

## ENG 3xx – Independent Study in Dramaturgy

Fall 2014  
Section XXX

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### **Course Description:**

This course will be a hands-on introduction to the craft of theatrical dramaturgy, including historical research, character analysis, rehearsal feedback, continuity, audience outreach and production support research. As dramaturgy is a blend of practice, research, and art, so too will this class involve the practical application of research to artistic endeavors. Students will conduct some basic dramaturgical work for the Hobart and William Smith Colleges production of *Tartuffe*, observing dramaturgy in action before then embarking on major individual projects.

### **Course Philosophy:**

As this course includes the practical application of dramaturgical approaches to a play, it is assumed that students will be active collaborators throughout the production process. Dramaturgs must be flexible, capable of thinking on their feet, and strong researchers, and as such, students enrolled in this course will be working to master these skills in conjunction with a production team. Just as theatre artists and audiences must approach each new project with an open mind, so I ask that you approach each reading, rehearsal, and interaction with the production team with your mind open to new possibilities. As we explore the past and its impact upon the present and future, we will encounter points of view and treatments of subjects that may offend or confound your sensibilities; indeed, *Tartuffe* presents topical challenges which require sensitive and thoughtful interactions with the cast, audience and team members who are spread across the eastern seaboard.

### **Course Objectives:**

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

- Communicate research and conceptual ideas to all participants in a theatrical event, including the audience
- Conduct research into historical and contemporary periods as appropriate for a particular play and as requested by the production team
- Craft written materials designed for a variety of purposes and reading audiences
- Participate in the rehearsal process

### **Required Texts and Materials:**

Ireland, et. al., *The Process of Dramaturgy*

Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy*.

Moliere, *Tartuffe*, trans by Bolt. (provided by production staff)

A Production Binder & lobby display materials

Other readings and materials as required throughout the production process and the semester.

**Attendance:**

As noted above, this will be a collaborative and interactive course. Attendance is assumed, by default.

**Tartuffe (50%):**

Tartuffe will serve as an introduction to dramaturgy, an opportunity to observe dramaturgy in action, and an opportunity to practice problem-solving and research skills before embarking upon your own projects. Students will be producing the following:

**An annotated bibliography** of reference materials for the production team, which will also then serve as your research introduction to the production and the nature of materials which dramaturgs use. Students will work together to produce this document but will be graded on their individual contributions. 5%

**Glossary list.** Like the performers, you are students approaching this show for the time. Thus, you will be creating a glossary of terms and ideas while reading the play and reading the background materials which will serve both as your opportunity to figure out those terms and as a working tool for the production team. Again, you will work together to produce this document but will be graded on your individual contributions. 5%

**Rehearsal responses.** If we can work out the technology, then we will periodically view rehearsals via Skype or some other technological feed. For each rehearsal, you should write a response as a dramaturg, using the guides in your readings. Pending funding, we will also be attending tech rehearsal and the production in person, and you will be writing short responses to those as well. 10%

**Reflection paper.** At the end of the entire process, you will be writing a 1500-2000 word reflection paper which assesses the process used. What role does a dramaturg play in an academic setting? How is that different or similar to the discussions of professional dramaturgs in your readings? What aspects of dramaturgy were employed in this production? What did you learn about applying the skills of your major/ minor to this production? 10%

**Brainstorming, Small Tasks and Discussions.** As with any show, small tasks always develop and collaborators need brainstorming assistance. Portions of the lobby display will likely fall into this category. When those tasks are discrete tasks which a student can complete, individual tasks will be assigned to you. Generally, you will be participating in group tasks as part of the production team – offering aesthetic judgments on production choices, serving as the “students won’t get that” gatekeeper for documents, serving as an ideal audience for all materials and choices, etc. This portion of your grade is similar to a participation grade in a classroom-based class. Be here, be participating, share your opinion, and help us make the show a success. 20%

**Important Production Dates & Deadlines:**

- Character bio sheets are due to the cast immediately after auditions (Sept 8-10, TBD)
- The Vocal Coach will be in town on the weekend of Sept 12-14
- Other materials are to be sent along as developed
- Lobby Display Installation during Tech Weekend (October 17-19)
- Pre-Show Lecture (to be given by Dr. Curley) & Post-Show Discussion with Dr. Curley and production team members October 24<sup>th</sup> (opening night)
- Also see tentative production schedule (attached)

**As part of the Brainstorming... grade, students will also be reading and responding to the following materials produced by the production dramaturg (Dr. Curley).** Below is the overall list of materials which will be produced for Tartuffe. This list should serve as your Tartuffe reading checklist (as you will be reading each of these) as well as your model checklist for your own projects. Discussion sessions will center on these documents.

#### Character Sketch Sheets for Each Character

- Historical etchings/ images of original character (if available)
- Contemporary parallels (control of women's bodies, rape culture, character type, etc.)
- Historical parallels
- Brief character analysis
- Character type in period comedy
- Additional research bibliography for individual parallels where appropriate

#### Background Research Documents, Cast:

- Gender & Power Dynamics Overview
- French Neo-classicism Overview
- Suffrage Era Overview, with parallels to play
- French Comedy Overview
- Structure of the Bourgeois Household Overview
- Historical Material on the Play, including production controversies & style of original production
- Glossary of Terms (ongoing as needed)
- Bibliography of additional materials available at the HWS libraries

#### Background Research Documents, Director:

- Translation options & assessment (completed)
- Deus ex machine options & assessment (resolved, but may need revisitation after casting)
- Upcycling (TBD conceptual revision)
- Suffrage Era space, power dynamics
- Contemporary parallels about controlling women's bodies (Hobby Lobby decision, abortion rights, birth control limits, etc.)
- Rape culture
- Others as requested or developed

#### Audience Materials

- Pre-show lecture powerpoint image research
- Pre-show lecture
- Post-show discussion materials (TBD)
- Lobby Display materials
- Education packs (TBD on school groups attendance)
- Program materials (TBD, but likely glossary at the minimum)

#### Materials as needed during the production process. For example

- The designer will likely need prop research assistance
- The costumer may need costume research assistance
- Continued brainstorming on various topics as needed (Ex: dumbshow, handling the table scene given production context and campus context, deus ex machina, etc.)

### **Participation & Learning**

Simply attending meetings and events does not guarantee an A, as your grade is determined by your *participation* in class and mastery of content, not your presence.

### **The Final Project 50%:**

Your final project for this course will be one of the following:

- A full binder of dramaturgical materials and a small scale lobby display for a production of *The Tempest*, followed by a visit to the SUNY-New Paltz fall production of *The Tempest*, and a response paper to that production which addresses the different approaches taken to the same script.

OR:

- A full binder of dramaturgical materials and a small scale lobby display for a production of a play of your choosing (must be a classical piece, out of copyright and thus available for adaptation choices.)

Ideally, you will be presenting your concept and lobby display to a small gathering as part of a student work presentation round table discussion which mirrors the pre-show lecture which we will attend in October.

The individual requirements for each project will be highly dependent on your show choice and your approach to that show (see the course texts for options); so the full details for each project will be developed individually in advance. Likewise, individual due dates for portions of the assignment (to keep you on task) and individual feedback will be arranged on a schedule that makes sense given the project.

### **Course Schedule:**

Course meetings will be TBD on our schedules and the finalized production schedule, but generally will follow this pattern:

During *Tartuffe*, weekly meetings with all members of the team in my office or a coffee shop to discuss the latest documents which are being sent to the team, to discuss any feedback or questions we've received from the cast, directors or designers, to plan and to discuss why these particular documents are being developed. Depending on the tasks of a particular week, readings from the texts and other readings will be assigned as well. Attendance at either tech weekend or opening week (or both, pending funding for rooms) is expected.

Regular production business will be conducted over email as well, so please check your email.

During November, weekly meetings with all members of the team will switch to readings from the course texts, the plays which form the basis of your final project, and other materials as assigned. We will collectively offer feedback and troubleshooting advice on your individual projects. These readings will be assigned once we determine your production choices and approaches.

### **Late Assignments:**

In fairness to students who meet deadlines, ***assignments handed in at any time after the due date & time will be reduced by one full letter grade*** (10% of the point value of the assignment) for each day it is late; for breaks & finals week, this penalty applies for every 24-hour period. No assignments will be accepted once they are more than seven days late. No assignments will be accepted after the beginning of the last day of class and no incompletes will be granted unless an emergency situation develops. *It is your responsibility to contact me regarding any coursework assigned in classes you miss and to turn all assignments in on time.* If you know in advance that you will miss a class, I expect you to make arrangements to hand the work in on time and get notes and assignment sheets from a classmate. **Certain assignments may not be submitted late because we use them in class on the due date or because they are written in class;** this category includes all materials used in workshops (introductions, drafts, etc.)

### **Special requirements or accommodations:**

- If you have any condition that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it, or which will require extra time in testing situations, please notify me *within the first two weeks* of the class so that appropriate arrangements can be made. An early heads up allows us to work with your situation; a last-minute plea rarely does.
- If you have a disability or other medical condition requiring specific accommodations, please speak with Special Services ([SpecServ@Marist.edu](mailto:SpecServ@Marist.edu)) in order to obtain their assistance and intervention on your behalf. The office provides services that can significantly enhance your learning experience. If you are using their assistance, please notify me early in the semester so that we can be sure that we are working to create an optimal learning environment.
- Extended absences (more than one class period) must be cleared through CAAS.
- If your observance of a religious holiday conflicts with the course schedule, you must also 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.

### **iLearn, E-mail, Etiquette and Other Policies:**

- All readings not available in book format will be posted on iLearn. *Consult your schedule.*
- You are in class to learn; be here mentally and physically. Shut off the phone.
- I will use e-mail to communicate with you. Please check your Marist e-mail regularly.
- Kindly put the course number in the subject line of your e-mail messages, especially if you are not using your Marist account. With all the spam in my inbox, messages entitled “Help!” risk deletion.
- While e-mail is a great communication tool, please remember that you are still addressing a professor. Do not hit that send key until you have taken a moment to reflect upon what you have written. If you respect yourself and present yourself respectfully, the world will take you more seriously than if your communications are incomprehensible, full of typos, or generally rude. Remember, it is in print.
- Do not email within 24 hours of our class meeting and expect that I will have time to read and respond. I check email at least once daily on weekdays, but expect a delay on weekends and nights.
- If you need a quick answer or need to ask a long question, come to my office hours.
- Grades on assignments are not negotiable; if you have questions about an assignment or your grade in the class, then you need to come into my scheduled office hours *with your assignments*. Federal law prohibits faculty from discussing grades over email.
- Unclaimed assignments will only be held until the end of the following semester. Claim them.

### **GRADING SCALE:**

A	= 1000-930 points	Outstanding	C	= 769-730 points	Satisfactory
A-	= 929-900 points		C-	= 729-700 points	
B+	= 899-870 points	Very Good	D+	= 699-670 points	Unsatisfactory
B	= 869-830 points		D	= 669-630 points	
B-	= 829-800 points	Good	D-	= 629-600 points	
C+	= 799-770 points		F	= Less than 600 points	Failure

### **Academic Honesty:**

The currency of higher education is knowledge and as you would not steal money, so I expect you not to steal other people’s ideas. The exchange of information allows us to improve society and ourselves, but we cannot grow 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.

**ANY STUDENT FOUND TO BE IN VIOLATION OF THE MARIST COLLEGE STUDENT HANDBOOK ACADEMY HONESTY CODE AS IT PERTAINS TO OUR CLASS WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A ZERO ON THE ASSIGNMENT AND MAY FACE FURTHER SANCTIONS, INCLUDING FAILURE IN THE COURSE. YOU ALSO MAY FACE INSTITUTIONAL SANCTIONS IF THERE IS A PATTERN OF PLAGIARISM.**

Violations include but are not limited to activities such as citation fabrication, plagiarism, cheating, and falsifying attendance sheets or other documents.

**If you do not understand how to properly cite sources, *please contact me* and I will gladly walk you through that minefield.**

**All written assignments for this course may be submitted to [turnitin.com](https://turnitin.com)**

***Please note that the course schedule is subject to change based on our progress, although readings and assignments will never be due before the published due date.***