

# Dr. Eileen Curley

TF 12:30

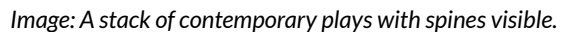
Location: FN 101

This course is an introduction to the craft of writing for the stage. Students will be introduced to techniques and devices which will enable them to experiment with the process of playwriting.

As this course is a workshop, students will be completing a substantial amount of writing and revision and will be engaging in regular workshopping, including reading other students' works aloud and participating in feedback sessions.

### Pre-requisites:

All students enrolled in this course must have completed ENG 150, ENG 222, ENG 280 or obtained permission to be enrolled without the prerequisite



## Theatre is Collaborative

Theatre is a collaborative and interactive art form that thrives upon active energetic involvement from all participants – audiences as well as participants. We will be discussing art with members of this community, which requires everyone to take risks together. Be cognizant of your own actions and reactions and their impact on our classroom community. Be a good collaborator.

## Theatre is Challenging

Theatre is human artists imitating human beings in action. And, intellectual growth depends on exposure to a diversity of human experiences in the classroom. Thus, this course requires you to engage with humanity on the page and in the classroom. We may encounter points of view and treatments of subjects that may offend or confound your sensibilities.

## Theatre is Community-Driven

As adults embarking upon collaborative learning together, you need to be honest, respectful, and supportive. As you are working this semester, please remember that everyone deserves to have a classroom where they are free to learn without fear of being silenced. We are all responsible for the climate in our classroom.

Be good to each other.

**Remember: plays may contain sensitive material or language which makes you uncomfortable.** Sometimes this is the discomfort of newness, but sometimes this is the discomfort of trauma. In the case of the latter, do what you need to do to protect yourself and your classmates. Sometimes that means speaking up within the community and discussing the text and reactions to it, and sometimes that means excusing yourself from the room for a bit.

# Course Objectives

This course will help students develop an understanding of playwriting structures and techniques, as well as writing and revision techniques and processes.

At the completion of this course, students should have a greater capacity to:

- Write effective short plays and scenes for the theatre, utilizing dramatic techniques, professional formatting, and theatrical terminology
- Edit and revise their own written texts using feedback
- Communicate constructive and informed feedback to peers about their dramatic writing
- Perform and utilize research that will enhance their texts and creative processes
- Continue working towards communicating analysis and knowledge in written and spoken communication
- Critically analyze plays as texts for performance using theatrical terminology

## Readings, Materials, & Supplies

Materials used in connection with the course may be subject to copyright protection. All photos in this syllabus (c) Eileen Curley

### Digital Plays & Readings

Links to various materials & digital scripts will be available in iLearn on the weekly lesson for each week.

Some of your ZJs will require you to engage with this content. Sometimes our class discussions will be based upon it.

You do not need to print these items.

### Digital Clips and Filmed Theatre

Links to Marist library digital copies and other open source filmed versions of shows will be available through iLearn.

You will not need to purchase any links or subscriptions this semester for this class, but I strongly recommend that you read or watch a version of *Hamlet* before reading *Backwards and Forwards*.

### Plays & texts to purchase

(print; digital is fine if they exist in that format. Used copies of Ball & Wright should be ubiquitous.)

**David Ball: *Backwards and Forwards*.**

ISBN: 978-0809311101

**Michael Wright: *Playwriting in Process: Thinking and Working Theatrically, 2nd edition*.**

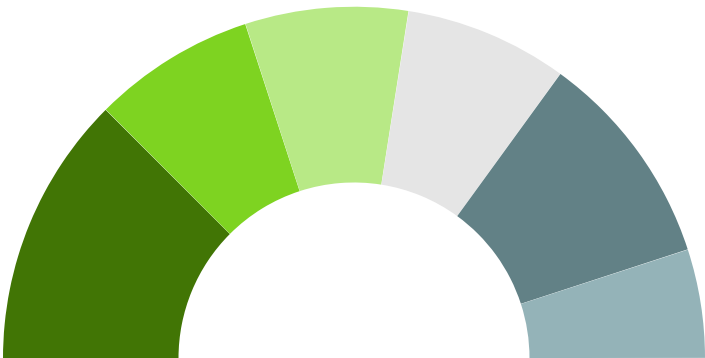
ISBN: 978-1585103409

**Anne Washburn: *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play***

ISBN: 978-1783191406

Also available in an anthology: ISBN 9781559364812

## Grading Breakdown



- 10-minute play (25%) ■ Terminology Quiz (15%)
- Revision Portfolio (15%) ■ Process Pieces (15%)
- Zero Journal (20%) ■ Participation (10%)

## Grade Scale

A (900-1000 pts) Excellent Mastery
B (800-899 pts) Above Average Mastery
C (700-799 pts) Mastery
D (600-699 pts) Partial Mastery
F (Below 600 pts) Failure to Master

# Graded Assignments

Full instructions will follow for all assignments

## 10-Minute Play 25%

- Your final project in this course will be a ten-minute play that encompasses all course objectives.
- The process for this play will include two workshops, a reflection essay, feedback for your peers, and some individually assigned research based on what you're doing.
- See the full instruction sheet for more detail.
- This assignment covers all course objectives.

## Terminology Quiz 15%

- At the mid-point of the semester, there will be a quiz covering all terminology introduced in the course and *Mr. Burns*.
- This quiz serves to encourage you to master the concepts of playwriting before we move into the intensive workshop portion of the course; you will be expected to work effectively with all terms during the second half of the course.
- This timed quiz will be administered via iLearn. Make certain that you neither forget to take it nor forget to prepare for it. Make-ups will not be permitted.

## Process Pieces 15%

- For the first 2/3 of the semester, we will be working on technique through short weekly scenes where you will experiment with techniques covered the previous day in class.
- As these are process pieces, they will be graded on a pass, fail, zero system.
- Some weeks, we will get through everyone; others, we will get through only some of these scenes, but you will get feedback on all of them from me. Generally, students have at least 3-4 of these workshopped in class.
- You must submit all of them, but you have a "oh please no" bailout option that you may use to pass on the in-class workshop of a process piece once during the semester.
- These assignments cover all course objectives.

## Revision Portfolio 15%

- Your revision portfolio will comprise seven to ten pages of dramatic writing, comprised of at most three different pieces, that you have revised and expanded from one or more of your PPs or ZJs.
- This portfolio will serve as practice for the revision process of your ten-minute play and a chance to revisit work based on in-class feedback. You will also produce a 2-3 page reflection essay about your process.
- This assignment is designed to provide practice writing plays, thinking about and engaging in revision, and learning and using terminology.

## Zero Journal 20%

- There will be two weekly journal assignments, called the Zero Journal, as is standard in Marist writing workshops.
- This journal should be a place where you experiment and explore.
- This assignment is designed to provide practice writing plays, thinking about and engaging in revision, and learning and using terminology.
- Assignments will be distributed each week and journals collected twice during the semester.

# Participation: Grading and Philosophy

Participation  
10%

**Workshop Feedback:** Active participation in feedback during workshop sessions, including Process Days and formal workshops in the second half of the semester. This participation will take the form of written feedback to peers on iLearn and in class, as well as oral feedback to peers in class.

**Workshop Readings:** Plays were meant to be heard and seen; a major component of this course will involve you hearing your work read aloud by classmates, which means that you will be reading their work aloud, too. These are cold readings, not refined performances.

**Discussion Days:** Throughout the semester, we will be discussing techniques and texts, while also experimenting with these techniques. Your active participation in discussions about the texts, and accordingly your preparation for these discussions by critically reading assigned texts, is expected. *There may be reading quizzes*, but let's not have to go there.

**Online Discussions:** We are still dealing with a pandemic. Assume we'll be having at least one on-line discussion or workshop during the semester.

## Assignment Submission Policies & Procedures

### Late Work

- Pieces that are to be workshopped (Process Pieces, Ten-Minute Play drafts) will not be accepted late for workshopping purposes.
- If you need to miss a day when your workshop piece is due, then you are welcome to and should submit the piece for feedback, but not a grade.
- The revision portfolio and the zero journal submissions will be accepted late; for each 24-hour period that an assignment is late, a 10% grade penalty will be applied.
- The Terminology Quiz will be open for multiple days; this cannot be submitted late.
- No late work is accepted after 7 days or Friday of finals week, whichever comes first.
- The pandemic may change all. TBD.

### Submission Instructions

This class has lots of small moving parts. To help you keep on top of them, see the instructions and schedule, and remember - either bring assignments on paper or submit to iLearn

- Process pieces are due weekly.
- Zero Journals are assigned daily but collected twice - online or on paper.
- Your 10MP drafts are due at your workshop. (Paper is preferable here)
- The Term Quiz will be on iLearn and open for days in Tests & Quizzes
- Readings are due at the start of the class when they are listed

Submission instructions may change due to pandemic policies.

### Extensions and Incompletes

- Incompletes and extensions will only be granted for emergency situations that develop towards the end of the semester.
- Do everything you can to stay on top of the course work, but if you end up with extenuating circumstances, then reach out and we will build you an individualized plan based on your situation.
- Do not suffer in silence.





## Collaboration, Participation, and Attendance

The Globe Theatre, London, England

Theatre is a collaborative process-based discipline, and this workshop will likewise be a collaborative and process-based course. This has a few implications for your participation and grading which I want to make clear at the outset:

1. **Your focus in this course should be on the *process* of writing for the stage**– idea generation, revision, experimentation, presentation for an audience, evaluation of reception, rinse and repeat.

- As such, numerous assignments are graded on a pass (uses the techniques assigned)/ fail (exists, but does not engage with the techniques)/ zero (missing) basis to encourage you to take creative risks & engage in the creative process. Your feedback on these assignments will be content-based to encourage you to, again, focus on the creative risk-taking process of writing.
- Other assignments will be graded on your incorporation of techniques, feedback, the quality of the revisions, and the overall improvement of your pieces.

2. **Plays are written for audiences.**

- In order to see your words come alive, you will be relying on your classmates to read, and vice versa. You will also be relying on the audience in the classroom to help you see what's working, what's not working, and what's working in unexpected ways – *for the audience*.
- Playwrights write for audiences – theatre requires audiences – and you are the audience. This means that you have built-in constant feedback, but it also means that you might discover that what's on the page is not working for your audience.

3. **Accordingly, we all need to be respectful of each other – as writers *and* as audience members.**

- We will be working on delivering effective constructive criticism during the semester, but respect extends to not texting during readings, not revising your scene during others' scenes, never talking during other scenes, being present and not leaving the classroom or entering late, and generally being supportive of one another while being honest with your reactions.
- Telling someone that you love their play because it's easier than figuring out why something about the dialogue is irksome does neither the audience nor the playwright any good.
- The goal is to help each other create good art – and that requires a process-focused exploration of the interaction between writer and audience.
- ***Good theatrical product comes from good collaborative process. Trust in your collaborators, trust in the process, and be a trustworthy collaborator and participant in the process.***

### Answers to Other Common Attendance Questions

- **Extended absences** (more than one class period) must be cleared through CAAS.
- If your observance of a **religious holiday** conflicts with the course schedule or our in-class work, then please notify me *at least two weeks prior to the holiday* so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- Participation in **college-sponsored activities** does not excuse you from your responsibilities as a student in this course. You know your schedules ahead of time. Plan accordingly.
- **Athletes & Band Members:** Alas, there's usually a note here about getting me your absence notes. TBD pandemic.
- **If you miss class**, then you should contact your classmates to get the notes from them. I recommend getting notes from multiple classmates, as that will increase your chance of getting decent coverage of the day's content.

# Workshop Policies and Procedures

## The basics -- For All Process Pieces and All Workshops:

You **MUST** either upload your work to iLearn in a readable format (PDF, Word) so that we can project it,

**OR** provide enough printed copies of each of your pieces (PPs & 10-MP) to cover:

- You (to take notes on feedback)
- Me (to provide written notes)
- A stage manager (to read stage directions)
- Each of the characters (whether they speak or not)

**If your work is not accessible, then we will not be workshoping it.**

If you print, then staple your pages. You have free on-campus printing, so please use the campus printers.

Be advised: There are no printing facilities available in Fontaine.

## Our Approach to Feedback Sessions:

- We'll be using techniques inspired by the Liz Lerman Critical Response process, which will be explained in class.

## Deadlines & Participation:

Remember that this is both a workshop and a theatre course: we can't discuss that which doesn't exist, collaboration is a vital element of workshops and theatre, and you're working in a discipline where shows have set due dates (opening night).

- Failure to attend your own 10MP workshop will result in a zero on that assignment.
- Failure to attend everyone else's 10MP workshop will result in a grade penalty (see individual assignments)
- Assignments are due at the start of all classes; if you arrive late, then you may not be permitted to workshop your piece.

## COVID-19

This syllabus has already undergone numerous COVID updates this summer. Expect more. As of late August 2021:

- If we need to be remote/ online as a class, we'll use Zoom and iLearn. Our dedicated class Zoom link will be in iLearn.
- If you individually need to miss class, current Marist policy is that we're back to 2019 - get the notes, use iLearn, etc., but we won't be Zooming students into class individually.
- In general, we'll figure it out and adjust as needed. Check your email regularly in case of updates.

## Play Formatting

As an industry, we're rather persnickety about how plays are formatted when they are typewritten, even in word processors. In particular, they are not formatted like short stories, nor are they formatted like film scripts. There are models and standards on iLearn. *You must learn to use this format, much like you will be required by future employers, playwriting competitions, and the IRS to follow specified formats for other kinds of documents.* Follow the directions. You do not need to buy the fancy software to do this formatting.

## Note-taking

While this is a workshop class, you should still have a notebook wherein you write down advice delivered to your classmates, observations about the process, and terminology as it arises in the course of our discussions. The notes on their pieces may well be relevant to your current or future work. We cannot discuss every element in a play in workshop, and so you should always be looking actively for intersections between our critique of your classmates' work and your own work.



*Seven Thousand Flakes*  
Fifth Floor (Russia)

World Stage Design,  
Taipei, Taiwan July 2017  
Creators, Artists and Actors:  
Kobozeva Sofya, Skorik Anastasia,  
Krupatina Olga

# Communications Outside of Class

## Office Hours

My office is Fontaine 214. Office hours are drop-in, but do know that I am also the Department Chair, and so registration times will be particularly busy.

My fall 2021 office hours are:

- Tuesday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Wednesday 9:30-10:30 am
- Friday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Full-time Marist faculty hold five office hours per week.

This is a time when you can drop in and ask a question without an appointment.

## Email

My email is: eileen.curley@marist.edu

Email is a professional communication tool. Please use it accordingly.

Marist requires that email about your academic progress be sent to your school email.

I check email at least once daily on weekdays, but expect a delay on weekends and Wednesdays.

Please do not email within 24 hours of class and assume I will be able to answer your message.

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## How Does This Course Fit into the Marist Curriculum?

ENG 310 offers 3 credits of Liberal Arts (LA) credit. This is a discussion and lecture course.

You may use this course in any of the following ways:

- Theatre minor elective
- English upper-level theatre arts requirement or elective (theatre concentration)
- English upper-level writing workshop (writing & literature concentration; creative writing minor)
- Elective Credit

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## Electronic Devices

Screens disrupt theatre and inhibit the development of community when we're all in a 3D space together. They create a literal barrier between you and your audience as a playwright.

However, pandemic times also require the use of screens periodically. Please be certain that if you have a laptop or tablet open, you are only doing so to take notes, access course readings, or access pieces to be workshopped. Stay focused & shop for shoes or cruise for job listings outside of class.

At all other times, devices should be off and closed, including when other scenes are being workshopped and you are not a reader.

As this is a workshop environment where you will be actively engaging with other students' work, I expect that you will be devoting your full attention to the course during class time, as you would expect others to pay attention to your work.

Further, as theatre union policies are such that phones are not permitted except during scheduled breaks, please consider this policy as future training for your careers – be they in theatre, medicine, teaching, the law, or any number of other workplaces where phones are a distraction from the task at hand.

# Academic Honesty

The currency of higher education is knowledge. This exchange of information allows us to improve society and ourselves, but we cannot grow and learn unless we first admit that we need to rely on the thoughts of others to generate our own ideas. When you use someone else's ideas, you must cite that person. When in doubt, cite.

If you have questions, then ask before submitting your work.

## Violations & Repercussions

As members of the Marist learning community, all students should adhere to the principles of academic integrity as set forth in the Marist Academic Integrity Policy.

**Violations include but are not limited to activities such as cheating on exams and plagiarism, which includes copying other artists' work.**

Any student found to be in violation of the Marist College Academy Honesty Code as it pertains to our class will **automatically fail the assignment with a grade of zero (0)** and may face further sanctions, including failure in the course.

## Turn-it-In

*Use of Turnitin is mandated for this course. Turnitin is a service used by Marist College faculty to compare a student's written work with its very large database of sources, student papers from other institutions, and the like, to check for originality. Work submitted to Turnitin will be used only for purposes of assessing originality, and will not be shared beyond Turnitin or used for any other purpose. Students must submit all assignments to Turnitin through the regular iLearn submission process. Students who wish to remove their personal identifying information (name, student identification number, etc.) from the submitted file may do so but must notify their professor ahead of submission. Work submitted through iLearn in this course will not be reviewed by the Professor or maintained by the College unless and until the Turnitin process is completed*

# Accommodations

If you have **any** condition or need for accommodation that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it, please notify me *within the first two weeks* of the class so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If something develops, then let me know. This include religious holiday observances.

## Learning Accommodations

- The Office of Accommodations and Accessibility provides services that can significantly enhance your learning.
- If you use OAA, please notify me so that we can work to create an optimal learning environment.
- Testing accommodations for the online quiz need to be programmed into iLearn by faculty.
  - **Please send me your OAA accommodations summary form so that I can set iLearn correctly.**
  - If you need further assistance such as a scribe or a reader, then please contact OAA to book those resources..
- If your accommodations include the use of electronic devices in class, then speak with me so that we can craft an individualized plan based on your needs, including for workshop readings.
- If you develop a medical condition during the semester (concussion, broken hand, etc.) that leads to you needing temporary accommodations, then please contact OAA.
- If you are new to Marist and had accommodations in high school and are considering not using them in college, please file with the accommodations office now regardless. Registering and then declining to use them when you see that you do not need them is much easier than the other way around. Also, I highly recommend that you use your accommodations for a semester before making this decision to not continue with the support. The heady joy of September/ February is a different learning condition than the doldrums of December/ May.



# What is Where on iLearn?

## Homepage (Lessons Tool)

- Start on the Homepage (Lessons Tool)
- This Homepage serves two main functions:
  - The landing page is a centralized place to start each time you log into the course.
  - Each week has a subpage.
  - Main resources are listed here with links
  - Other useful subpages are also listed here
- Think of this like an interactive course schedule with some additional resources

## Weekly Lessons Pages

- These are Weekly subpages of the Main Lessons Landing Page. They have everything you need to complete that week's work, including:
  - Links to materials & readings when those are digital
  - Links to the tools you need to submit your assignments for that week, such as Assignments, Forums, etc.
  - A Checklist tool to help you manage your workflow. Use this to manage your workflow.
  - Zoom, if necessary, but let's hope not.

## Zoom

- We will hopefully never need to use this videoconferencing tool, but, pandemic.
- If we do, we'll have a dedicated Zoom link for class.

## Checklist

- Each week will have a checklist on the Weekly Lesson.
- This allows you to keep on top of work and serves as a backup to the schedule.

## Feedback & Grades

- This course will use the iLearn gradebook.
- Written feedback on your assignments is more crucial for development and progress than simple numerical grades. Read the feedback.
- Feedback on assignments will be distributed either:
  - In the Assignments tool as an attachment or in the text box
  - In the gradebook in the comments boxes
  - On paper, like it's 2019.
- All grades will be visible in the Gradebook tool a few days after assignments are returned.

## Forums will be used in two main ways

- Online Discussions
  - There will not be regular online discussions, but pandemic times might change this reality.
- Peer Feedback, if the world collapses under the Delta variant. More instructions will follow.

## Tests & Quizzes

- We'll use this tool for the term quiz.

## Assignments

- Written work for this class will be submitted to the Assignments Tool when not submitted in class.
- Select the correct Assignment and be sure to upload your work in an accepted file format
- ALWAYS go back into the assignment and make sure that the file upload worked. It is your responsibility to make sure that your uploads are successful and completed on time.
- Please do not upload .pages files or links to Google Docs.
- Export to .doc or .pdf

ENG 310 Playwriting

Week		Topic	Readings (from texts or iLearn)	Process Work Due	Cumulative Work Due	
1.1	T	8/31	Intro to the Course & Basic Units of a Play	iLearn: Spencer "Beats, Scenes, Acts"		
1.2	F	9/3	Backwards and Forwards	Ball: Part 1 (pages 1-36)		
2.1	T	9/7	Index Card Beats	Wright: pages 1-28.	PP: Index Card Beat (1 p)	
2.2	F	9/10	Index Card Beats (continued)			
3.1	T	9/14	Character, Exposition, & Structure	Ball pages 39-67		
3.2	F	9/17	Six Line Two Character Plays		PP: Six-Line Scene	
4.1	T	9/21	Dialogue	iLearn: Dialogue Folder		
4.2	F	9/24	Two Person Conflict Scene		PP: Two Person Conflict Scene	
5.1	T	9/28	Subtext & Dialogue continued	iLearn: Subtext Folder		
5.2	F	10/1	Spoken Subtext 6-line Scene		PP: Spoken Subtext 6-line Scene	
6.1	T	10/5	Pulling it all Together	Washburn: <i>Mr. Burns</i>		
6.2	F	10/8	Pulling it all Together	Washburn: <i>Mr. Burns</i>	Revision Portfolio	
7.1	T	10/12	Terminology Quiz online. Take during class or during the week. Due by 5:00 pm on Thursday 10/14.			Terminology Quiz online
7.2	F	10/15	Fall Break			
8.1	T	10/19	Monologue	iLearn: Monologue Folder		
8.2	F	10/22	Monologue		PP: Monologue	
9.1	T	10/26	Pulling it all Together: One-Act Plays	iLearn: One-Act Plays Folder		
9.2	F	10/29	Missed Connections		PP: Missed Connections Scene	
10.1	T	11/2	Space, Place, and Design Impacts	iLearn: Theatricality and Space folder	Zero Journal Round 1	
10.2	F	11/5	What Happens Here Photo Scene		PP: What Happens Here Photo Scene	
11.1	T	11/9	10 minute play workshop 1		10 minute play draft 1	
11.2	F	11/12	10 minute play workshop 1		10 minute play draft 1	
12.1	T	11/16	10 minute play workshop 1		10 minute play draft 1	
12.2	F	11/19	10 minute play workshop 1		10 minute play draft 1	
13.1	T	11/23	10 Minute Play Structure Exercise	Ball: Part 3 (pages 81-96)	(online assignment)	
13.2	F	11/26	Thanksgiving Break			
14.1	T	11/30	10 minute play workshop 2		10 minute play draft 2	
14.2	F	12/3	10 minute play workshop 2		10 minute play draft 2	
15.1	T	12/7	10 minute play workshop 2		10 minute play draft 2	
15.2	F	12/10	10 minute play workshop 2		10 minute play draft 2	
16	F	12/17	Revision Portfolio for 10 minute play due to my office/mailbox by 10:00 am			10 MP Revision Portfolio

Schedule subject to change based upon our progress and course needs.