

Theatre 832: Comparative Drama and Criticism  
Spring 2016: Tuesday/Thursday 3:00PM-4:20PM, 304 Nat Sci

Prof. Daniel Smith  
[smit2030@msu.edu](mailto:smit2030@msu.edu)

Phone: 517-884-7789

Office: 133 Auditorium  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30 PM-3:30 PM  
Thursday 11:00 AM-12:00 noon  
And by appointment

**Course Description:**

Catalogue Description: Comparative study and critical examination of selected playwrights, theorists, developments, movements, and trends in world drama from their beginnings to the present.

This course is intended to develop competencies in using methods from Theatre Studies to support critical analysis of plays as an artist and as a teacher. We begin with a discussion of the dramatic canon, to be followed by intensive study of pedagogies of Play Analysis. We then shift to a unit on historical criticism, using case studies from Japan, England, and France. Our third unit is on Adaptation, loosely aligning with the department season. An anthology review project gives students the opportunity to delve into a nascent area of critical expertise, with the possibility of building a course syllabus around the chosen anthology. Theories of translation are studied in conjunction with classical comedy (Plautus and Molière), referring back to adaptation, pedagogy, and questions of canon. Students will complete a final project tailored to their interests in acting, design, and/or teaching.

**Course Objectives:**

- To investigate a breadth of genres and styles in dramatic literature and criticism
- To identify an area of critical expertise for in-depth examination
- To explore pedagogies of play analysis and theatre studies
- To develop a critical voice as an artist, teacher, and scholar

**Required Materials:**

A course packet available from Collegeville Textbook Company, located at 321 E. Grand River. Phone (517) 922-0013.

Additional readings to be provided online or as handouts.

**Assignments:**

Attendance and Participation: Weekly attendance and assiduous participation are expected. You should aim to contribute to discussion at least twice per class session. (25%)

Critical Journal Assignments: Students will respond to short “critical journal” assignments throughout the semester. Some of these are intended to spark discussion, while others are intended to lead to larger projects. They should be posted to discussion boards on D2L. (25%)

Anthology Review Project: A scholarly review of an anthology of plays. Students should choose an anthology with a view to developing an area of expertise in dramatic literature, with the possibility of using this anthology as a textbook for a Theatre Studies course syllabus. (25%)

Final Project: A research-based original project related to the course topic. The project may be scholarly, artistic, and/or pedagogical in nature. This may take the form of a syllabus and instructional materials for a course on dramatic literature; a traditional research paper; a dramaturgy packet; acting preparation materials (scored script, character analysis, etc.); design research/model/renderings. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor early in the semester about ideas for the final project, and to pursue opportunities for expansion and revision of the project after the course has ended. (25%)

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**

If you use someone else's ideas as your own (for instance, copying a sentence from the internet into one of your papers without properly citing the author), an F for the assignment is automatic. Depending on the gravity of the offense, plagiarism may result in an F for the semester, and even a letter to the dean about your academic dishonesty. To understand expectations for academic integrity: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/index.html>

**Grading Rubric:**

4.0: Excellent work that makes a clear, sophisticated argument and explores subtle nuances. Demonstrates creative thought and a thorough understanding of course materials. Pushes toward larger implications.

3.0: Very good work that articulates an argument and shows solid understanding of course materials, but may lack creativity and may not push to further implications. (Or may demonstrate strong creativity but lack in organization.)

2.0: Acceptable work that makes an attempt at an argument. Shows general understanding of material, but may make errors on subtler points. May have some problems with organization.

1.0: Marginally acceptable work that demonstrates major errors of understanding and organization. If creativity is demonstrated, it is done so in a way that is not relevant to the topic of the assignment. Some requirements of the assignment may not be fulfilled.

0.0: Unacceptable work that does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

**How Percentages translate to GPA:**

93%-100%=4.0

89%-92.9%=3.5

84%-88.9%=3.0

80%-83.9%=2.5

75%-79.9%=2.0

70%-74.9%=1.5

65%-69.9%=1.0

64.9% or less=0

**Attendance:** THR policies regarding missing class and attending a rehearsal/performance are in effect for this course. In any graduate seminar, the expectation is that you will not miss class. Exceptions for professional activities, emergencies, and family obligations are negotiable, but you must keep the instructor informed in advance.

**D2L:** This course will use D2L for posting documents and announcements. Please check your MSU email account regularly.

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Accommodations for persons with disabilities, with documentation from the MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities, may be requested by contacting me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

### **Weekly Schedule (subject to change):**

#### Week 1: Introductions

Tues 1/12: Introduction to the Course; discussion of Canon  
Critical Journal 1: Five Canonical Plays; Five Theatrical Moments (due Friday)

Thurs 1/14: Michael Billington, "101 Greatest Plays" List [D2L]  
Susan Jonas, "The Other Canon: 10 Centuries of Plays by Women" [D2L]  
Terence McNally, *And Away We Go* [D2L]

#### Week 2: Classical Dramatic Theory and Play Analysis

Tues. 1/19: Aristotle, *Poetics* [D2L]

Thurs. 1/21: Freytag's Pyramid Handout [D2L]  
Elinor Fuchs, "E.F.'s Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play" [D2L]  
Julian Olf, "Reading the Dramatic Text for Production" [D2L]

\**And Away We Go* runs January 22-31

#### Week 3: Play Analysis Methods and Pedagogy

Tues. 1/26: Geoffrey S. Proehl, "Pattern" [CP]  
Shelley Orr, "Teaching Play Analysis" [D2L]

Thurs. 1/28: Critical Journal 2: Applying Play Analysis Methods to a play of your choice

**\*\*Special Event: Saturday, January 30: Theatre Studies Symposium, Studio 60.\*\***

Week 4: Japanese Noh Theatre

Tues. 2/2: Zeami, *A Mirror to the Flower* (1424) [D2L]

Thurs. 2/4: Zeami, *Hagoromo* and W.B. Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well* [D2L]

Week 5: Critical Approaches to Shakespeare

Tues. 2/9: Andrew Hartley, *The Shakespearean Dramaturg* Chapters 2-7 [CP]

Laura Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush" [D2L]

\*Critical Journal 3: Shakespeare and You OR Response to Japanese Noh Theatre

Thurs. 2/11: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* [D2L or find on your own]

Week 6: Corneille and Critical Controversy

Tues. 2/16: Pierre Corneille, *Le Cid* (trans. Kline) [D2L]

Bernard Dukore, ed. "The Cid Controversy" [D2L]

Thurs. 2/18: Henry Carrington Lancaster, "*Le Cid*" [CP]

\**Pride and Prejudice* 2/19-2/28

Week 7: Adaptation

Tues. 2/23: Linda Hutcheon, "Beginning to Theorize Adaptation"

Thurs. 2/25: Screening of Bela Lugosi *Dracula* film in class

Week 8:

Tues. 3/1: Mac Wellman, *Dracula* [D2L]

\*Critical Journal 4: Approaching Adaptation

Thurs. 3/3: FOT *Pride and Prejudice* Script Club: Class will not meet

Week 9: Spring Break

Tues. 3/8 and Thurs. 3/10: Class will not meet

Week 10: Anthology Projects

Tues. 3/15: Anthology Project Check-in; Reading: Book reviews on anthologies

Thurs. 3/17: Research Day: Class will not meet (Dan at MATC; Designers at USITT?)

Week 11: Anthology Projects, cont'd

Tues. 3/22: Anthology Project Presentations

Thurs. 3/24: Anthology Project Presentations

Week 12: Translation: Theory and Pedagogy

Tues. 3/29: Eugene Nida, "The Role of the Translator" and "Principles of Correspondence" [CP]

Thurs. 3/31: Michael Evans, "Credo" in *The Mercurian* [D2L]

\**Xtigone*: 3/31-4/3

Week 13: Roman Comedy: Translation and Practice-Based Research

Tues. 4/5: Tim Moore and Sharon James, *Didaskalia* article [D2L]

Thurs. 4/7: *Pseudolus* scenes: B,C,D,E (video and text) [D2L]

Erin Moodie article on translation [D2L]

\*Critical Journal 5: Thoughts on Translation

Week 14: Molière in Translation and Adaptation

Tues. 4/12: Molière, *The Misanthrope* (trans. Neil Bartlett) [CP]

"Production Dramaturgy of a Classic" [CP]

Thurs. 4/14: Christopher Hampton, *The Philanthropist* [CP]

Kenneth C. Bennett, "*The Philanthropist* and *The Misanthrope*" [CP]

\**Grease*: 4/15-4/24

Week 15: Translation and Pedagogy

Tues. 4/19: Dorothy Chansky, "American Higher Education and Dramatic Literature In(to) English." [D2L]

Thurs. 4/21: Critical Journal 6: Find 3 critical articles/essays about a chosen play; discuss how they might inform your teaching/artistic approach to the play.

Week 16: Translation, Adaptation, and Canon: *Antigone*

Tues. 4/26: George Steiner, *Antigones* excerpt [D2L]

Thurs. 4/28: Wrap-up

Exam Week: Final Projects Due. We will meet to discuss them at the scheduled exam time:  
Thursday, May 5, 2016, 3:00pm - 5:00pm in 304 Natural Sciences Bldg