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### **Course Objectives**

- To study selected plays of modern dramatic literature (1875-present) that pose moral problems for the characters
- To investigate in these plays, and especially in their characters, issues of race, ethnicity, religion, and gender, as well as other concerns that create or compromise the moral life as it is experienced in the modern world
- To enhance the literary and theatrical study of this dramatic literature by drawing upon complementary or rival perspectives, including the historical, psychological, philosophical, and theological, as well as the always helpful view of the fine arts
- To identify and understand better the personal values each reader or audience member brings to his or her judgment of a play or a character
- To develop analytical, oral, and writing skills
- To strengthen the listening and viewing skills of a practiced audience member through readings and performances

### **Required Texts**

Bennett, Alan. The History Boys. New York: Penguin, 2006.

Brecht, Bertolt. The Good Woman of Setzuan. Tr. Eric Bentley. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999.

Churchill, Caryl. Top Girls. London: Methuen, 2005.

Dorfman, Ariel. Death and the Maiden. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Fugard, Athol. "Master Harold" . . . and the boys. New York: Penguin, 1984.

Glaspell, Susan. Trifles. Handout.

Ibsen, Henrik. Ghosts and Other Plays. Tr. Peter Watts. London: Penguin, 1964.

Kaufman, Moises, and the members of Tectonic Theater Project. The Laramie Project. New York: Vintage, 2001.

Miller, Arthur. All My Sons. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Shaw, Bernard. Major Barbara. London: Penguin, 2000.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Journal**

Each student will keep an electronic journal of her or his weekly reactions to the readings and videos for the course, writing at least 250 words each week for a total of 14 responses. Each of the 10 plays will be addressed at least once. One response will review a Moravian College Theatre Company performance of The Laramie Project. (Students are required to attend a performance of the play, which runs April 13-16.) The other 3 responses will give some plays a second thought. Each response will be e-mailed to student colleagues in the course and to the instructor at any time during a given week but no later than midnight on Saturday. Each response can earn 5 points (one point each for being on time, being at least 250 words long [include a word-count at the end of each response], focussing on a specific moral issue, including a relevant reference to the text, and demonstrating thoughtful consideration) for a total of 70 points. At the end of the semester, on April 28, the entire journal and a 500-word concluding essay (worth 30 points) reflecting on a personal moral position or positions that have been strengthened, questioned, and/or changed through journals written, read, or discussed in class will be compiled and submitted to the instructor in hard (paper) copy form for a grade worth 20% of the final grade.

### **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be a feature of most class meetings. Each class member will sign-up for a class meeting on which to serve as “quizmeister.” The quizmeister will prepare, administer, and grade a five-question quiz on the assigned reading for the day and, no later than the next class meeting, submit to the course instructor a copy of the quiz questions and correct answers, the list of quiz scores, and the graded quiz sheets. Quiz questions may be posed in a variety of forms: identification, multiple-choice, true-or-false, fill-in-the-blank, or short-answer. They may be projected on a screen for the quiz administration, read aloud to the class, or duplicated and distributed to the class. The average of quiz scores will count as 20% of each student’s final grade, so quizmeisters are expected to prepare testing instruments that are substantive and fair and to administer and grade them responsibly.

Each quizmeister will also be responsible for offering a brief interdisciplinary insight on the play under consideration. An interdisciplinary insight will be an idea about or understanding of some aspect of the play from the perspective of a discipline other than literary analysis or theater study.

## **Mid-term Examination**

A mid-term examination on February 27 will be worth 20% of the final grade. There will be no final examination.

### **Paper**

A research paper dealing with a moral issue in a play studied for the course will be due on April 16. Each student will identify three critical essays addressing the issue. One of the three critical essays may be a theater review. The citation (in MLA format, as it will appear on the works-cited page of the finished draft of the research paper) and a brief summary (100 words) of one critical essay will be due on February 6, a second on March 12, and a third on April 9. Using the three critical essays as a base and two additional sources, a student will develop a paper that discusses the moral issue in question. The final paper will be 8-10 word-processed, double-spaced pages in length, including documentation in the MLA format, and will count as 20% of the final grade.

### **Visual or Critical Analysis of a Character**

Each student will choose a character from the play under consideration at the class meeting to which the student has committed on the sign-up sheet circulated for the purpose of scheduling oral presentations. The student will present orally to the class

- **either** a visual analysis of the nature, behavior, moods, motives, feelings, etc., of that character in facing a moral crisis, using a non-representational painting to illustrate the analysis
- **or** a critical analysis of the character based on what the character says, what he or she does, and what other characters and the playwright say about the character.

The visual or critical analysis should not exceed 15 minutes. A companion essay—two word-processed, double-spaced pages of written analysis summarizing the oral presentation—will be submitted to the instructor immediately following the oral presentation. The student will conclude the activity with a practiced reading of a speech by the character, selected for its illustrative and/or revelatory significance. This activity will be worth 20% of the final grade.

### **Grading**

The final grade will, in general, be computed according to the percentages noted above. Late work will be penalized. Missed quizzes cannot be re-scheduled, but a mathematical adjustment will be applied if a quiz is missed for a valid, documented reason (a medical or family emergency or a college-related commitment approved by the instructor by prior arrangement). A mid-term examination missed for a valid, documented reason may be

re-scheduled at the discretion of the instructor. Since students are expected to attend class regularly, absences will be noted and will negatively affect a final grade. In addition to formal oral presentations, contributions to class discussions and participation in other class activities will be considered in assigning the final grade. The instructor will apply both quantitative and qualitative judgments in determining grades for individual assignments and for the course.

Grading equivalents:

A+	98	B+	88	C+	78	D+	68
A	95	B	85	C	75	D	65
A-	92	B-	82	C-	72	D-	62
						F	55

### **Academic Honesty**

Students in this course should refer to the statement on academic honesty at Moravian College in the current *Student Handbook*. It is also available online at <http://www.moravian.edu/StudentLife/handbook/academic2.htm>

Students must retain copies of all written work submitted to the instructor, as well as all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments. These are to be made available for inspection by the instructor at any time.

Questions about appropriate collaboration, proper documentation, and other honesty issues can be confusing. If in doubt, ask the instructor.

### **N.B.**

- This syllabus, including the schedule of readings, written assignments, and examinations that follows, is subject to change.
- To be successful, students should expect to work at least six hours per week outside of class preparing for this class.
- Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Services Office as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

## Schedule of Readings, Written Assignments, and Examinations for English 361

- Jan.**    **14** Introduction to the course  
           **16** Trifles (handout); quiz  
  
           **23** Ghosts, Introduction, pp 10-12, & Act I; quiz  
  
           **28** Ghosts, Acts II-III; quiz  
           **30** Major Barbara, Introduction, Preface & Act I; quiz
- Feb.**    **04** Major Barbara, Act II; quiz  
           **06** Major Barbara, Act III; quiz; **1<sup>st</sup> critical summary due**  
  
           **11** Good Woman of Setzuan, Preface, Comments, Prologue & Scenes 1-4a; quiz  
           **13** Good Woman of Setzuan, Scenes 5-10 & Epilogue; quiz  
  
           **18** All My Sons, Introduction & Act I; quiz  
           **20** All My Sons, Act II; quiz  
  
           **25** All My Sons, Act III; quiz  
           **27** **Mid-term examination**
- Mar.**    **10** Laramie Project, Introductory material, pp v-xiv, & Act I; quiz  
           **12** Laramie Project, Act II; quiz; **2<sup>nd</sup> critical summary due**  
  
           **17** Laramie Project, Act III; quiz  
           **19** “Master Harold”. . . and the boys, read entire play; quiz  
  
           **26** “Master Harold”. . . and the boys, discussion continues  
  
           **31** Top Girls, Commentary & Act I; quiz
- Apr.**    **02** Top Girls, Acts II-III; quiz  
  
           **07** Death and the Maiden, Acts I-II; quiz  
           **09** Death and the Maiden, Act III; quiz; **3<sup>rd</sup> critical summary due**  
  
           **14** History Boys, Act I; quiz  
           **16** History Boys, Act II; quiz; **research paper due**  
  
           **21** History Boys, Introduction  
           **23** Conclusions

**Journal responses are due electronically by Jan. 19 & 26; Feb. 2, 9, 16 & 23; Mar. 1, 15, 22 & 29; and Apr. 5, 12, 19 & 26. Hard copies of responses and the final essay are due by Apr. 28 in Zinzendorf 306.**

**A visual or critical analysis of a character (oral presentation and accompanying paper) is due on the date for which a student signed-up.**