

English 215: History of Drama and Theater I

Fall 2009
Oxford College

Dr. Lemons, Few Hall 104
Office Hours: M-F 3 - 4 & by appointment

Objectives:

1. to gain an understanding and appreciation of some of the best plays of the classical and early modern period.
2. to develop an understanding of the development of plays and theatrical conventions from the ancient Greeks through the 18th century and to see the influence of plays and playwrights in succeeding generations.
3. to improve the ability to a) discuss, and b) write about plays, the human and spiritual issues they present, and the theatrical environment, including the historical, religious, philosophical and sociological contexts

Texts:

Stages of Drama; Sophokles: The Complete Plays, Our Town

Methods:

- Introductory remarks, particularly on historical and theoretical contexts
- In-depth class discussion of texts
- Frequent brief, factual quizzes
- One major paper
- class presentation of paper (2)
- Final & Midterm essay Exams
- One or two theater field trips to Theater Emory and/or Shakespeare Tavern--OR Participation in a "lab," working on the Spring Play (10 hours)
- Participation in the Learnlink conference: Oxford College>Classes>English>215 Lemons
- Student-teacher conferences during office hours and by appointment

Note: We will strive for class sessions that are lively, engaging, fun, creative, and informative

Guidelines:

1. Since the course involves active and informed class participation, I expect you to be in class every day, on time. Each absence will result in one point off the final grade per absence. However, you may miss two classes without penalty. These two absences should be used for illnesses and/or whatever you believe important. You do not need to get permission for these cuts, nor tell me when or why you take them. Participation in class depends on your own personal style, but it should include: paying attention, listening, responding to classmates' comments, proposing interpretations, and answering questions. More than your physical presence is required in class.
2. All readings assigned for the day must be completed before coming to class.
3. The Mid Term & Final exams, covering readings and our discussions, will consist of in-class essay(s), graded for writing ability as well as content. The Mid Term will cover the first half of the course, the Final the second half. You will not be able to use your text book or notes during the exam.
4. Quizzes are brief, factual and frequent. **Missed quizzes cannot be made up**; and a 0 is recorded if a quiz is not taken. The quizzes cover the plays, the introductions to plays and other material about the plays in the texts. The lowest two quiz grades will be dropped so that missing two classes is not a penalty. Being late to class will probably mean you will miss the quiz given at the beginning of class.

5. The paper, 5-8 pages long, will approach two or more plays from an historical, contextual, or literary critical perspective. Outside sources may be used and, if used, documented properly, but they are not required; the analysis should be essentially your own. Topics for papers are best worked with your professor. There will be some time given in class to instruction in paper writing for this assignment. Late papers will be reduced one letter grade per day late, beginning at the due time. The **class presentation** will consist of two parts: one presentation before the paper is due and one when the paper is turned in. The class presentation will be on the topic of your paper, but may also include other elements such as a report on your progress, powerpoint, even a staged reading.

6. Play work is help on the Our Town or The Tempest. Each hour of work counts one point up to 10 points (10 hours). Hours are flexible. **OR,**

Reviews may be written: each 2 – 3 page review of a live performance of a play counts 3 points up to 10 points.

For the play work/review section of your grade, a maximum of 10 points may be earned. Play work/play reviews may be mixed.

8. Check the Class LL Conference (see above) for changes, updates, to share something relevant to the class, to continue a discussion. If there are last minute changes, tips, suggestions, these will go to the LL Conference. Put it on your desktop and look at it when you see the red flag!

7. As in all classes at Oxford, students are expected to act in a professional way, preparing for class ahead of time, meeting deadlines, collaborating with classmates, and generally contributing in a positive way to the class. Understanding this will make a positive difference in your work, and your grade.

Grading Scale

Quizzes-20%

Paper-20% (includes class presentation)

Mid Term-15%

Final Exam-25%

Participation-10%

Reviews/Play Work-10%

(Keep track of your grades. I do not do averages until after the final exam is graded.)

Schedule of Assignments:

In the first half of the class, the plays are shorter; so we will do one play per class. In the second half most plays will take two class days. Have the entire play read, however, by the first discussion due date day. Below the assignment order. Plays are in Stages of Drama unless otherwise noted.

Agamemnon

Our Town (separate text)

Oedipus Tyrannus (Sophokles Complete)

Antigone (Sophokles Complete)

Oedipus at Kolonos (Sophokles Complete)

Electra (Sophokles Complete)

Philoctetes (Sophokles Complete)

The Bacchae

Lysistrata

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Wedding

Master Peter Patelan (handout)

Mid Term Exam

Second Shepherd's Play

one-act Medieval pageant plays (text provided)

Everyman

Dr. Faustus

Much Ado About Nothing

The Tempest (text provided)

Othello

Othello

Volpone

Volpone

Paper Due: Presentations scheduled.

The Misanthrope

The Rover

School for Scandal

Final Exam 12/10, 9AM