**LMC 3220: Theater III—Modern/Contemporary Drama Dr. Shannon Dobranski**

Location Office Hours: TTH 11:30-1:00

Time Skiles 330, 404-385-0625

Semester shannon.dobranski@lmc.gatech.edu

Theater III: Modern and Contemporary Drama

**Prerequisite and Course Attributes**

Prerequisite: ENGL 1102

This course satisfies the Core Area C Humanities/Fine Arts requirement.

**Description**

In this course we will survey representative dramatic works from the twentieth and twenty-first century. In an age in which cinema and television can reach a far wider audience than live theater, we might wonder why people continue to write, perform, and watch stage plays. This course will position contemporary theater in the larger theatrical tradition and examine representative texts to understand theater’s enduring appeal.

**Learning Outcomes**

After taking LCC 3220, students will be able to

* Understand and thoughtfully apply literary terms to contemporary drama.
* Articulate trends in the development of contemporary drama.
* Analyze contemporary drama to reveal meaning beyond an expression of plot.
* Read, analyze, and interpret not only cultural projects such as film, literature, art and new media, but also scientific and technical documents.
* Recognize a variety of social, political, and philosophical theories and apply those theories to creative and scientific texts, as well as to their own cultural observations.
* Recognize the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, and analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts.

**Texts**

Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Bernard Shaw: *Pygmalion*

Bertolt Brecht: *Mother Courage and her Children*

Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*

Caryl Churchill: *Vinegar Tom*

David Mamet: *American Buffalo*

Tom Stoppard: *Arcadia*

Tony Kushner: *Angels in America*

(Students may use any edition of the above plays, as long as they are responsibly edited, with footnotes or endnotes; however, using the editions ordered at the bookstore will allow for simpler class discussion.)

Other texts available on electronic reserve.

**Requirements**

HOMEWORK: You will be expected to complete the readings for each class day and arrive prepared to discuss those readings intelligently. Working collaboratively in discussion is one of the most effective and enjoyable ways of learning. Please participate.

PAPERS: The course will require two major papers in which you analyze a major theme of an individual play or group of plays and support your observations with evidence from the text. The first of these papers will require that you respond to an assigned topic question. The second will require that you develop and answer your own topic question based on your careful reading of the texts.

In addition to your two major essays, in which you will analyze the plays as written texts, you will write a short theater review, evaluating a live performance. We will discuss the criteria for evaluating live theater and the ways literary analysis can enhance theater reviews in class.

EXAMS: You will have a mid-term and final exam, which will test your knowledge of the assigned readings and class discussion. Exams will be composed of short answer questions, passage identifications that require a one-paragraph response, and essay questions. We will have a brief in-class review session before the mid-term exam.

QUIZZES: About a dozen pop quizzes will reward students for active reading. Quizzes missed due to absences cannot be made up and will receive a grade of '0'. I will, however, drop the two lowest quiz grades.

LATE WORK: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the designated date. Late papers will be accepted with a 5-point deduction for each class day the paper is overdue. Papers more than a week late will not be accepted and will receive a grade of 0.

**Grades**

The final course grade will be determined with the following formula:

Paper 1: A 5-7 interpretation of *Importance of Being Earnest* 15%

Paper 2: A 5-7 page interpretation of the play or plays of your choice 20%

Review: A review of a live performance 10%

Quizzes: About a dozen pop quizzes 20%

Exam #1: 15%

Exam #2: 20%

Total: 100%

You must complete all major assignments to pass the class.

**Attendance**

I will expect you to attend class regularly. You will be allowed five absences. If you have six absences, your final grade will be lowered 10 points (a full letter grade). If you have seven unexcused absences, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. You may use your five absences for job interviews, illness, trips home—all the usual reasons—but five is the limit. I will make exceptions only in the case of extended hospitalization, for which I will require documentation. Quizzes missed due to absences, for any reason, will receive a grade of zero, but I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours. The Office of Disability Services for Students offers a variety of resources for students with disabilities. Learn more about the ADAPTS program here: http://adapts.gatech.edu.

**Honor Code**

The penalties for plagiarism (submitting other people's words or ideas as your own) are severe. I will report all cases of academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Integrity. Please adhere to the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. You may review that code at [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu).

**Schedule**

8/20 Introduction, syllabus, policy statement

8/22 Background reading TBA

8/27 Wilde, *Importance*

8/29 Wilde, *Importance*

9/3 Background reading TBA

9/5 Shaw, *Pygmalion*

Paper 1 Thesis Statement and Outline Due

9/10 Shaw, *Pygmalion*

9/12 Brecht, *Mother Courage*

9/17 Brecht, *Mother Courage*

Paper 1 Due: A 5-7 page essay on *The Importance of Being Earnest*

9/19 Brecht, *Mother Courage*

9/24 Background reading TBA

9/26 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

10/1 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

10/3 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

10/8 Midterm Exam

10/10 Churchill, *Vinegar Tom*

10/15 Fall Break (class cancelled)

10/17 Churchill, *Vinegar Tom*

10/22 Churchill, *Vinegar Tom*

10/24 Background reading TBA

10/29 Mamet, *American Buffalo*

10/31 Mamet, *American Buffalo*

11/5 Mamet, *American Buffalo*

Paper 2 Topic Proposal Due

11/7 Workshop topic to be announced

11/12 Stoppard, *Arcadia*

Paper 2 Thesis Statement and Outline Due

11/14 Stoppard, *Arcadia*

11/19 Stoppard, *Arcadia*

11/21 Kushner, *Angels in America*

Paper 2 Due: A 5-7 page essay on the subject of your choice

11/26 Kushner, *Angels in America*

11/28 Thanksgiving (class cancelled)

12/3 Kushner, *Angels in America*

12/5 Kushner, *Angels in America*

Final Exam: Time and Location TBA