Godot*) as "striving all the time to avoid definition." Write an essay outlining what the play means to you, drawing from your own response to it. Give **REASONS** for your answer, taking cues from the play (including its two titles), your own intuitions and experience, and critical analyses that you have read. You may refer to texts outside the syllabus to explain your reading. **DO NOT** write a plot summary, especially since in this play "nothing happens, twice."

3. Write an essay evaluating the attitudes towards Christianity in J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904), Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* (1928), and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1955) as suggested through the plot and dialogue. Do these three plays share any similarities in this regard? Give **REASONS** for your answer. **DO NOT** write plot summaries.

4. Write an essay explaining how Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* (1928), and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1955) can be seen as "theatre that continually declares its own theatrical artifice." Give **REASONS** for your answer. **DO NOT** write plot summaries.