Studies in British Drama
English 312
4 Credits; 3 hours lecture per week
No prerequisites
Writing Intensive Course

Rationale for Conversion: The conversion will give students greater opportunity to read more widely in the focus of the course and to practice critical thinking and writing. The conversion will increase the number of primary and secondary texts and/or online resources needed for student research as well as allow a greater understanding of how best to select and deploy this research toward the composition of an analytical writing assignment of much greater length and complexity than previously warranted.

This course continues to meet all WIC criteria.

The four credit version will:
• Add primary and secondary print texts.
• Add and provide instruction in online resources for the study of British Drama.
• Increase length and complexity of critical writing.
This syllabus is the 3 credit generic version of a recently approved course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A mid-level study of the genre of dramatic arts in British literature with intensive practice in reading and writing skills for literary study. This course is intended as a bridge between 200-level literature surveys and 400-level courses in advanced literary studies. Satisfies WIC requirement. This is a three credit course.

GOALS AND SCOPE: The goal of this class is to give each student a working knowledge of the dramaturgical, cultural, political, and philosophical aspects of British drama through a study of various eras from term to term. Iterations of the course may range from Medieval Drama, Restoration to 19th Century Drama, or Modernist to Contemporary Drama. In each version the course will focus on a study of a selection of key playwrights of each period as they can be set against relevant movements, issues, and schools of drama. Students will be responsible for the assigned readings as they are due in accordance with the syllabus (assignments are to be completed by the end of the week in which they appear unless otherwise indicated). The scope of the class will link the texts of the dramas with relevant historical, aesthetic, and cultural contexts. Through both formal lecture and assigned background readings, students will be expected to introduce these contexts as aspects of their interpretations.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Student will be expected to synthesize newly acquired knowledge of the cultural and aesthetic contexts of a selected era of British drama with close-reading-based interpretations of individual plays. Students will also be expected to explain in written form the changes in dramaturgy that some key plays brought to the landscape of British drama. Students will be expected to compose a lucid, cogent, and well researched longer essay on one of the plays focused on in class. As a WIC class, students will be expected to improve
their prose style and research skills through revision writing assignments.

**ASSESSMENT:** Two in-class essay assignments. Pre-writing exercises and a rough draft of a traditional critical essay culminating in a revised final draft (2000-2500 words each) that will be graded on use of research, close-reading skills, specificity of argument, and mechanics.

**WIC:** To satisfy the requirements for writing-intensive curriculum, students will do substantial writing both in and out of class. The formal essay writing assignment will include a prewriting exercise (500 words), a first draft (2000 words), and a revised final draft (2000-2500 words). Students will receive instructor feedback on the prewriting exercises and on the first draft in order to help strengthen the final drafts. Students will also write freely in several classes to total around 500 words. Finally, students will sit for two formal in-class essay assignments at the midterm and final. In total, the in-class formal essays will total around 1,500 words.

**Stage 1: Prewriting Exercise (500 words)**
**Due date:** 4th week of the term
**Task:** Choose one scene from one of the plays previously discussed in class. Articulate the argument you’d like to make about this specific scene as it relates to a thematic issue in the drama. Using at least four quotes to support your argument, explain by way of close-reading in formal paragraph form how the language of the scene implies the stated thematic issues.

**Format:** typed with your name & a page number on each page
**Feedback:** The instructor will respond to the prewriting exercises with written comments.

**Criteria for Evaluation:** Prewriting exercises will be graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory primarily based on how well they fulfill the task requirements and how completely they analyze each quote.

**Stage 2: Rough Draft (2000 words)**
**Due date:** 5th week of the term
**Task:** Using your prewriting exercise as a basis (but taking into account instructor comments and adding, deleting, or changing as desired) as well as at least two researched secondary sources on the play, write a complete rough draft of a paper that includes a specific argument surrounding the thematic concerns of one of the dramas we’ve studied in class.

**Format:** typed and double-spaced with your name & a page number on each page

**Feedback:** Rough drafts will receive evaluative comments on substance and style from instructor.

**Criteria for Evaluation:** Rough drafts will be graded with non-permanent formal grades (A through F) primarily on whether they meet the length requirement, contain a cogent argument and a thorough, insightful, and lucidly written textual analysis.

**Stage 3: Polished of Final Draft (2000-2500 words)**
**Due date:** 8th week of the term
**Task:** Using your rough draft as a basis (but taking into account peer comments and adding, deleting, or changing as desired), write a polished draft of the paper.

**Format:** typed and double-spaced with your name & a page number on each page

**Feedback:** The polished draft will receive a letter grade and written comments from the instructor.

**Criteria for Evaluation:** Polished drafts will be graded on the clarity and cogency of argument as
regards play’s themes, use of research, and the detail and complexity of the textual analysis with some consideration given to mechanics (spelling, grammar, clarity of thought, etc.).

**EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:** The evaluative tools for the undergraduate will be in-class formal essays (mid-term and final in-class forms), and the formal critical essay. The formal essay involves research on the student’s topic, support drawn from the course’s background readings, and careful close-readings of subject text(s). Students will be expected to write in a clear, organized, and detailed manner on the examinations, and to be able to implement the skills of organized and informed essay writing for the paper. Final grades will be determined by the average of three unequally weighted grades (30% for mid-term, 40% paper, 30% for final).

**Statement Regarding Disability Access Services:**
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

**ATTENDANCE:** Students will be allowed one (1) unexcused absence. If more absences accrue by the end of the semester, I reserve the right to question the student and possibly count the absences against him/her in the tabulation of his/her final grade. Please limit excused absences as well: schedule all appointments or things such as rides home outside of class time. If you are ill please contact me before the class that you will miss. Please don't call me the day before a paper is due and tell me you're dying of a bad hangover. Finally, I begin my class at the specified time; please be prompt.

**PAPERS:** One paper is mandatory for undergraduates. In final draft papers are to be formal critical essays: they should introduce and map the historical/biographical/critical framework for the subject text and theme to be pursued. They should then conduct a “close-reading” of the work in question so as to prove the thesis. The paper will be due during the latter half of the course and should be about an eight-to-ten page (2000-2500 words) piece on a selected work. Papers are to be typed, doubled-spaced, and free of spelling, grammatical and typographical errors. Papers are to be formal essays, containing contextually relevant introductions, coherent and complex theses, sustained and detailed arguments, and thoughtful conclusions. Sentence structure must be clear and concise; paragraph unity and overall organization must be readily apparent. Each page of your paper must have your name and page number in the upper right hand corner. Either MLA or Chicago Manual of Style method of citation and documentation will be acceptable. Each paper must be given an original title. No cover page is necessary: please title the first page of the essay and paper clip all pages together. Five (5) background and/or critical sources are mandatory for final drafts. The writer must cite the text or secondary source in each instance of quotation.

**LATE PAPERS:** I accept no late papers. If a student does not submit either the rough of final draft of the paper during the class meeting it is due (and not later on that same day) he/she will receive an F for that assignment.
EXAMINATIONS: At the mid-term and final, in lieu of any kind of identify or multiple-choice examinations, a formal in-class essay assignment will be completed in the period of time during which the class meets. The format for these essays may change depending on the weekly setting of the course (MWF or TTH), because the fifty-minute class does not lend itself to all in-class essay questions. The final in either case will be a two-hour, in-class essay.

CONFERENCES: There may or may not be mandatory conferences; however, I'm always available for help or to further our classroom discussion. Often students want to speak about a paper before it is due; I am available during my office hours or by appointment.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Be sure you realize exactly what qualifies as plagiarism and what does not; explicit procedures taken for the discovery of academic dishonesty can be found in the “Academic Regulations” section of the current Schedule of Classes. I will pursue to the letter of the University’s stated policies any case of plagiarism I may discover. Link to Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm

LEARNING RESOURCES: Texts in the course are as follows (in each instance, please obtain the exact edition given here):
Masterpieces of Modern British and Irish Drama, Sanford Sterlicht, editor (Greenwood, 2005).
Packet of Course Materials, Circulation Desk, Valley Library

SYLLABUS

APRIL
Week of 2nd: Introductory Lectures on Victorianism, Ibsenism, Modernism, Theater of Absurd.
Read Oscar Wilde: Importance of Being Ernest; Ideal Husband (1890’s)
Week of 9th: George Bernard Shaw: read excerpts from The Quintessence of Ibsenism; read as well Mrs. Warren’s Profession; Heartbreak House (1890’s-1920’s)
Week of 16th: Irish Rising: read John Millington Synge’s Playboy of the Western World; read also Sean O’Casey’s The Plow and the Stars and Silver Tassie (1907-1020’s)
Week of 23rd: 20th Century Politics of Love: read James Joyce’s Exiles (1918) PRE-WRITING EXERCISE ON PAPER TOPIC DUE THIS WEEK.
Week of 30th: Tie up Modernist and Irish Drama. MID-TERM EXAMINATION

MAY
Week of 7th: Post-W. W. II Absurdities of Place, Time, and Language: read Samuel Beckett’s Endgame and Waiting for Godot (1940’s-1950’s)
Week of 14th: More English Absurdities: read Harold Pinter’s The Dumbwaiter, Birthday Party, and The Homecoming (1950’s-60’s). ROUGH-DRAFT OF FINAL ESSAY DUE THIS WEEK.
Week of 21st: Lost Generation: Read John Osborn’s Look Back in Anger (1950’s-60’s).
Week of 28th: Postcolonial Identity: Read Wole Soyinka’s The Strong Breed (1960’s) and Athol Fugard’s “Master Harold” and the Boys (1980’s). FINAL DRAFT TERM PAPER

JUNE
Week of 4th: Finish postcolonial drama, tie up loose ends
FINAL EXAMINATION TUESDAY, JUNE 12, IN OUR CLASSROOM