

Department of English & Writing Studies

**Table Work**  
**Theatre Studies 3208G (001)**  
(cross-listed with Arts & Humanities 3392G)  
Winter 2018



**Instructor:** Dr. Jo Devereux  
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Arts & Humanities Building 2G28J  
**Office Hours:** Monday 10:30-12:30; or by  
appointment

**Course Location:** Kresge Building K208

**Course Date/Time:** Wednesday 9:30 am-  
12:30 pm

**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

“Table work” is one of the most important phases leading to the staging of a piece of theatre. It is the moment when the actors, the director and often the production team gather to read a chosen play-text. It is the moment when they can confront their ideas about the text that will be embodied on stage, in order to deepen their understanding of how it signifies. This year, students will close-read *The Changeling*, by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, a significant Early Modern tragedy. They will analyze the script’s vocal patterning, experiment with the pacing of a scene in terms of breath, silences, and “beats,” shape interpretations of character, tone, and motivation, and debate what constitutes textual “clues” to performance. We will reflect on how to infuse a text with political overtones, and how to tackle a more formalist style of acting adapted to political satire and morality plays. This class will culminate in a public reading of chosen scenes from the play. 3 hours, 0.5 course

### Course Materials

#### **Required Text:**

*Three Revenge Tragedies: The Revenger's Tragedy; The White Devil; The Changeling*, edited by Gamini Salgado, Penguin, 2005.

We will also be referring to the first printed edition of the play, available at Western Libraries on Early English Books Online.

### Methods of Evaluation

Essay 1, due Feb. 28, 2018: 10%

Essay 2, due Apr. 11, 2018: 20%

Group Performance, various dates: 10%

Public Reading, Apr. 2018 (possibly Apr. 11): 20%

Attendance: 5%

Final Exam, Apr. 2018 (date TBA): 35%

NOTE: A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

### Academic Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## Course Information

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is expected for all classes. Absenteeism may result in debarment from the final exam and, thus, failure of the course.

### **Essay Due dates, Late policy, Extensions, Plagiarism**

All overdue essays will receive a penalty of 1% per day late.

Late essays may be dropped in the English Department Essay Drop-Off Box.

Do NOT slide essays under office doors.

No essay will be accepted 14 days after the due date.

Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and stapled in the upper left-hand corner. No binders or protective covers of any kind are necessary. Essays must follow current MLA format and must include a list of Works Cited at the end (see *MLA Handbook* for details).

Essays must be on works studied in **this** section of the course.

IT IS ADVISABLE TO RETAIN AT LEAST ONE HARD COPY OF THE ESSAY IN THE EVENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE TO THE ORIGINAL.

### **Plagiarism**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

**Plagiarism Checking: Western University uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.**

### **Email Policy**

Email is meant for brief inquiries only. Please allow a day or two for a response. Email received over the weekend will be answered the following week.

### **Essay 1:**

Length: 1500 words

Format: MLA for undergraduate research essays, eight edition

Worth: 10%

Due: Feb. 28, 2018

Choose one long speech from any Act of the play, and analyze this speech in terms of what the speaker is saying; what the speech reveals about their emotions, motivations, and character; what stylistic, rhetorical, and literary devices are used; what important patterns of imagery appear; what word choice is difficult or challenging; what kind of syntax is deployed; and what contribution the speech makes to the play as a whole.

### **Essay 2:**

Length: 2500 words

Format: MLA for undergraduate research essays

Worth: 20%

Due: Apr. 11, 2018

Choose one critical approach to the play, and argue your own position in light of the critic's topic, using your knowledge of performance aspects of this play, as well as literary, textual, and historical points. Show clearly where your view of the topic differs from that of the critic.

**Group Performances:**

I will be dividing the class into four groups, and we will have a performance hour (the first hour of class) run by one of the four groups on the following dates:

Mar.7	Group 1 scene from Act 2
Mar.14	Group 2 scene from Act 3
Mar.21	Group 3 scene from Act 4
Mar.28	Group 4 scene from Act 5

Our performance hour will begin with a scene study presentation by the group designated, for that week, as THE COMPANY.

- It will be the Company's job to stage a scene and to take up roles such as actors, director, dramaturge, and designers. The scenes you perform will be "poor" theatre in the best sense of the word: not a formal, heavily rehearsed performance, although you are free to bring props and costumes as you choose. Your primary task will be to work together to select a specific approach to the scene, and then be prepared to defend and explore your choices in class. This "thought work" is *the most important* component of your presentation!
- Those who aren't acting or directing in any given week must contribute behind the scenes, by helping to imagine potential visions for the scene, by imagining a design (be prepared to explain and discuss it!), or by applying dramaturgical (that is, critical, close-reading) skills to the text and then offering options to the actors and/or director.
- The Company will need to read ahead, and agree on a scene (or scenes) to perform in advance of their scheduled hour. You need not clear your scene selection with me in advance, but please choose something that will take approximately 10-15 minutes to perform.
- Be prepared to meet outside of class for an hour or two, at least a couple of times, before each performance, and establish an informal email discussion list among yourselves in order to hammer out your basic choices and ensure everyone knows their jobs.
- Coordinating your schedules will *not* be easy. In fact, it's part of the challenge. Do your best to accommodate everyone, to get to know one another, and to support one another; by the end of the term, you'll be glad these people are your colleagues; they may even be your friends!
- After each performance, and a short break, the Company will be asked to get back on stage and participate in a question-and-answer period. Each member of the Company should try to contribute something during the Q&A, especially those whose work has been primarily behind the scenes. This is the time for you to explore in depth, with your colleagues, the terrific thought work that has gone into your presentation!
- The final part of the hour will involve a post-performance "talk-back" or discussion.
- When the week's performance is over, the Company will take their break while the rest of us get into our designated groups. You will be given 10-15 minutes in your group to discuss the performance you've just seen, and to prepare two or three good challenging questions about the Company's performance choices.
- NOTE that the questions you develop must delve below the surface of what the Company is doing. Colleague-critics are reviewers with a difference: your task is to explore what worked and what didn't, to probe the critical effects of the Company's choices, to offer alternative readings, and to examine how others in the class received the performance (it's a good idea to address some questions to your fellow audience members as well!). One important proviso: colleague criticism is designed to be helpful and respectful, not hurtful and derogatory.
- We hope to get a lively discussion going, and will bounce from group to group until either our time or your notes are exhausted. Support a strong, engaged class discussion!

**Assessment:**

- Your group work is the core component of your participation grade; you will be judged on the amount of effort you put into the work—NOT on your acting skills—and on your willingness to push yourself in new directions, beyond your comfort zone. Note that you need not play a major role in each presentation: balance your commitments to the group work as needed, but ensure that you are contributing helpfully in some way each time your group is The Company, and that you challenge yourself to contribute during your group's discussions.
- Attendance. One of the keys to doing well at this assignment is attending regularly; the other key is being engaged when you attend. Attendance will be taken. Even if your group is not performing, your attendance is still required and appreciated.

**Schedule:**

Jan.10	Introduction
Jan.17	Background to Middleton's theatre and <i>The Changeling</i> ; Breathing and speaking
Jan.24	First reading of <i>The Changeling</i>
Jan.31	Watch 1974 film of <i>The Changeling</i>
Feb.7	Discuss film of <i>The Changeling</i> ; Work on Act 1 in terms of vocal patterning, tone, pacing, and motivation of characters
Feb.14	Examine early printed text of <i>The Changeling</i> ; Discuss Essay 1; Work on Act 2
Feb.21	<b>READING WEEK</b>
Feb.28	Renaissance acting versus modern acting; Work on Act 3; <b>Essay 1 Due</b>
Mar.7	Work on Act 4; <b>Group 1 scene from Act 2</b>
Mar.14	Work on Act 5: <b>Group 2 scene from Act 3</b>
Mar.21	Discuss critical reception of play and Essay 2; <b>Group 3 scene from Act 4</b>
Mar.28	Examine past productions; <b>Group 4 scene from Act 5</b>
Apr.4	Second reading of the whole play, with cuts; choose scenes; <b>Essay 2 Due Apr. 4</b>
Apr. 11	Last practice reading <i>The Changeling</i> scenes for performance <b>Possible performance that night.</b>