

Instructor

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Class

Class number 11352  
MW, 2:30-4 pm  
Class Location: AH201

**TEXTS:**

<i>Disgraced</i> , Ayad Akhtar	<i>The Barber of Seville</i> , Pierre Beaumarchais
<i>Wit</i> , Margaret Edson	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> , Lorraine Hansberry
<i>M. Butterfly</i> , David Henry Hwang	<i>Venus in Fur</i> , David Ives
<i>Fat Pig</i> , Neil Labute	<i>G-d of Carnage</i> , Yasmina Reza
<i>In the Next Room (Or the Vibrator Play)</i> , Sarah Ruhl	
<i>Hamlet</i> , William Shakespeare	<i>Doubt</i> , John Patrick Shanley

**DESCRIPTION:**

English 2307 is an introduction to drama, a course in which we will study plays written during several historical periods, with an emphasis on contemporary issues, such as sexuality, ethnicity, and postmodern storytelling. Drama is a literary art; therefore, this is a literature course. We will approach plays as works of art, reading, discussing, analyzing, and writing about the texts so that we become acquainted with dramatic conventions and elements such as plot, character, theme, dialogue, conflict, setting, scene, rhetorical and linguistic devices, and dramatic forms such as tragedy and comedy. We will also pay close attention to the cultural contexts of these plays, as we interrogate the relationship between dramatic literature and its representation of reality.

We will balance our analyses of these plays as literature on the page with an examination of their performative aspects. Thus, we will not only read the plays closely and critically, and write about them argumentatively, but we will also read scenes along and watch great performers. As the ancient Roman poet Horace claimed, the purpose of imaginative literature is to “delight and instruct.” If so, what is the nature of these motivations, how do they occur, and how does drama, specifically, illuminate facets of human nature so that we, ourselves, can experience a wide variety of situations, conflicts, and emotions?

Introduction to Drama fulfills a three-hour credit in the Creative Arts component area of the Core Curriculum, which has four stated objectives: critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and social responsibility.

## **GRADES:**

Participation is an *essential* component of this class. Learning requires discipline. An evident lack of discipline in your behavior and assignments will be reflected in your final grade. Just like any opportunity of potential value, you'll get from this class what you put into it. Please refer to the attendance policy below for how attendance may impact on your participation grade.

- Research Paper (~10 pages) (30%)
- Presentation + Annotated Bibliography (25%)
- Personal Narrative (20%)
- Quizzes/Homework/Performance Evaluation (15%)
- Participation/Attendance/Professionalism (10%)

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

### *Research Paper (~10 pages) (30%)*

Your final research paper is due at the end of the semester. This is the culmination of the thinking and working you've been doing over the semester. Your grade is partially adjudicated on how much you have applied what you've learned—including craft terminology, class visitors, your peers, discussions, homework, and quizzes.

### *Presentation + Annotated Bibliography (25%)*

You will produce a short 10-12 minute presentation on a play of your choice, including an overview of the play (genre, socio-historical context); a discussion of theme, plot, character, dialogue; scholarly views of the play and/or an analysis of the play's reception.

To prepare for your presentation, you'll complete an annotated bibliography of 8 sources. On the day of your presentation, you will also turn in a one-page outline, bulleting the topics you addressed and indicating the flow of information.

### *Personal Narrative (20%)*

This course endeavors to explore situations in the contemporary political, social, and cultural world—of which you are a member. For this assignment, you will dramatize a conflict. It can be minor or major, comedy or tragedy, related to school, family, friends, or anything else. We'll work together to find a juicy topic that will reflect the theatrical conventions you've learned that create a successful dramatic text.

### *Quizzes/Homework/Performance Evaluation (15%)*

For each play, there will be a reading comprehension quiz or an equivalent writing assignment. This ensures that all students are on the same literal and metaphorical page. You will also be required to attend one play produced locally over the course of the semester. Some suggestions

are included in the course schedule. Report back with a summary, analysis, and personal reflection.

### *Participation/Attendance/Professionalism (10%)*

Come on time and fully prepared. Most of the class is discussion-based so it is important that everyone on time, if not early, so we can begin together. When we're discussing a reading, you may be required to bring three specific craft-related questions or take a quiz. Please, no computers or telephones out, unless cleared by me/CSD. Everyone must contribute to class discussions. See attendance policy below.

### *Formatting for Writing Assignments:*

All written assignments should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman, and adhere to MLA guidelines. Number each page and have a header with your name, class number, and the date the assignment is due. Create an original title. Make sure to proofread at least twice before turning it in; grammatical errors will be noted. Assignments must be held together with a staple or a paper clip.

### **UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

**Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability that could affect your performance in this class or a disability that requires a special accommodation, please let me know during the first week of class and provide me with university documentation. I'm happy to discuss options with you and make arrangements to make your learning experience as comfortable as possible. Students who want to know more about these services should consult the Student Handbook, or should contact CSD in Room 110 of the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES (building 568, room 110), 713-743-5400 (voice) or 713-749-1527 (TTY); [www.uh.edu/csd](http://www.uh.edu/csd).

**Attendance:** Three class absences (of any kind, "excused" or otherwise) will affect your grade. Thus, you should reserve absences to address serious illness, mishaps in daily life, etc. Only religious holidays or official university-sponsored activities count as excused absences; please email me well in advance. Chronic tardiness also counts as an absence. It is your responsibility to catch up on the work; information and handouts you missed out on should be obtained from your peers.

**Civility:** I expect you to treat each member of our community with the dignity and respect that person deserves. No discriminatory behavior directed toward a person's race, sexual orientation, sex, gender expression, creed, national origin, age, or ability will be allowed in our class space, either face-to-face or online.

Come to class on time, silence your cell phone, don't fall asleep, don't text. Food consumption should be avoided. You don't need to request permission to use the bathroom.

**Plagiarism:** The University of Houston Academic Policies define and prohibit academic dishonesty as follows: employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic

endeavor that the student knows or should know is not permitted by the university or a course instructor to fulfill academic requirements” (for a definition see the *Student Handbook*, <http://publications.uh.edu/index.php?catoid=23>). There are poetic ways to acknowledge sources. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will be reported to the English Dept.

### **Additional Resources**

If at any time you want supplementary help in your writing, here are some places to check out:

**Learning Support Services**, located in Cougar Village, room N109, offers grammatical and mechanical writing help.

**The Writing Center**, located in the located on the second floor of the new classrooms and offices building over by Bauer, provides students with a place to discuss their writing with trained peer consultants. They offer great help with developing theses and topics and anything else you may need help with. For more information and to make an appointment, please call (713) 743-3016, or visit the website at [www.uh.edu/writecen/](http://www.uh.edu/writecen/).

### **Schedule**

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This is a tentative schedule, which may change as the class progresses. Changes will be announced in class and/or via email.

#### Week 1

Wednesday, January 18—Introduction + Slate Video

#### Week 2

Monday, January 23—*Hamlet*, Act I

Wednesday, January 25—*Hamlet*, Act II

#### Week 3

Monday, January 30—*Hamlet*, Act III

Wednesday, February 1—*Hamlet*, Act IV

(February 1—Last day to drop a course or withdraw without receiving a grade)

*Alley All-New Festival, February 2-12*

#### Week 4

Monday, February 6—*Hamlet*, Act V

Wednesday, February 8—NO CLASS

*The Ghost Sonata at CTC, February 8-26*  
*Passing Strange at the Obsidian Theater, February 9-March 4*

Week 5

Monday, February 13—*Doubt*  
Wednesday, February 15—*Doubt*

*Julius Caesar at UH, February 17-26*

Week 6

Monday, February 20—*Disgraced*  
Wednesday, February 22—*Disgraced*

Week 7

Monday, February 27—*Fat Pig*  
Wednesday, March 1—*Fat Pig*

Week 8

Monday, March 6—*A Raisin in the Sun*  
Wednesday, March 8—*A Raisin in the Sun*

Week 9

Monday, March 13—SPRING BREAK  
Wednesday, March 15—SPRING BREAK

*The King and I, Hobby Theater, March 15-19*

Week 10

Monday, March 20—*G-d of Carnage*  
Wednesday, March 22—*G-d of Carnage*

Week 11

Monday, March 27—*Wit*  
Wednesday, March 29—*Wit*  
(March 31—Last day to drop a course or withdraw with a 'W')

Week 12

Monday, April 3—*The Barber of Seville*

Wednesday, April 5—*The Barber of Seville*

*The Barber of Seville at Classic Theater Company, April 5-23*

Week 13

Monday, April 10—Classic Theater Company Visit

Wednesday, April 12—*In the Next Room*

Week 14

Monday, April 17—*M. Butterfly*

Wednesday, April 19—*M. Butterfly*

Week 15

Monday, April 24—*Venus in Fur*

Wednesday, April 26—*Venus in Fur*

*10-Minute Play Festival at UH, April 28-30*

*A View From the Bridge at the Alley, April 28-May 17*

Week 16

Monday, May 1—LAST DAY OF CLASS

(May 10—*Official closing of the Semester*)