Course Description

We'll be studying plays and short stories with particular emphasis on how the form of a literary work contributes to its meaning. We'll look at the dynamic relationship between form and content and explore some of the particularities and problems associated with generic designations. We'll also be examining productions and adaptations of these texts in order to complicate our understanding of genre.

The primary concern of the course is to facilitate close reading and analysis in class discussion and written assignments. Students are required to read critically and carefully and come to class prepared to discuss the works.

Required Texts

Albee, Edward. Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
Brecht, Bertold. Good Woman of Setzuan
Shakespeare, William. A Merchant of Venice
Skaggs, Calvin. The American Short Story, vol. 1
Skaggs, Calvin. The American Short Story, vol. 2
Wilde, Oscar. The Importance of Being Earnest
Course Pack

Assignments

2 essays the first worth 20% (1500 words, double spaced), the second worth 45% (2,000 words, double spaced): For the first, I will provide a topic list (as opposed to a thesis statement) that you may select from if you wish. The second will require your own thought for both topic and thesis. For both essays I will ask you to compare one play and one short story. I expect you to move beyond plot issues and concentrate on craft – explore how the authors achieve the particular effects you are discussing. The final essays will be marked and available for pick-up on or after December 14 in the English Department Mailroom (HH 229). All submissions made outside class time should be made to my box in the mailroom – not my office!

Journal 20%: Every week I expect a journal entry of at least 500 words. The entry will address questions from the discussion list and will be handed in the last day of each discussion section. The journal will be marked on both completion and thought – formal essay style is not required. They will be marked (with a check or a minus) and returned. The complete package will be handed in with the final paper. This is an all or nothing deal: if you keep up and hand in everything (and indicate that you’ve actually read the stuff) it’s an easy 20 marks. Fall behind and you’ll be writing hack entries while you are finishing your final paper.

Quizzes 15%: I will administer a series of quizzes to test whether or not you have read the texts. No trick questions – I just want to know if you are keeping up on your reading

Academic Offences (and other unpleasantness): The faculty of arts requires me to politely let you know that
All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with policy #71 (student academic discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of any aspect of discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

To briefly expand on one point: plagiarism is “the act of presenting ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one’s own.” Make everything easy for all of us and remember to cite all your sources.

**Schedule (Tentative)**

**September**
- 11- Welcome, syllabus, course requirements
- 13- Genres: an introduction to Drama and Short Story
- 18- Poe, “Fall of the House of Usher”
- 20- Kafka, “The Hunger Artist”
- 25- Merchant of Venice
- 27- Merchant of Venice

**October**
- 2- Merchant of Venice
- 4-- Fitzgerald, “Bernice Bobs her Hair”
- 9- O’Connor, “The Displaced Person”
- 11- The Importance of Being Earnest
- 16- Paper 1 - The Importance of Being Earnest
- 18- Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia”
- 23- Faulkner, “Barn Burning”
- 25- Hawthorne, “Rappaccini’s Daughter”
- 30- The Good Woman of Setzuan

**November**
- 1- The Good Woman of Setzuan
- 6- Twain, “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg”
- 8- Crane, “Blue Hotel”
- 13- Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
- 15- Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
- 20- Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
- 22- Hemingway, “A Clean, Well Lighted Place”
- 29- Paper 2 – Bartheleme concluded; final remarks

**Film Presentation Schedule**

All films presented in AL 208 from 6 – 8 p.m.

**September**
- 21 – Merchant of Venice

**October**
- 5 – The Importance of Being Earnest
- 26 – Major Barbara

**November**
- 9 – Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
English 102A  The Major Forms of Literature: Short Stories and Drama – Essay 1

Topic List

Choose any one of the 3 broad topics below, then select one play and one short story from the course list from which to argue. Develop a position (thesis; opinion; stand; resolute view; etc.) on the topic and then go about logically proving your point in formal essay style. Remember to always ask how the artists are achieving the effects you claim. Feel free (hint! hint!) to consult critical sources to bolster your argument. You may use any citation system you wish, but be consistent and provide a works cited list. Please come see me and clear your thesis!!! – It’s best to head problems off before they affect your mark.

*When writing a formal, academic essay be sure to avoid certain “high-school” mistakes:
  ● Provide a clear and direct intro paragraph that addresses your texts. Avoid generalizations (i.e. “Throughout the history of humankind no concept has been more important than justice.”). Your intro should serve three functions: introduce the topic; deliver your thesis statement; outline the points you intend to use to prove your thesis.
  ● Your thesis statement should direct your paper. The thesis is the stand you take on the topic, so make sure that each of your points clearly relate to it.
  ● Don’t force a 5-paragraph structure. If it takes more or less to prove your point, so be it. Take whatever is needed.
  ● Avoid the first person (“I think”; “We can see”; “In my opinion”); colloquialism (common, or ‘low’ speech); contractions (don’t; aren’t); beginning sentences with conjunctions (But; And); over-use of cohesive markers (Therefore; However)
  ● Don’t force a ‘topic wrap’ from paragraph to paragraph.

Topics:

How does the setting of the text (for example: The exotic location of Venice; the timeless space in The hunger artist; the poverty of the displaced person; or the decadence of Usher, Bernice and Earnest) contribute to any of the themes?

How do the work’s genres effect the characterization? - I.e. what techniques unique the play and short story do the artists use to develop the particular characters?

What techniques do the artists use to represent power relations between the characters? Choose a form of power on which to concentrate (class, race, gender, etc.) and trace how the relationships in each work are developed. Take note of how the form of the text constrains how power is represented.