Rhode Island College English 322 Modern Drama

Course Description:

There is a tremendous diversity within the field of Modern Drama and much dissent as to even what time period this might cover. For the purposes of this course we shall define Modern Drama as developments in the theater that took place between the late nineteenth-century, when Henrik Ibsen first came to the world's attention through to the period of World War Two with Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* (1947), an American play bordering on the contemporary but with strong roots in Ibsenian realism. The course will cover the most central concerns and schools of thought in drama during this period, and will be supplemented with a number of videos and/or performances of plays studied. The following list gives you a class-by-class explanation of the plays we will be studying. Although not all of these titles are full-length plays, and most plays are a quicker read than a novel, this is a reading intensive course and you need to keep up.

Course Requirements:

• Class participation is a major aspect of this course. Regular attendance and participation are required in order to successfully pass the course. **More than three absences will lower the final grade.** You are expected to come to class on time, with all assigned readings, having properly read them in advance. N.B.

Two tardies, or leaving class early=one absence. (10%)

- Two critical essays: each 5-8 pages in length. Topics will come from class discussion. (40%)
- Two exams: In class Midterm and Final. (30%)
- One group presentation on a specified topic, with an annotated bibliography that conforms to MLA. (20%)

Required Texts:

Great Spanish Plays Angela Flores (ed.) [contains Echegaray and Lorca]

Ghosts by Henrik Ibsen

The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov

Heartbreak House by George Bernard Shaw

Plays by American Women Judith Barlow (ed.) [contains Treadwell and Glaspell]

O'Neill: 3 Plays by Eugene O'Neill

Mother Courage by Bertold Brecht

Our Town by Thornton Wilder

Five Plays by Langston Hughes [contains Mulatto]

Six Plays by Lillian Hellman [contains The Little Foxes]

All My Sons by Arthur Miller

*additional reading materials may be handed out in class, some intended to be read for the following meeting, so if you are absent be sure to get any reading material you might need for the next session.

Please Note: Papers will be handed in the day and time stated on the schedule or they will not be accepted (unless the student has significant reason for the lateness, and asks <u>in advance</u> for an extension). Papers must be typed (regular size font, clear black type), using double spacing, no extra space between paragraphs, and one inch margins (MLA format). Exams also taken on date and time set unless there is serious hindrance. Any problems regarding attendance, assignments, tests, understanding etc. come and talk to me about it--if office hours are impossible we will make other arrangements. I can be as accommodating as needed.

Schedule for Modern Drama 322 Fall 2009 Rm. CL104

Introduction

Mon. 8/31 Introduction to concepts of Modern Drama: what is modern, what is drama, and ways

of approaching drama and surmounting any potential difficulties.

Thurs. 9/2 Nineteenth century drama: melodrama and *The Great Galeoto* by Echegaray.

Realism vs. Naturalism

Mon. 9/7 RIC closed: no classes.

Thurs. 9/9 Ibsen's *Ghosts* Mon. 9/14 Ibsen's *Ghosts*

Thurs. 9/16 Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*Mon. 9/21 Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*Thurs. 9/23 Shaw's *Heartbreak House*Mon. 9/28 Class cancelled: Yom Kippur

Experimentation, Expressionism, and Feminism

Thurs. 10/1 Shaw's *Heartbreak House*

Mon. 10/5 Shaw's Heartbreak House

Thurs. 10/8 Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata* (on electronic reserve at the library)

Mon. 10/12 RIC closed: no classes. Tues. 10/13 In class **Midterm exam**.

Thurs. 10/15 Riders to the Sea by Synge (handout) and Trifles by Glaspell *Paper One due

Mon. 10/19 Machinal

Thurs. 10/22 *The Emperor Jones* by O'Neill Mon. 10/26 *The Hairy Ape* by O'Neill

The Epic Theatre of Alienation vs. Poetic Theatre

Thurs. 10/29 Mother Courage by Brecht

Mon. 11/2 *Mother Courage* by Brecht * PRESENTATION: Moscow Arts Theatre Thurs. 11/5 *Blood Wedding* by Lorca

Mon. 11/9 Blood Wedding by Lorca * PRESENTATION: Theater of Cruelty

Developments in American Drama

Thurs. 11/12 *Our Town* by Wilder

Mon. 11/16 *Our Town* by Wilder

* PRESENTATION: Federal Theater Project

Thurs. 11/19 *Mulatto* by Hughes

Mon. 11/23 *Mulatto* by Hughes * **PRESENTATION: The Theater Guild**Thurs. 11/26 No class: Thanksgiving.
Mon. 11/30 *Little Foxes* by Hellman

Thurs. 12/3 Little Foxes by Hellman * PRESENTATION: The Group Theater Mon. 12/7 All My Sons by Miller

Thurs. 12/10 All My Sons by Miller *Paper Two due

Final Exam: Between 12/14 and 12/19 TBA

RIC Policies

- Please note: Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Disability Related Services for Students office at Craig-Lee 127, 456-8061.
- Pursuant to the RIBGHE Rhode Island College does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, marital/citizenship status, or status as a special disabled veteran, Vietnam veteran, or any other veteran who served active duty during war or campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.
- This classroom is a safe classroom for all students. Negative discrimination toward any one, through words of actions, will not be tolerated, based on but not limited to, race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, marital/citizenship status, or status as a special disabled veteran, Vietnam veteran, or any other veteran who served active duty during war or campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.

Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic behavior and the penalties can include failure for the assignment without possibility of make-up or failure for the course. Plagiarism is expressly prohibited as outlined in the Student Handbook. All students must become familiar with the definition of plagiarism and why it is such a serious matter in academic circles. Read the *MLA Handbook* for a detailed description of the types and forms of plagiarism, and advice as to how to avoid unintentional plagiarism.