

Department of English & Writing Studies
Theatre Studies Program

Theatre 2204G (001)
Dramatic Forms and Genres: The Greeks to Shakespeare
Winter 2025

Instructor: Dr. Jo Devereux
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Office: UC 4433

Prerequisite: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 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

This course will introduce students to the range of plays and theatre practices that shaped the first two millennia of theatre. Landmark texts will be studied in the context of the diverse theatre spaces, festivals, and political cultures in which the drama first came into being. 3 hours, 0.5 course

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- analyze a range of mainstream and alternative theatrical forms and genres in terms of their cultural production
- assess the aesthetic, ethical, social, economic, and political dimensions of theatrical works using a range of critical approaches
- conceptualize, design, communicate, and implement creative academic projects, both alone and in collaboration with diverse others

Course Materials (required)

The Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama, edited by Christina M. Fitzgerald and John T. Sebastian, Broadview, 2012.

Textbook costs:

Print CA \$73.95
eBook CA \$53.25

Students are welcome to purchase second-hand copies of this textbook.

Plays to be Studied

Sophocles, *Oedipus King of Thebes*: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27673/27673-h/27673-h.htm>
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*: <https://web.viu.ca/johnstoi/aristophanes/lysistrata.htm>
The Wakefield Master, *The Second Shepherds' Play* (*Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*)
The Chester *Play of Noah's Flood* (*Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*)
The York *Crucifixion* (*Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*)
Anonymous, *Mankind* (*Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*)
Anonymous, *Everyman* (*Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*)
Fulwell, *Like Will to Like* (*Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*)
Middleton, Thomas. *The Revenger's Tragedy* (PDF on OWL)
Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-winters-tale/>

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Essay 1, due Feb.12, 2025: 15%

Essay 2, due April 2, 2025: 25%

Two group scenes, each worth 10%, for a total of 20%, see below for dates

Attendance: 5%

Final Exam, April 2025: 35%

Attendance

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

Here is the sliding scale that will make up the attendance marking for the course:

Days missed	Grade.
0-2	5/5
3-5	4/5
6-7	3/5
8-9	2/5
10	1/5
>10	0/5

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term per course**.

Instructors may designate one assignment or assessment as exempt from this allowance. In this course, requests for academic consideration pertaining to essays, exam, and group performances **must** be accompanied by supporting documentation.

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

Essay Due dates, Late policy, Extensions, Plagiarism

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

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.

Method of Submission: attachments in Word or PDF via OWL

Plagiarism (see Academic Offences)

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

The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

The use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI is NOT permitted in this course.

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.

Participation/Performance Work (20%)

Each Wednesday, starting January 29, we will forgo the formalities of a traditional university lecture and get down to the business of performance. I will be dividing the class into four groups, and each week you, the students, will run the Wednesday hour.

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 based on one from the week's play, 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/play, 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.
- I would like each of you to try different roles over the course of the term: if you are shy, challenge yourself to try acting once; if you're a raging extrovert, challenge yourself to pull back a bit and let the quieter members of your group shine.
- The Company will need to read ahead and agree on a scene (or scenes) to perform in advance of their scheduled Wednesday. You need not clear your scene selection with me in advance, but please choose something that will take approximately 15-20 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. But your groups are large because performance cannot happen with just a couple of people: theatre is made in the messy coordination between different personalities with different schedules and different needs. 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 class 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 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.
- In order to ensure that your group's discussion runs smoothly, each of you will need to take some notes during the Company's performance, bring those notes with you to your group's "huddle," and be prepared to talk about them.
- 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.

Essay 1

Length: 1500 words

Format: MLA 8th edition for undergraduate research essays

Worth: 15%

Due: Feb. 12

Method of Submission: attachment on OWL (Word doc or PDF)

Choose ONE play and write an argumentative essay that focuses on one of the topics listed below. Be sure to narrow and refine your topic so that it is very specific and clear. Do early research on the topic so that you can develop your essay gradually, rather than writing it at the last minute.

1. Discuss the role of the chorus in ONE play on the course.
2. Explore the construction of masculinity and/or femininity in ONE play on the course.
3. Consider the importance of a specific prop or costume in ONE play on the course.

As you research your essay, **start** by reading **two** critics on your subject and noting their arguments. Then examine the play closely and develop your own ideas about the passages the critics examine in their articles, so that you can show clearly how your ideas differ from those of the critics.

Essay 2

Length: 2500 words

Format: MLA 8 or 9 for undergraduate research essays

Worth: 25%

Due: April 2

Method of Submission: attachment on OWL (Word doc or PDF)

Choose **TWO different plays** from the one you examined in Essay 1. As with the first essay, choose ONE of the broad topics listed below (which you must narrow down very specifically to construct a clear argument).

Again: do some preliminary research on this topic with reference to the play you are exploring.

You must cover TWO different plays from the one you examined in Essay 1.

As you research your essay, **start** by reading **four** critics on your subject and noting their arguments. Then examine the play closely and develop your own ideas about the passages the critics examine in their articles, so that you can show clearly how your ideas differ from those of the critics.

1. Compare and contrast the main characters in TWO plays on the course.
2. Discuss the idea of failure and/or success in TWO plays on the course.
3. Explore the representation of power struggles in TWO plays on the course.

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

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or 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 <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

The use of ChatGPT and other forms of generative AI is NOT permitted in this course.

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.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Schedule Winter 2025

(G = Group, P = Performance)

Jan.6-8	Introduction (no readings yet)
Jan.13-15	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>
Jan.20-22	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i>
Jan.27-29	Wakefield Master, <i>The Second Shepherds' Play</i> ; G1, P1
Feb.3-5	The Chester <i>Play of Noah's Flood</i> ; G2, P1
Feb.10-12	The York <i>Crucifixion</i> ; G3, P1 ; Essay 1 Due Feb.12
Feb.17-19	READING WEEK
Feb.24-26	Anonymous, <i>Mankind</i> ; G4, P1
Mar.3-5	Anonymous, <i>Everyman</i> ; G1, P2
Mar.10-12	Fulwell, <i>Like Will to Like</i> ; G2, P2
Mar.17-19	Middleton, <i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i> ; G3, P2
Mar.24-26	Shakespeare, <i>The Winter's Tale</i> ; G4, P2
Mar.31-Apr.2	Wrap up; Essay 2 Due Apr.2
Apr. 2025	Final Exam (date, time, location TBA)