

ENG 399 Fall 2009
One Voice: Monologue in 20th Century Drama
Monday/Wednesday 6B 2:35-3:45 PPHAC/103

Instructor: Mrs. Nicole Tabor

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 10:00A-12:00 and by appointment

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“...The monologue communicates directly with all of society; in theatre, the whole stage becomes the monologist’s discursive partner. In fact, the monologue addresses the spectator directly as an accomplice and a watcher-hearer. In direct communication lies both the strength and the improbability and weakness of the monologue.”
- Patrice Pavis, critic

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this class we will closely read twentieth-century plays with significant attention to the form and function of monologues. We will discuss the monologue’s role in dialogic plays as well as texts composed entirely from monologues. It will be useful to historicize these texts in order to consider how the monologue helps us make sense of developments in identity and subjectivity. Each text’s monologues will illuminate a new way of seeing unique to its period in time. Some of these plays will allow us to read backward into theatre history. For example, Kushner’s didactic aims owe much to Brecht’s Epic Theatre. The course’s more recent texts reflect the enormous contributions of women and people of color to the dramatic monologue. Exploring these questions of identity will complicate the relationship between page and stage. If, as Pavis claims, “the whole stage becomes the monologists discursive partner” then as *readers* how might we negotiate our relationship to the virtual stage? Our readings, discussions, and writing assignments will offer the opportunity to develop answers to these and more questions. Writing especially will provide the chance to develop your own line of inquiry regarding specific texts.

COURSE GOALS:

- Develop a sophisticated vocabulary of key terms to discuss and write about monologues
- Identify foundational texts in order to situate twentieth century monologues within a larger historical tradition
- Deepen our understanding and appreciation of multicultural contributions to the monologue form
- Design and implement an intellectually substantial research project drawing on original argumentation, writing, and research
- Develop innovative strategies to substantiate our claims utilizing monologues as textual evidence
- Utilize life experiences to make connections between the monologue form’s single speaker, character development, and identity formation

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. *The Longman Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Drama: A Global Perspective*
by Greenwald, Pomo, Schultz, and Welsh
2. *Hamlet* (The New Folger Library Shakespeare)
3. *Collected Shorter Plays of Samuel Beckett*
4. *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*
by Ntozake Shange
5. *Fires in the Mirror* by Anna Deavere Smith

ASSIGNMENTS

PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE:

First Essay	20
Second Essay	25
Final Exam	15
Reading Responses	20
Oral Presentations	10
Class Participation	10

ESSAYS: You are required to compose two argumentative essays. The first essay will be 4-6 pages and the final essay will be 10-12 pages in length. You will develop the final essay from an abstract and rough draft. These essays will be thesis-driven and follow MLA guidelines. Essays will be evaluated primarily on the quality of your ideas and the thoroughness of your critical argument (including appropriate citations of the text). Organizational, grammatical, and other writing matters will, however, also affect your grade. We will discuss these essays in further detail throughout the term.

READING RESPONSES: You are required to type a response to every play. These responses should be no longer than one page in length. They will consist of two parts. In the first section of the response you should summarize the play's plot in a short paragraph. Second, please propose a question for further inquiry at the end of your response. Your question should be especially attentive to the text's monologue(s). These questions are useful in generating essays from our readings, and they will also be beneficial in class discussions. Please refer to the handout "Discussion Questions as Post-reading." You may be asked to read from your response in class. Also, you will attend a Moravian College theatre production and write a 1-2 page drama review. This review will be counted as one reading response grade. Please refer to the handout "Drama Review Guidelines" for format information.

ORAL PRESENTATION: You will be required to give two oral presentations on topics related to our primary texts. Your presentation will summarize key terms, make connections to our reading, and ask the class significant discussion questions related to your topic. Topics may include: Dramatic Monologue, The Mirror Stage, Closet Drama, Hero/Heroine, Subjectivity, Suspension of Disbelief, Epic Theatre, Existentialism, Black Arts Movement, Feminist Drama, Environmental Theatre, Performance Art & "Perf-Po." A sign-up sheet will be circulated in class.

PARTICIPATION: Our classroom comprises a *discourse community*, in which we gain knowledge and insight through mutual inquiry as a result of both verbal and written interaction with others in the class. This interaction will take the form of co-operation as well as respectful disagreement. As a member of this discourse community, you will be expected to contribute intelligently and frequently to the discussion. Along with speaking, effective participation requires active and open-minded listening to others. Respond to and interact with your peers, not just with me. The more you participate, the more interesting, exciting, and rewarding this class will be. Always bring your textbook and notes to class. Expect to read passages aloud and closely investigate details of the texts we are studying. There will be unannounced quizzes and in-class writings throughout the term. I highly encourage you to visit me during office hours (or make an appointment) to discuss your paper ideas or any other questions or concerns related to the course.

POLICIES:

Grades. It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignments and for the final course grade.

Format. All written work should include your name, the course number and instructor (Tabor), the date, and the assignment in the upper right-hand corner. Any pages after the first should be numbered and stapled. All work must be typed using a reasonable 12-point font, double-spaced, and conventional margins (one inch). No electronic assignments accepted without special arrangement.

Deadlines. Reading responses, quizzes, and other daily assignments will not be accepted late including assignments due to absence. Assignments are due during the class period of the due date. Extensions may be given on essays, provided that a student asks for the extension at least one week in advance. Unless an extension is given, late essays will be reduced by one letter grade for each day that passes after the due date, e.g. an A becomes a B if one day late.

Access for Students with Disabilities. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Plagiarism. All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please see the Student Handbook if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Attendance. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet at each class. Your final course grade will be dropped by 10% for each unexcused absence after the third. A note from a doctor's office is required for an excused absence.

Tentative Reading Schedule. Readings are to be completed on the day assigned. The schedule is subject to change.

Week One

Mon Aug 31 Introduction
Unit One: Foundational Texts
Monologues and Soliloquies: Edmund from Shakespeare's *King Lear*

Wed Sept 2 Selections from Foundational Texts:
Paradise Lost (Bk. IV) by John Milton
Hérodiade by Stéphane Mallarmé
My Last Duchess by Robert Browning

Critical Reading: Abrams

Week Two

Mon Sept 7 Labor Day, No Class

Wed Sept 9 Unit Two: Hamlet and the Twentieth Century Soliloquy
Hamlet by Shakespeare

Week Three

Mon Sept 14 *Hamlet and Hamletmachine* by Heiner Muller
Critical Reading: Pavis and Marranta

Wed Sept 16 *Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

Week Four

Mon Sept 21 Unit Three: Making Meaning from Twentieth Century Monologues
Spoon River by Edgar Lee Masters
Critical Reading: from "Cambridge Guide to Modernism"

Wed Sept 23 *A Moon For the Misbegotton* by Eugene O'Neill

Week Five

Mon Sept 28 Yom Kippur

Wed Sept 30 *Blood Wedding* by Federico Garcia Lorca
Critical Reading: Lorca, *In Search of Duende*
Essay One Due

Week Six

Mon Oct 5 *The Good Woman of Setzuan* by Bertold Brecht
Critical Reading: The Epic Theatre and The Conventions of Chinese Theatre

Wed Oct 7 *Machinal* by Sophie Treadwell

Week Seven

Mon Oct 12 Fall Recess, No Class

Wed Oct 14 Unit Four, Case Study: Beckett's Monologic Dramas
Happy Days by Samuel Beckett
Critical Reading: The Theatre of the Absurd

Week Eight

Mon Oct 19 Research Methods: Library Visit

Wed Oct 21 *Footfalls, Come and Go, Eh Joe, and Not I* by Samuel Beckett

Week Nine

Mon Oct 26 *Krapps Last Tape* by Samuel Beckett

Wed Oct 28 **Abstract Due**
Krapps Last Tape (film clips)

Week Ten

Mon Nov 2 Unit Five, Case Study: African and African American Soliloquy
Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka

Wed Nov 4 Soyinka continued

Week Eleven

Mon Nov 9 **Rough Draft Due**
For Colored Girls by Ntozake Shange

Wed Nov 11 Shange continued

Week Twelve

Mon Nov 16 *Fires in the Mirror* by Anna Deavere Smith

Wed Nov 18 Smith continued

Week Thirteen

Mon Nov 23 **Essay Two Due**
Twilight Los Angeles (selections) by Anna Deavere Smith

Wed Nov 25 Thanksgiving Recess, No Class

Week Fourteen

Mon Nov 30 Unit Six: Recent Voices
Fefu and her Friends by Maria Irene Fornes
Critical Reading: Acting Out

Wed Dec 2 *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner
Critical Reading: Tony Kushner and Bertolt Brecht

Week Fifteen

Mon Dec 7 Selections from "Solo Performance Texts"
Critical Reading: Performance Art

Wed Dec 9 Conclusions and Evaluations

Final Exam

Wed Dec 16 8:30A **Take Home Final Exam Due**