



## Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

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**Semester:** Spring

**Course Prefix:** ENGL

**Course Title:** Study of Genres: Drama

**Year:** 2025

**Course and Section #:** 412R-X01

**Credits:** 3

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### *Course Description*

This course will cover the history of drama, with a primary focus on 20th-century works, particularly the emergence of Theater of the Absurd in response to Stage Realism, theater for social change, and the shift from distinct genres (Comedy, Tragedy) to tragicomedy. This is a literature course rather than a creative writing workshop, but two creative exercises are assigned to help students engage with the genre instead of merely learning about and reporting on it, and the Final Exam for the semester allows students to choose to do an Alternative Creative Project instead.

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### *Course Attributes*

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

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### *Instructor Information*

**Instructor Name:** Professor Rob Carney, PhD

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### *Student Learning Outcomes*

**Objectives:** This course is intended to:

- 1) familiarize you with the evolution of drama from Ancient Greece to now;
- 2) familiarize you with some major plays by major playwrights;
- 3) introduce you to contemporary, living writers whose work seems, to varying degrees, influenced by and/or parting with past trends;
- 4) identify cultural, social, and historical background of the dramatic texts covered;
- 5) identify cultural, social, and historical importance of the texts studied;
- 6) deepen your understanding and appreciation of one major 20<sup>th</sup>-century playwright through further reading and creating a group presentations for the class;

- 7) broaden your knowledge of another four major 20<sup>th</sup>-century plays/playwrights as a result of others' group presentations;
- 8) increase your analytical/evaluative skills through *discussion of* and *writing about* drama;
- 9) find trends, themes, values, visions, etc. explored by selected plays/playwrights;
- 10) get you to keep reading (and, ideally, attending) plays long after this semester is over.

## ***Course Materials and Texts***

### **Required Texts:**

Since much of the work we'll cover is available online, I've decided to give you links and/or pdfs to as much of it as I can. Still, you'll need to buy four (or five) actual physical books. For those, I'm listing the ISBNs of my personal copies. But several print editions may exist, so buy whichever used copies you like. You can buy new, of course, but new books don't cost a dollar like many of the available used copies do. Or you can use libraries (free).

- Lorraine Hansberry. *A Raisin in the Sun*. Vintage Books: pbk. 2004. ISBN-10: 0-679-75533-0.
- August Wilson. *The Piano Lesson*. Plume: pbk 1990. ISBN-13: 9780452265349.
- Samuel Beckett. *Waiting for Godot*. Grove Press: pbk. 1982. ISBN-10: 0-8021-3034-8.
- Martin McDonagh. *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Vintage: pbk. 1998. ISBN-10: 0375705236.

Also, as I say in Announcement 2, if you want a book that covers the whole history of the genre, one that also includes complete texts of landmark plays, reviews of some of them, essays about some of them, and other supplemental writing about theater history and/or theory, then *Drama: Classical to Contemporary: Revised Edition*, edited by Coldewey and Streitberger, is a good one to start with. For our purposes, it seems to me more than necessary, but you may have purposes and interests of your own, you may want more, you may want timelines and definitions and so on, and this book has those. Plus, having more books is never a bad idea. Try eBay, for instance, since it usually has multiple copies; and an engine-search can no doubt lead you to others.

## ***Course Requirements***

### **Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**

**Grading:** NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED.

A = 4.0	B+ = 3.33	B- = 2.67	C = 2.0	D+ = 1.33	D- = 0.67
A- = 3.67	B = 3.0	C+ = 2.33	C- = 1.67	D = 1.0	E = 0.0

Given that we're doing things online rather than in person, much of your work will be graded all-or-nothing, A-or-Zero. And the majority of it will be informal and/or creative rather than formal essays. But formal essays aren't the only possible indicator of understanding and clear expression.

### **Two things I want to highlight:**

First, I will assign letter grades to the Group Presentation and Final instead of grading these in the same all-or-nothing/pass-fail way as the eight Tasks. Second, if you look at the math below, you'll think I've miscounted or done one of those weird things like in sports where

athletes and coaches talk about giving 110%. I haven't. I've just eliminated the need for anyone to ever ask me for a do-over or extra credit, or worry about final grades and complain that a (possible) low score on a single Task will ruin your GPA or etc. Here's what I mean: Let's say you just skip doing one of the seven Tasks, or can't do it because of health reasons or an emergency. You could still get 100 out of 100%. Let's say further that you do poorly on the Final and get a C-. That's still a 1.67; so if you get an A (4.0) x 7 Tasks, and an A (4.0) on the Group Presentation, along with that C- (3.34 because it's weighted twice as much) on the Final, then you'd have 35.34. Divide that by 10 assignments, and it = 3.53, between a B+ and an A- for the course, and there's a good chance I'd round that up rather than down. This isn't because I'm easy. I just don't see any upside in giving you a low grade if you show me that you're reading, thinking, and articulating as well as I know you can.

Descriptions/details for all of the following are provided in the CANVAS Assignments tab:

- Task 1. 10%—Scene Without Words (and commenting on each other's work).
- Task 2. 10%—Monologue, 1 to 3 minutes (and commenting on each other's work).
- Task 3. 10%—Response to Glaspell (and to each other's comments).
- Task 4. 10%—Theater for Social Change 1: Response to Ionesco & Valdez (and to each other's comments).
- Task 5. 10%—Theater for Social Change 2: Response to Hansberry & Wilson (and to each other's comments).
- Task 6. 10%—Defining “Tragicomic/Tragicomedy” (and commenting on each other's definitions).
- Task 7. 10%—Responses to each other's Group Presentations.
- Group Presentation. 20%—(See list below). Read the “GroupPresentationSpecifics” attached for instructions.
- Comprehensive Final. 20%—EITHER a 5- to 6-page analytical essay, OR the [Alternative Creative Option](#) (see the attachment).

**Authors for Further Reading:** You'll choose one and work in a group of five:

- GROUP 1: Eugene Ionesco, *Rhinoceros*, which is about the most straightforward play this Absurdist playwright wrote, seems nuts-o fun to try to stage, and is an allegorical warning about conformity.
- GROUP 2: Martin MacDonagh, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, which satirizes violence and reprisal violence while being wicked bloody crazy and hilarious.
- GROUP 3: Beth Henley, *Crimes of the Heart*, which is not the sort of plot you would guess is funny (but it is) or the sort of sisters you would describe as sisterly (but they are).
- GROUP 4: August Wilson, *Two Trains Running*, which tricks you, I promise, in a lot of great ways because Hambone (with his one or two lines, repeated seemingly mindlessly) turns out to be speaking the real truth for Risa, Sterling, Memphis, Black Americans throughout history, and the audience as well.
- GROUP 5: Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*; yes, as in Wolfgang, but this play inverts our protagonist/antagonist expectations and is presented so brilliantly that it's worth it just to read the stage directions and imagine how the playwright, director, actors, and stage crew pull it off.

If you're counting, that makes three playwrights whose work we will know a bit about already and two who are new. One is African-American, one of them a woman, one British, one Irish,

one Romanian (who began at the age of 40 and as an expatriate in Paris). One is a major figure in the Theater of the Absurd, another is expanding our ideas about tragicomedy. And have awards been won by these playwrights? Big-time, including more than one Pulitzer Prize, plus eight or so Oscars (for the screen adaptation starring F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce). Therefore, a representative variety, and works that have received gobs of critical acclaim.

What should you do exactly? Please see the “[GroupPresentationSpecifics](#)” attachment for details (it's also hyperlinked several times in the Syllabus/Calendar below). Similarly, you can find the details in the [Assignments](#) tab.

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## Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

### **Reading/Discussion Schedule and Due Dates:**

**NOTE: I AM PROVIDING YOU WITH A SERIES OF 5-MINUTE MINI-LECTURES FOR CONTEXT AND DELIVERING THEM VIA THE ANNOUNCEMENTS TAB PRETTY FREQUENTLY, SO LOOK FOR AND LISTEN TO THOSE EACH WEEK. THINGS'LL MAKE A LOT LESS SENSE IF YOU DO NOT.**

Also, it should go without saying, but I'll say so anyway to be clear: Down below, where you see "Read \_\_\_\_\_," usually on Tuesdays, that doesn't mean you have to wait until then to start reading it, and ideally you will have finished it before that day because that's when I'd like you to begin posting your answers to Tasks in the Discussions.

Verb tenses can seem odd on a calendar, though. For ex., I suppose I could have said, "Have finished reading \_\_\_\_\_" on specific dates instead, but then maybe you'd wonder why I didn't say "Start reading \_\_\_\_\_" on an earlier date. Anyway, I know you know this already, but the class preparation and reading in advance of the Discussions is up to you all, okay?

### **Week 1**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 1: So Much Drama)

**T (1/7)**—Read this whole scrolling Syllabus + “[Puberty: A Dramatic Sketch.](#)”

(And you should keep this play/.doc file as a model for how to format one-acts, assuming you might want to opt for the Creative Alternative to the Final at the end of the semester.) **Also, I need your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices for Group Presentations, so you need to email me with those choices today.**

**R (1/9)**—TASK 1: Scene Without Words due by 6 pm. Begin posting your Scene Without Words and doing class discussion from noon today until 6 pm Friday (1/10).

### **Week 2**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 2: Talk About Plot; and ANNOUNCEMENT 3: Medieval Meets Modern)

**T (1/14)**—TASK 2: Monologue, 1 to 3 minutes, due by 6 pm. Begin posting your Monologues and doing class discussion from noon today until 6 pm Friday (1/17). **Also, if I don't yet have your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices for Group Presentations, you need to email me with those choices *muy pronto*.**

### **Week 3**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 4: Glaspell)

**T (1/21)**—Read “Trifles” (link to play provided). **TASK 3: Response to Glaspell due by 6 pm. Begin posting your Response to Glaspell and doing class discussion from noon today until 6 pm Friday (1/24).**

#### **Week 4**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 5: Ionesco)

**T (1/28)**—Read “The Leader” (link to play provided).

Plus, two other things: First, just as Dadaism was a movement in response to WWI, Theater of the Absurd seems influenced by WWII (as well as by the limitations of, or disinterest in, stage realism), so maybe you will like these short videos about Dadaism. Second, rather than *discuss* like philosophy, theater *enacts*. But the enacted moods/anxieties/ideas make me think you might like [some quick notes about Existentialism](#) [Download some quick notes about Existentialism](#)

(3 links provided)

#### **Week 5**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 6: Valdez)

**T (2/4)**—Read “Los Vendidos”: [Text of play as pdf](#)

. **TASK 4: Theater for Social Change 1 due by 6 pm. Begin posting your comments and doing class discussion from noon today until 6 pm Friday (2/7).**

#### **Week 6**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 7: Hansberry)

**T (2/11)**—Read Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*.

**R-F (2/13-14)**—Ideally, you’ve read your play by now for the Group Presentation project, and you’ll have begun discussing your thoughts about it together as a group and even planning your approach to the presentation, including divvying up the tasks, etc.

[NOTE: If anyone wants a good documentary/biography about Hansberry to watch on your own, my suggestion is a DVD titled *Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes, Feeling Heart*.]

#### **Week 7**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 8: Wilson)

**T (2/18)**—Read August Wilson’s *The Piano Lesson*. **TASK 5: Theater for Social Change 2 due by 6 pm. Begin posting your comments and doing class discussion from noon today until 6 pm Friday (2/21).**

#### **Week 8**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 9: Beckett; and ANNOUNCEMENT 10: Stoppard)

**T (2/25)**—Read Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*. With that on the agenda, and with other tragicomedies coming up next, I thought it might help to have this [definition of tragicomedy](#) [Download definition of tragicomedy](#) from a poet and also these [notes toward a working definition](#) [Download notes toward a working definition](#) from me.

**W (2/26)**—Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Here’s a link to the film adaptation online: [R&G Are Dead](#). [Links to an external site.](#)

**R-F (2/27-28)**—Ideally, you’ll meet (online or offline) as groups to go over organizing and polishing your Group Presentation project since those begin rolling out soon after Fall Break.

### **Week 9**

(Be sure to listen to ANNOUNCEMENT 11: McDonagh)

**T (3/4)**—Read Martin MacDonagh’s *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. TASK 6: Define “Tragicomedy” (& explain why it’s effective), due by 6 pm. Begin posting your comments and doing class discussion from noon today until 6 pm Friday (3/7).

### **Week 10**

TWRF (3/11-14)—SPRING BREAK.

### **Week 11**

**T (3/18)**—Group Presentation 1: Eugene Ionesco. This should be posted by noon so that your peers can see your work and give you comments (TASK 7) between noon and 6 pm Friday (3/21).

[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#)  
[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#)

### **Week 12**

**I will be presenting at a national conference: MTWRF, 3/24-3/28. Therefore, no class this week.**

### **Week 13**

**T (4/1)**—Group Presentation 2: Martin MacDonagh. This should be posted by noon so that your peers can see your work and give you comments (TASK 7) between noon and 6 pm Friday (4/4).

[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#)  
[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#)

### **Week 14**

**T (4/8)**—Group Presentation 3: Beth Henley. This should be posted by noon so that your peers can see your work and give you comments (TASK 7) between noon and 6 pm Friday (4/11).

[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#)  
[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#)

### **Week 15**

**M (4/14)**—Group Presentation 4: August Wilson. This should be posted by noon so that your peers can see your work and give you comments (TASK 7) between noon and 6 pm Friday (4/18).

[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#)  
[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#)

**W (4/16)**—Group Presentation 5: Peter Shaffer. This should be posted by noon so that your peers can see your work and give you comments (TASK 7) between noon and 6 pm Friday (4/18).

[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.doc](#)  
[GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#) Download [GroupPresentationSpecifics-412R.pdf](#)

### **Week 16**

**T (4/22)**—**Last Day of Class.** Therefore, FINAL EXAMS/ONE-ACTS are due as uploads (or to my email in-box) no later than 6 p.m. today.

[412R-Final.doc Download 412R-Final.doc](#)

[412R-Final.pdf Download 412R-Final.pdf](#)

[412R-Final\(CreativeOption\).doc Download 412R-Final\(CreativeOption\).doc](#)

[412R-Final\(CreativeOption\).pdf Download 412R-Final\(CreativeOption\).pdf](#)

### **FINALS WEEK (RFMT 4/24 to 4/29): "Standing O's"**

Give some shout-outs and praises about what's great in each other's Final Projects. There's a place in the Discussions to post these and read each other's work, and it'll be open until 6 pm Thursday (4/29). If at all possible, you should hear back from me about your Final Project grade once I've had a chance to do that grading, maybe even by Friday or sooner (that's my goal, at least, so that you see your grade for the semester before CANVAS closes). And remember that CANVAS might be showing your course grade incorrectly right now since it doesn't understand that I have 10 points of built in forgiveness/extra credit. Meaning, if your grade isn't an A already, according to the bot-system code lines, that doesn't necessarily mean that it won't be an A once I'm done with final grades, okay? (See "Grading" above.)

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### **General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion**

See weekly parentheticals and/or explications listed above.

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## ***Required Course Syllabus Statements***

### **Generative AI**

#### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism involves dishonesty; it is the theft of another's intellectual property. Plagiarism occurs when 1) students buy papers, hire others to write papers for them, or simply allow or request someone to write a paper for them and then claim the work is their own; or 2) students copy, quote, paraphrase, or summarize a source without properly documenting it. Any course work that is found to violate UVU's standards of academic honesty will be dealt with as laid out in the college's statement on "Student Rights and Responsibilities." Please read these standards and the consequences for violating them. Be aware that plagiarism is a violation of both college policy and the policy of this course. **Plagiarism is an impediment to your education and to the educational mission of UVU [and so is trying to "shortcut" critical thinking and good writing by having a bot or algorithm eat the reading and then "write" an answer for you].** Under the policy of the ENGL, plagiarized work must receive a failing grade. A distinction is made between unintentionally plagiarized work, which must be corrected in order to be considered for a passing grade, and intentional plagiarism, which will result in an F for this course and be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Student Life as a disciplinary matter in accordance with UVU's statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities. **And I'll add a note of caution here too about trying to use an autobot to do your assignments. They won't get it right, I promise, and they won't sound like you. Plus, you won't learn to write (or write better), and people can tell if an autobot is subbing in for you on the work required and even use spotter tools, if need be, to prove it. So using ChatGPT etc. isn't a shortcut (or a win) whatever way you look at it.**

Please refer to [www.uvu.edu/english/student/plagiarism.html](http://www.uvu.edu/english/student/plagiarism.html) to read the department's full statement on plagiarism and review guidelines for avoiding plagiarism.

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### **Using Remote Testing Software**

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

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## ***Required University Syllabus Statements***

### **Accommodations/Students with Disabilities**

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](mailto:DHHservices@uvu.edu)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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### **Academic Integrity**

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).



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## **Equity and Title IX**

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – [TitleIX@uvu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@uvu.edu) – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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## **Religious Accommodation**

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu). If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.