

HL 3006 : Modern Drama

This subject will trace a line of development throughout modern drama from realism and naturalism to absurdism and post-modernist theatre. Among others, dramatists will include Strindberg, Ibsen, Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett, Churchill, and Shepherd as well as contemporary Singaporean dramatist Kuo Pao Kun. In addition to understanding how changing theatrical trends embody changing epistemological, ontological and ideological attitudes, students will also develop a powerful comparative appreciation of the interconnected evolution of Asian and Western drama.

1. Core Texts:

Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*.

Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*

All other texts will be available on NTUlearn

2. Films:

(held in the library and to be screened in class)

Mike Figgis's *Miss Julie*, from the play by Strindberg.

Krapp's Last Tape, from the play by Beckett.

Method of Instruction

Lectures : 2 hours per week

Tutorials : 1 hour per week

Course Assessment

Continuous Assessment : 50%

Final Examination : 50 %

100%

A.

Proposal for the short Essay: This 400 word proposal (Due Tuesday Sept. 10) will make the case that the subject you are interested in is worthy of an essay. It should contain a research question related to one of the course readings, a brief answer to that question (including a tentative thesis statement), and some suggestion as to the relevant scenes (and characters) that you would focus on in the essay. These are not marked. However, late proposals will not be accepted – and students will lose 10% off their Final Essay Grade.

Essay Conference: In this conference, I will return your proposal – and we will discuss possible ways forward for your essay. If you miss your conference it will not be rescheduled – and you will lose 10% off your Final Essay Grade. Tardiness = Absence, as I have to keep to a schedule.

Final Essay: This 1800 word (lower limit) essay (Due Friday, Nov. 15) must defend an original thesis about one of the works read in class – and do so by reflecting on secondary material about the play and/or the author of the play. You must use at least 4 secondary sources. Please submit a hard copy – and also submit through turn-it-in – in NTUlearn.

B. The Final Examination will consist of two essays worth equal points.

****Warning** Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in automatic failure of the course.**

| Lecturer | Office Room No. | E-mail Address |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
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Proposed Lecture Schedule

| Week No. | Topics | Readings |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Week 1 August 13 | Course Introduction | David Ives, <i>Variations on the Death of Trotsky</i> |
| Week 2 August 20 | Introduction to the Variety of Dramatic Form Early Modern Drama | August Strindberg, <i>Miss Julie</i> |
| Week 3 August 27 | Realism, Naturalism, and Objectivity | Henrick Ibsen, <i>Hedda Gabler</i> |
| Week 4 September 3 | American Realism | Eugene O’Neil, <i>The Great God Brown --</i> |
| Week 5 September 10 | Anti-realism | Luigi Pirandello, <i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i> |
| Week 6 September 17 | Absurdist Drama | Samuel Beckett, <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> |
| Week 7 September 24 | Research Interviews – No Seminar | |
| Week 8 Oct 1 | <i>Recess</i> | |
| Week 9 October 8 | The Epic Theatre | Bertolt Brecht, <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i> |
| Week 10 October 15 | Brecht’s Continuing Influence | Caryl Churchill, <i>Top Girls</i> |
| Week 11 October 22 | Postmodern Theatre? | Edward Albee, “The Sandbox” |
| Week 12 October 29 | Black Comedy and the Avant-Garde | Sam Shepard, <i>True West.</i> |
| Week 13 November 5 | The Rise of the One-Act | Wendy Wasserstein, <i>Tender Offer</i> [one act], Kuo Pao Kun, “No Parking on Odd Days” |

| Week No. | Topics | Readings |
|------------------------|--------------|---|
| Week 14 November 12 | Other Voices | Milcha Sanchez Scott, <i>The Cuban Swimmer</i> , Luis Valdez, <i>Los</i> <i>Vendidos</i> [one act] |