

English 215: History of Drama and Theater I

Spring 2013
Oxford College

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

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) talk about, and b) write about plays and theater, the human and spiritual issues they present, and the theatrical environment, including the historical, religious, philosophical and sociological contexts of the plays we read.

Texts: Stages of Drama 5th ed. (ed., Klaus, Gilbert, & Field); Sophokles: The Complete Plays (trans. Mueller). You need your own text in class each day.

Methods:

- Introductory remarks, particularly on historical and theoretical contexts
- Class discussion of texts. We will strive for class discussions that are lively, engaging, fun, creative, and informative and involve everyone; this is how the majority of class time will be spent.
- Frequent brief, factual quizzes
- One major paper & a presentation on this paper
- Final & Midterm essay Exams
- Written reviews of non-Oxford (Atlanta, e.g.) plays and/or participation in a "lab," working on the Spring Play or an approved, school play(10 hours)
- Participation in the class Blog
- Student-teacher conferences during office hours and by appointment

Guidelines:

1. Since the course involves consistent and informed class participation, you should be in class every day, on time. Each absence counts one point off the final grade. However, you may miss two classes without penalty, to be used for illnesses or whatever you choose. You do not need to get permission for these cuts. Participation in class depends on your own style, but it should include: listening, responding to classmates' comments, proposing interpretations, and answering questions. More than your physical presence is required in class. Each absence, after the first two, counts 1 point off your final average. Being late more than a couple of times will result in a grade reduction as well. If you are absent/late, you miss your opportunity to learn and to develop your skills.

2. A note on illness: Save your 2 cuts, if possible, for illness. No doctor's notes please--if you are seriously ill, contact Academic Services and they will notify all your teachers and arrangements so you won't suffer too much academically.

3. Laptops, phones, etc., can be distracting; don't use them in class.

4. The Mid Term & Final exams, covering readings and discussions, consist of in-class essays, graded for writing ability and content. The Mid Term covers the first half of the course, the Final the second half. You may not use your texts for the Midterm but you may for the Final.

5. Quizzes are brief, factual, easy, and frequent. Missed quizzes cannot be made up though, if necessary, a quiz may be taken early. 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.

6. The paper, 5-8 pages long, will approach two or more plays from an historical, contextual, or literary 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. 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 brief 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, or a staged reading.**

7. Play Lab is work on the Spring Play or other approved school plays. Each hour of work counts one point up to 10 points. Hours are flexible. **OR, Reviews** may be written and orally presented within a few days of having seen the play: each 2½ – 3 page (750 words) review of a live performance of a play counts 3.3 points up to 10 points. For the play lab/ review grade, a maximum of 10 points may be earned. Play work/play reviews may be mixed. If you'd like a sample play review, I have good ones or find play reviews on the NYTimes, etc.

8. Check Blackboard often. Here you will have access to announcements relevant to the class, the syllabus and any changes/updates to it, reminders about what you need to do, handouts, and the class Blog.

Blackboard & Blog Instructions

In this blog, we'll discuss plays and theater history as a kind of "journal" for the whole class. Go to: classes.emory.edu. You will be in Blackboard and see Eng 215. Open, go to Tools, then to Blog Tool. Here you can read what other class members have posted, make an "entry," and "comment" on other entries or comments. Enter as many posts/comments as you want, but make them one or two full paragraphs (5-10 sentences); "comments" may be shorter but should be a complete thought. Comment on the plays, on the editor's comments, on what we've said in class. You can write personal responses to plays, connect the plays to other courses you've taken or relate them to your lives today and to society—whatever you like. You must submit 6 major blog entries and 6 shorter comments on the entries of other class members in the first third of the semester and then the same number in the second and then the same number in the last third of the semester—they must be made over a period of time rather than all at once. I am not concerned about "correct grammar" here, but it's always good to write clearly and effectively.

9. 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.

10. The **HONOR CODE** is in effect for all your assigned work in this class and every Oxford class. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses. You must submit your own work, not another's, and if you use material other than your own (from the internet, books, etc.) that material must be acknowledged with citations.

Grading Scale

Keep track of your own grades. I do not do averages until *after* the final exam.

Quizzes-20%

Paper & Presentation-20%

Mid Term-15%

Final Exam-25%

Participation-10%

Reviews/Play Lab-10%

Schedule of Assignments

Read the entire play, introductory material, the entire play, and the commentaries/interviews after each play, all in the text, before the due date. We will discuss one play, approximately, per class meeting. Check Blackboard for updates/changes.

Tuesday: Introduction: How we read a script & stage a play

Thursday: No class. (I will be at a funeral.)

Tuesday: Agamemnon; & Aristotle "On the Nature of Tragedy" pp.1656-62 (Stages of Drama).

So, for example, for this day you would read "Classical Theater" pp.13-19, "Aeschylus" pp. 21-23, the play Agamemnon pp. 24-42, and the play reviews of Agamemnon pp. 46-48. This is a longer assignment than most and not particularly easy but because of the schedule you have a week to finish it.

"Sophocles & the Athenian Theater" (1-13); Oedipus Tyrannus (intro on pp. 23-27; play on pp.

207-267) ([Sophokles Complete](#))

Antigone ([Sophokles Complete](#))

Oedipus at Kolonos ([Sophokles Complete](#))

Electra ([Sophokles Complete](#))

Philoktetes ([Sophokles Complete](#))

The Bacchae (Stages of Drama)

Lysistrata (Stages of Drama)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way... (Stages of Drama)

"Medieval Theater"; Master Peter Patelan (text provided)

Mid Term Exam: March 5th

Second Shepherd's Play (Stages of Drama)

Medieval pageant play (text provided)

Everyman (Stages of Drama)

"Renaissance English Theater": Dr. Faustus (Stages of Drama)

Much Ado About Nothing... (Stages of Drama)

Othello (Stages of Drama)

Othello (Stages of Drama)

Presentation Progress Reports

Volpone (Stages of Drama)

Volpone (Stages of Drama)

Paper Due: Final Presentation Report

"Neo Classical Theater"; The Misanthrope; & Goldsmith pp.1664-66 (Stages of Drama)

The Rover (Stages of Drama)

School for Scandal (Stages of Drama)

Final Exam Tuesday May 7th, 9-12 am