

Modern and Contemporary  
Drama: English 3370w.01,  
Spring 2018  
3 Credit Hours  
CRN: 22068

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Office Hours: 9-11 a.m. TT and by appointment in Huntsville  
1-3 p.m. MW and by appointment at the Woodlands Center

**Class Meets:** 11:00 a.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, in Room 262 of the Evans Complex

**Texts:** Ayckbourn, *Communicating Doors*  
Durang, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*  
Foote, *The Young Man from Atlanta*  
Gainor, et al., *The Norton Anthology of Drama*, Vol 2, 3rd edition  
McDonagh, Martin, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane and Other Plays*  
Stoppard, *Arcadia*  
Gilbaldi & Franklin, *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

### **Introductory Thoughts:**

So what are you going to do in this course?

As the textbook list may suggest, we're going to read plays—quite a few plays. But we're also going to think about them in two different but important ways: as works of literature--words written on a page in highly patterned and original ways; and as blueprints for a performance--descriptions, actions, and words meant to be reproducible before a live audience. The two are not always mutually exclusive, but they suggest two mind-sets not always covered in every literature course. And we're going to try to clarify the distinction between "modern" and "contemporary" that appears in the course title. In other words, we're going to think about how the art of drama has evolved in the twentieth century. In doing so, we'll focus largely on American and British plays, but not exclusively. Students should complete the course feeling they have had at least a taste of what the world of modern and contemporary drama has to offer.

### **Course Description and Prerequisites**

According to the **University catalogue**, this course focuses on “the major figures in modern British, American, and Continental drama.” This is true but vague. More specifically, the course surveys

the major changes in Western drama beginning with the shift from classical tragedy, comedy, and melodrama by European playwrights in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and toward more mixed forms of dramatic writing, including recent developments visible on commercial stages. It seeks to enrich students' knowledge of drama as an art form and to enable them to follow the general trends in its relatively recent history. The class **methods** will always include background lectures, but they will also require student analysis and practice—that means students are expected to comment in class and try dramatic readings as various points as well as work in a learning community to better understand a play. It also involves writing academically about drama. The dramatic works that will be our focus include both well-known “great works” and less familiar but interesting and important ones. Still, there will be some obvious omissions and some surprising inclusions.

Of course, to succeed, every student needs to have met the **prerequisites** set by the University for this course: 6 hours of freshman composition (Eng. 164 and 165) and 3 hours of sophomore literature (either Eng. 265 or 266). Every student who meets those prerequisites is expected to have mastered basic grammar and argument writing as well the ability to document and cite material from literary works.

### Course Objectives

In summary, then, the goals of this course are:

- To survey changes in Western drama from the Modern period to the present.
- To increase student knowledge of the workings of drama as both a literary text and a performance text.
- To explore and gain understanding about the historical and cultural issues important to dramatic writing since the start of the Modern age.
- To improve writing and oral presentation skills through writing and discussing dramatic works.

### Grading:

Of course, you're probably wondering, “How am I going to earn my grade for this class?” The answer is that each student's grade for the course will be determined by three major factors.

### Exams

We will have **two** exams. Each exam will consist of two sections: one section that focuses on concepts and quotations important to our class discussion and to understanding the literary works assigned during that section of the course; a second section will involve a 475-500 word essay about one or more of the plays read during the portion of the course covered by the exam. The first exam will take place around the middle of the term, and the second will take place at the time scheduled by the University for the Final Exam. Collectively, a student's grades on these exams will determine **one third** of his/her course grade. For information on how to earn extra credit for these exams, see the section labeled “Attendance Policy.”



### Major Papers

Students will be required to write **one** paper during the semester. That paper will focus one of four plays:

*Death and the King's Horseman* by Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka

*Top Girls* by British playwright Caryl Churchill (not in Norton Text)

*The Real Thing* by British playwright Tom Stoppard (not in Norton Text)

*Ruined* by American playwright Lynn Nottage

*Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches* by American playwright Tony Kushner

*The Maids* by French playwright Jean Genet

Students will have two options for writing about the play they select: **either** analyzing a major character in the play or analyzing the various sets used in the play. In both cases, the point will be to find how the character or the set contributes or reveals a meaning for the play. This paper will be academic in format and tone, and it **should** involve research done in the library and using library databases. The exact

assignment is attached to the syllabus on a page titled, "Paper Assignment: Analyzing Drama." The paper is due relatively early in the term to get ahead of the crowd of papers that tend to haunt English students late in the term. The grade on this paper will determine **one-third** of each student's course grade.

There is also a creative writing alternative to this paper that is laid out on the "Paper Assignment: Analyzing Drama" pages of the syllabus. It also involves using one of the four plays listed above and the full details are found in the long version of the assignment.

### **Group Presentation**

Students will work on a group project that plans a theoretical production of one play. These projects will be presented in class after the midterm exam. This presentation is designed to help students learn the ways productions both must analyze and interpret a play in order to be prepared and manage to communicate an interpretation through performance. A detailed assignment is attached to this syllabus and titled, "Group Project Assignment." Grades on this project will be assigned to the group, and that grade will determine **one-third** of a student's course grade.

### **Extra Credit**

Throughout the semester, I will give students opportunities to earn points by doing such things as attend performances of non-musical plays (done at either the professional or college level), sketching sets designs, or providing biographical data on authors. At the end of the term, any student who has earned a total of 100 points or more will have the lowest of his or her three major grades raised by one letter value (a "B" grade on an exam, for instance, would become an "A"). The exact value of any such opportunity will be announced when the opportunity is announced, and I will do my best to make the announcements both in class and on Blackboard.

### **Attendance Policy**

To help insure everyone gets a leg up on the exams, I offer a positive inducement for attendance. Everyday a student attends a **complete** class session, having come to class with a copy of the play to be discussed that day and willing to tell me they have done the assigned reading, that student earns one extra credit point that is added to his or her next exam. At the same time, students should realize that failure to attend class has negative results. Excessive absences will not be tolerated. They discourage other students and me. Anyone missing more than four days of class will see a lowering of his or her course grade by a minimum of one letter.

### **Missed Exams / Late Paper Policy**

Students who miss an exam for any reason should contact the instructor immediately. In cases involving illness or family crises, I will ask the student to have the reason for the absence verified by the Dean of Student Life Office before rescheduling an exam. In other cases—weather, car problems, stupidity, etc.—I will do my best to accommodate students, but all such cases are matters of grace and mercy, not right.

My general policy is not to accept late papers unless encouraged to do so by the Dean of Student Life office. However, I define late as anytime after 5 p.m. on the day the paper is due, and students may e-mail me a Microsoft Word attachment of their paper before that deadline—with a hard copy given to me later—in order to meet the deadline. Again, students are always welcome to discuss specific issues with me, but they need to realize I will refer all rulings of the validity of excuses to the Dean of Student Life office. Also, in all cases, I reserve the right to penalize late papers by lowering the final grade.

**Please note: any student who has major problems fulfilling the requirements of the course (family crisis; unexpected health issues; severe emotional turmoil) should contact the office of John Yarabeck, Dean of Students. That office is located in Suite 215 of the Lowman Student Center. The phone number is 936-294-1785. Students may also check out their website, especially this page:**  
[http://www.shsu.edu/~slo\\_www/absceance.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/absceance.html). **This office will help you deal with all your instructors and makes it unnecessary for you to bring me documentation concerning such crises.**

## **Legal Matters the University Requires Me to Include:**

These are policies that cover the University as a whole. For a more detailed discussion of the items below, go to this link: [www.shsu.edu/syllabus](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus). The University also has a written code for student conduct and discipline. It can be found in full at this link: <https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html>. Here are my understanding of the most important of these matters:

- **Academic Dishonesty:**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: [Dean of Student's Office](#)



- **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in an academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

- **Religious Holidays:**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

</dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

- **Visitors in the Classroom:** Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.
- **Instructor Evaluations:** Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.
- **Classroom Rules of Conduct:** The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. I expect students to show respect for everyone in the classroom—the instructor, students, guests—through both words and actions. I ask students not to do other work during class, to place cell phones on silent mode, and to put away other distractions: social media devices, newspapers, a photo of your significant other in scanty clothes, etc. If something else needs your attention during class time, don't come to class.
- **Study Tips:** The best way to succeed in this course is to attend regularly having read the assigned work for that day. Ask questions—particularly about terminology and approaches that are unclear. Schedule a time to meet with the professor at some point in the term—preferably early in order to get a better sense of his personality. If you need help with reading, writing, or other study assistance, you should take advantage of the resources listed below:

### **The SAM Center**

The Student Advising and Mentoring Center, also known as the SAM Center, offers a wide variety of services for the students of Sam Houston State University. We offer academic advisement and enrichment services to all undergraduate and graduate students. The SAM Center is a resource dedicated to helping students adjust to academic life at Sam Houston State University. Services available include career testing, aid with time management, and study skills. The center has grown rapidly since we've been open and with new programs being offered, our students are taking more advantage of our resources. With a great faculty and staff, all students are encouraged to look into any of the programs we have available. The SAM Center is located in Academic Building 4 (AB4) on the second floor, room 210. AB4 is located on the corner of Bowers Blvd. and Ave. I. For more information, go to <http://www.shsu.edu/~sam> [www/index.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~sam). Or call one of the numbers listed below:



**Toll Free: (866) 364-5211**

**Houston Area: (281) 657-6432**

**Phone: (936) 294-4444**

**Fax: (936) 294-1149**

### **The Academic Success Center**

You may know this better as either the SHSU Writing Center or the SHSU Reading Center, but these have been merged to form a comprehensive, one-stop source for aid. The Academic Success Center offers a variety of academic support including peer tutoring programs for writing, math/statistics, and reading skills. There is also an online writing lab and a supplemental instruction program. It is open 8 am to 7 pm, Monday-Thursday, 8 am to 3pm on Friday, and 2 to 7 pm on Sunday. Appointments are made by calling 936-294-3680. Further information is on the Center's website, [www.shsu.edu/asc](http://www.shsu.edu/asc).



*Art is not a mirror held up to reality,  
but a hammer with which to shape it.  
-- Bertold Brecht*



"Why did I write?  
Because I found life  
unsatisfactory." --  
Tennessee Williams





### Schedule of Assigned Readings:

Thursday 1/18	Introduction to the Course: Getting Drama(tic) Fugard, <i>Master Harold ... and the Boys</i>
Tuesday, 1/23	Fugard, <i>Master Harold ... And the Boys</i>
Thursday, 1/25	Ibsen, <i>Hedda Gabler</i>
Tuesday, 1/30	Ibsen, <i>Hedda Gabler</i> Strindberg, <i>Miss Julie</i>
Thursday, 2/1	Strindberg, <i>Miss Julie</i>
Tuesday, 2/6	Chekhov, <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>
Thursday, 2/8	Chekhov, <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>
Tuesday, 2/13	Chekhov, <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>
Thursday, 2/15	Shaw, <i>Pygmalion</i>
Tuesday, 2/20	Shaw, <i>Pygmalion</i>
Thursday, 2/22	O'Neill, <i>The Hairy Ape</i>
Tuesday, 2/27	O'Neill, <i>Hughie</i> ( <b>on Blackboard</b> )
Thursday, 3/1	Brecht, <i>The Good Woman of Setzuan</i>
Tuesday, 3/6	Brecht, <i>The Good Woman of Setzuan</i>
Thursday, 3/8	MIDTERM EXAM
<b>Friday, 3/9</b>	<b>MAJOR PAPER DUE</b>
Tuesday, 3/13	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Thursday, 3/15	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Tuesday, 3/20	Becket, <i>Waiting for Godot</i>
Thursday, 3/22	Becket, <i>Waiting for Godot</i>

Tuesday, 3/27	Ionesco, "The Lesson" ( <b>on Blackboard</b> )
Thursday, 3/29	Pinter, <i>The Homecoming</i>
Tuesday, 4/3	Pinter, <i>The Homecoming</i>
Thursday, 4/5	<b>GROUP PRESENTATIONS!</b>
Tuesday, 4/10	Stoppard, <i>Arcadia</i>
Thursday, 4/12	Stoppard, <i>Arcadia</i>
Tuesday, 4/17	Foot, <i>The Young Man from Atlanta</i>
Thursday, 4/19	Foot, <i>The Young Man from Atlanta</i>
Tuesday, 4/24	Ayckbourn, <i>Communicating Doors</i>
Thursday, 4/26	Ayckbourn, <i>Communicating Doors</i>
Tuesday, 5/1	Durang, <i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i>
Thursday, 5/3	Durang, <i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i>
<b>Thursday, 5/10</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM at Noon or the time/date set by the University</b>

You can't win  
every week. –  
Caryl Churchill







## Paper Assignment: Analyzing Drama

Part of any reputable English class is the experience of learning through writing that is based on research and textual analysis. Such an experience is important because it gives a student a chance to hone and demonstrate skills

in

- close reading of a text
- collection and assimilation of research
- understanding the nature of literary elements
- creative thinking
- logical organizing
- clear writing.

Indeed, all of these will be essential to success here.

So what exactly does this assignment require you to do?

First, get to know well the play you select for this assignment. Select a play from these six:

*Death and the King's Horseman* by Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka

*Top Girls* by British playwright Caryl Churchill (not in Norton Text)

*The Real Thing* by British playwright Tom Stoppard (not in Norton Text)

*Ruined* by American playwright Lynn Nottage

*Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches* by American playwright Tony Kushner

*The Maids* by French playwright Jean Genet

What does getting to know it well entail?

- ⇒ Read the play carefully, marking passages that strike you as good or significant.
- ⇒ Look on-line for reviews and comments about the play—especially its most recent production in New York.
- ⇒ Find materials in the library—books and reference materials—that will tell you more about the author and about this play.

Second, decide which of two perspectives will be the focus of your writing: a character analysis or an analysis of the play's physical spaces. In either case, the goal is to understand not just what these things look like but what they mean, what they contribute to the play. In general, a character works to suggest some sense of agency in a play: who causes what? A character is also a tunnel into an author's mind, reflecting the personality types the author—and his/her text—is interested in. To understand a character, a student will need to look for all aspects of that character's personality. Obviously, there will be minor and major aspects, and the student's task is to find out how these aspects mesh together and contribute to the action being dramatized in the plays. Students should be especially aware of any view of a character that changes in the course of the play: are audience members likely to think one way about a character early in the play but another way when the play finishes? Similarly, a play's spaces, especially its imagined sets, generally work as symbolic environments. They are placed before an audience to make clear the kind of world the play is interested in and to what degree that world is stable and unstable. Of course, "space" must be construed broadly to include not just furniture and the color of the walls

but less physical things such as lighting and sound as well as totally imaginative things such as “place.” With a play that offers multiple sets changing over time, students will be especially interested to see the ways the different sets force audiences to understand what is happening before them. In either case, what each student wants to discover is the contribution to the play made by either the character that has been chosen or by the sets.

Third, armed with knowledge of the play and commentary on it, begin to devise a thesis for the paper. Here, it will be important to avoid the following pitfalls:

- ⇒ A focus on evaluation. Literary analysis seeks understanding, not a quality number. You don’t want to see the grade that results from a thesis such as, “Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* is an important and exciting figure in drama.” Until the *New York Times* hires you as its drama critic, no one cares about your subjective evaluation.
- ⇒ A delay of revealing your thought. If you write a thesis such as, “Analyzing the sets of *The Real Thing* leads to a number of insights about the play,” I will interpret this as meaning that you began writing without a clear idea in your head. Ideas developed on the fly as the paper progresses generally get grounded by low grades. Be specific.
- ⇒ A thesis generally serves as a structure or informal outline of your paper. A thesis should be a road map to all the paper’s ideas. A brilliant thesis ignored by the paper is a waste of intellectual effort. It’s better to come up with a clunky thesis that lays out an organization the paper can follow rather than one that sounds great. A thesis such as this, “The set of O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey* emphasizes the centrality of family to the play but implies a family split by conflicting ideas and confronted by the reality of its own inevitable demise.” Such a thesis suggests the paper will have a section proving that the set is suggestive of family, a section proving that the set reveals intellectual conflict, and a section that proves the set reveals impending and inevitable demise.

Once the thesis is clear to you, I strongly advise you, as a fourth step, to schedule an appointment with me to talk about your idea. Believe it or not, I can from time to time be a source of insights you may find useful. Plus, you’ve paid for my intellectual services. Take advantage of them. Often I can send you to a resource that you’ve missed in your own research.

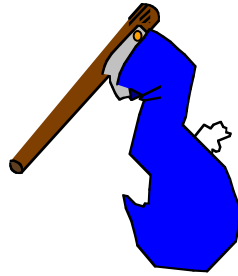
Fifth, once your interpretation is clear, begin to write. Be sure you allow yourself time for revision and editing. I also **STRONGLY** encourage every student to follow the outline that has been developed from the thesis in concert with our individual discussion. Once the paper is written, be sure to check the format requirements of the *MLA Handbook*. These are crucial to your success.

Now the paper is ready for submission. The grade will be determined by the degree of success the paper shows in demonstrating the skills with which this assignment discussion began:

- close reading of a text
- collection and assimilation of research—I MUST see library research.
- focus on either a character or sets
- creative thinking
- logical organizing
- clear writing.
- following the stylistic and grammatical rules of English as laid out by the *MLA Handbook*.

This paper, which should be between 5-10 pages in length, is due no later than 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, March 9**. It may be submitted earlier if you want to give me a hard copy, but if you cannot put a copy in my hand, you should submit an electronic copy as a Microsoft Word

attachment to an e-mail sent to my SHSU e-mail address on this syllabus. Any other type of attachment will be considered a non-submission and the paper penalized for lateness.



# ALTERNATIVE

## **FOR THOSE WHO WANT A MORE CREATIVE OPTION FOR THIS GRADE, HERE IT IS:**

Your job will be to write a one act play of approximately 10-20 minutes in performance time. However, this play must meet some very specific requirements.

First, it must use EITHER a major character or a set from one of the six plays listed above (the ones by Soyinka, Churchill, Stoppard, Nottage, Kushner, or Genet) that is true to its presentation in his or her original play. This will mean that you must select one of these plays to study carefully to be sure you are reflecting what that play presents.

Second, it must include the following in addition to your choice above:

- At least the following characters: your mother, a farmer, and an escapee.
- Take place during or immediately following a natural disaster.
- A dramatic moment that disintegrates into gibberish.
- At least one important prop.
- Must form a complete action (this isn't part of something longer)

Otherwise, all options are open. It may be funny, serious, realistic, fantastic, easy or difficult (but not impossible) to stage, add other characters—just about anything.

Like the analysis papers, these scripts are due for evaluation no later than 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, March 9**. I will grade them, and if any are particularly strong, I will arrange a staged reading for

the class and friends. After that, should New York or Hollywood decide to option your work, I get \$5,000 up front and 10 percent of all grosses for forcing you to write it.

It is important that all scripts follow the standard format on the page for scripts. I offer a model found at <http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/fyi/scriptformat.html>. It is printed on the next two pages and presents all the relevant information.

Beyond that, you need merely to make your writing lively and interesting. Learn from the masters we are reading in class as well as your own reading and play attendance. It will be harder than you think but a lot of fun.



## Sample Script Format

### ACT I

The first stage direction at the beginning of an act or scene should start one tab stop in from the left margin and go all the way across the page. Then skip a line before the character's name which is always capitalized and centered.

#### FIRST CHARACTER NAME

(stage directions after CHARACTER NAME are indented to the second tab stop, placed in parentheses, and single-spaced. There is no line space between CHARACTER NAME and stage direction, and no space between stage direction and dialogue. Note that there is no period at the end of the stage direction)

Hey! This is the dialogue, which begins at the left margin and goes all the way over to the right margin - - - just like this. Lines of dialogue are single-spaced. If you want stage directions within a speech, use the following format.

(indent, without skipping a line just as in the previous direction)

Then continue the speech from the left margin without skipping a line. This format holds true even for one word directions like, say

(pause)

Or even

(beat)

Do you understand?

#### SECOND CHARACTER NAME

Yes, I think so, and I see that you skip a line before the next Character Name. The second character's speech again begins at the left margin and runs the same way.

(with all the stage directions indented, in parentheses, and single-spaced)

When directions: follow a speech, you skip a line before the next CHARACTER NAME

#### FIRST CHARACTER NAME

Now that's just about all you need to know about script format except, of course, that the margins must be one and one-half inches from the left, and one inch from the top, bottom and right sides of the page.

#### SECOND CHARACTER NAME

And you keep going just like this?

#### FIRST CHARACTER NAME

Yes!

Second Character Name

Until the play is done. The end. Finito. Good night!





## Group Project Assignment

Unlike most literary texts that are fixed and unchanging on a published page, a play is part of a collaborative, living process that makes each production a unique interpretation of the written text. This project is designed both to enable students to practice some of the elements of that process and to experience the joys and frustrations of collaborative work.

Once the class begins, students will be divided into two groups and be assigned to work on one of the following plays:

Martin McDonagh, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*  
Martin McDonagh, *A Skull in Connemara*

These two plays are in the assigned McDonagh text. Every student is responsible for reading both plays.

For their assigned play, each group will need to make decisions about the following elements of production:

- set design (how can the descriptions offered in the text be realized in a way that will best facilitate the action that must take place? what will the general "look" be?)
- costume design (what kind of clothes should the actors wear? will you keep the period of the play or alter it? what should clothes signal to the audience about character or some other facet of the play?)
- textual changes (does the play need cutting for either audience endurance or for clarity?)
- casting (what actors or actor-types would work best in the major roles and why?)
- program design (what will the audience be handed as they arrive that will help them start to think about the play as you want them to think?)
- background music (if music is called for in the text, what music should it be? what music should be played between acts or during scene changes)
- directing guidelines (what instructions should the director give to each actor about the way to play his/her character)
- audience reaction (what effect does the production want ideally to achieve on those who watch it? How should this effect be defined in terms of both intellect—what the audience is made to think—and emotions—what the audience is made to feel?)

Then in a presentation to the class, the group must offer to the class:

- a brief summary of the play (realizing that the class is expected to have read it, this should largely be a matter of emphasizing the rhythm of the play, how it builds and climaxes)
- a statement of the general meaning the group feels the play is trying to communicate

- a bibliography of resources consulted in designing the production such as reviews of other productions, literary criticism, comments by the author, historical sources, etc.
- pictures, descriptions, models, mock-ups, sound-bites, etc. for each of the items listed above, explaining during the presentation how these reflect or encourage the interpretation of the play the group has made.
- the presentation of a brief scene from the play that attempts to capture the general feel and sense of the play. The scene may be no more than 7-10 minutes in length.

The exact format for the presentations is up to the group, but it must all be accomplished within 30 minutes. Also, the more creative and entertaining the better. I don't expect professional drawing skills or acting, but I expect that the groups will be lively and rehearsed. I also expect students to have done a close reading of the play and at least some research into its background and commentary.

Part of the process is learning how to manage all these tasks, how to organize the work. I encourage each group to appoint or elect a leader who can let me know if anyone is failing to participate. You'll have to work around everyone's schedules, but this should prove a fun part of the course.

**In addition to the oral presentation**, the group must submit to me in writing (typed, double-spaced of course):

- a one page (maximum) statement of the meaning of the play arrived at by the group and the basic reasoning the group used to arrive at this meaning.
- a one or two page description of the work done by individuals in the group (example: Bill and Sally came up with the costume ideas; Bill hunted down photos of some costumes in magazines while Sally sketched drawings).

Everyone in the group will receive the same grade (unless the group reports that one or two members offered no contribution), and that grade will be determined by

- the clarity of the interpretation.
- the degree to which the production elements support the interpretation.
- the thoroughness of the justifications for each production element.
- the degree of intellectual interest encouraged by the presentation.

I strongly encourage students to take these presentations seriously. Read the play carefully, and do research (for brownie points, you could always turn in a bibliography). You can even ask questions of the professor. Groups should plan on at least **two** sessions outside of class to discuss the play, lay out responsibilities, and be sure each member of the group is carrying his/her load. Such sessions are difficult to schedule, but they are necessary.

Presentations will take place on **Thursday, April 5**. Be prepared for unexpected emergencies within the groups as the date **cannot be rescheduled**.