ENG 2011G-004: Literature, the self, and the world

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The key terms in the course description of English 2011 are "identity," "action," and "meaning." Of the various literary genres, drama is best suited to create a synthesis among these terms: we watch characters on stage struggle with the creation of identity and meaning in that vast arena of possibilities simply called "action." You will read a number of plays, watch segments of those available on video, and at least act in one scene to find out how theatre works as a location in which interactions between the self and the world can be explored.

Course requirements:
Attendance:
Class attendance and participation are expected. I call roll regularly and can disregard only two unexcused absences during the semester. If you accumulate more than two unexcused absences, your grade (for the semester) will suffer (1/2 point for each absence). If you’re absent because of an illness, please bring with you a note from your doctor or the health care center when you return to class. In case of a family emergency, please stop by my office the first chance you have so that we can talk about classes you’ve missed.

Papers:
You’ll write two 4-page papers (typed, double-spaced). If you wish, you can incorporate research material in them (use the MLA style of documentation). If you wish, you can revise one of your papers for a better grade. Your final grade on the paper will be the average of the two grades. This is a writing-intensive course, so you can use one of your papers (preferably the revised one) for your writing portfolio. Late papers will be marked down (unless you have an excused absence for the day). Very late papers (turned in a week after the deadline) will not be accepted.

Revision:
Cosmetic changes to your paper will not result in a better grade. Besides editing your paper to fix basic problems (with grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, etc.), you need to incorporate new material in the paper. The revision has to show you’ve reworked some of the paragraphs to add more substance to your argument, to further clarify some of the ideas and/or reorganize them, and to offer a better introduction or conclusion. The result has to be a stronger, more cogent paper.
Journal:
You need to write in your journals at least twice a week after you’ve completed the assigned reading for the upcoming class meeting. Write at least one full page. Please date each entry. In your journal, write down your thoughts, responses, and especially questions you have regarding the assigned readings. Please keep your journal separate from class notes. Bring your journals to class. I might ask you to share your questions and insights with the class. I’ll ask to see your journals twice during the semester.

Class performance:
You’ll be placed in a group of 5 students. Each group will be responsible for the “teaching” and the performance of a segment (a scene or one act) of a play. (If you’d rather do a one-person monologue, let me know as soon as possible, and I’ll make arrangements.) Performances will be during April 14-28 (five performances in all). You can choose a play (make sure it’s in the anthology or have copies for everyone in class), or ask me to assign one. Your group can decide how to use your one session; you need to assign duties (one person can be the director, other members can be the actors, another person the “narrator/instructor,” who will begin by talking about the play). Make sure you leave some time for discussion at the end. Set aside adequate time for the rehearsal; indulgence in creativity is expected! You can even “sell” tickets ahead of time! Your audience will evaluate you by assigning you a grade. You need to decide which play you’re going to perform and notify me and your classmates before spring break.

Exams and quizzes:
You’ll take midterm and final exams. They will consist of a number of questions (10-15) to which you’ll be asked to provide paragraph-long answers. The midterm exam will cover material studied until the date of the midterm; the final will cover material studied after the midterm. I might give you pop quizzes, especially if class discussions show you’re not keeping up with the readings.

Grading policy:
Papers: 30%; exams (and quizzes, if any are given): 40%; journal: 15%; performance: 15%

Conferences:
Please stop by my office to discuss any problem or question related to the course. You can make an appointment if my regular office hours are inconvenient for you. The best way to reach me is by e-mail.

Other policies:
The English Department has a very strict policy on plagiarism. If I detect an act of plagiarism (and these days we have software to help us do so), I have to report you to the Judicial Affairs office and give you a grade of F for the course. If you’re nervous about your writing skills, I’ll be happy to work with you on an individual basis. Remember the Writing Center is a great resource for you to use.
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Required texts:

Klaus, Carl H. ed., *Stages of Drama* (fifth edition)
Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*
Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (You need to pick up this book later in the semester.)

Class meetings:

January 11: Introduction

January 13: Read pp. 521-528 ("Modern Theater") and Oscar Wilde (613-616). Act I of *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Jan. 18: *Importance* (continued)

Jan. 20: Bernard Shaw (693-696) and *Pygmalion*, Acts I and II

Jan. 25: *Pygmalion* (continued)

Jan. 27: J. M. Synge (647-650) and *In the Shadow of the Glen*

Feb. 1: Brian Friel (1213-1215) and Act I and Act II (scenes 1 and 2) of *Translations*

Feb. 3: *Translations* (continued)

Feb. 8: L. Hansberry (1037-1039); *A Raisin in the Sun*, Act I and Act 2 (scene 1)

Feb. 10: *Raisin* (continued)

Feb. 15: Amiri Baraka (1083-1085) and *Dutchman*

Feb. 17: Athol Fugard (1247-125) and "*Master Harold*"... and the Boys

*Turn in your journals*

Feb. 22: *Master Harold* (continued)

Feb. 24: Review (and catch-up day)

**First Paper is due.**

March 1st: **Midterm Exam**
March 3: Tony Kushner (1475-1477) and *Angels in America* (Part One), Act I

March 8: *Angels in America* (continued), Act II

March 10: *Angels in America* (continued), Act III

*(Groups need to report their choices of plays!)*

**SPRING BREAK**

March 22: Luigi Pirandello (739-742) and *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

March 24: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

March 29: *Hamlet*

March 31: *Hamlet*

April 5: *Hamlet*

April 7: *Hamlet* (concluded) and Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

April 12: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

**Turn in your journals**

April 14: Student Performance

**Second Paper is due.**

April 19: Student Performance

April 21: Student Performance

April 26: Student Performance

**All revisions are due.**

April 28: Student Performance

*(Date of the final exam will be announced later.)*