

English 361 Dramatic Literature and the Moral Life 1875-Present Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Martha Reid
Office: Zinzendorf Hall 306
Phone: (O) 610 861-1642 (H) 610 838-0910 (C) 610 442-9422
E-mail: reidm@moravian.edu
Office hours: M 4-5 p.m. and W 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; also by appointment

English 361 meets the U2 (Moral Life) requirement for LinC and the genre requirement in the English major.

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 such as race and gender that both create and compromise a 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 live and filmed performances and reader's theatre

Required Text

Gainor, J. Ellen, Stanton B. Garner Jr., and Martin Puchner, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Drama: Volume 2: The Nineteenth Century to the Present*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2014.

Course Requirements

- Quizzes. Short quizzes will be administered, unannounced, at the start of ten class meetings. A quiz will assess basic familiarity with the assigned reading for that day. Quiz questions may be posed in a variety of forms: identification, multiple-choice, true-or-false, fill-in-the-blank, or short-answer. Each quiz will be worth 10 points, and the combined total of points earned will be worth 10% of the final course grade.
- In-class responses. Impromptu responses will be written at the start of ten other class meetings. Each student will write a brief, thoughtful commentary on a short text selected by the instructor from the assigned reading for that day, focusing on a moral issue addressed in the text. Each written response can earn up to 10 points, and the combined total of points earned will be worth 10% of the final course grade.

- Interdisciplinary insight. Each student will sign up for a date on which to make a brief oral presentation (about 5-10 minutes) of an interdisciplinary insight into the play under consideration on that date. An interdisciplinary insight will be information or an understanding about some aspect of the play from the perspective of a discipline other than literary analysis or theater study. Both value of information and quality of communication will be considered in assigning a grade for this presentation, worth 10% of the final course grade.
- Performances. Each student will sign up for a date—February 8, March 14, or April 18—on which to offer a practiced reading of a significant monologue by any character from any play studied during the preceding month. The speech will be read twice, before and after a brief analysis of its important elements, addressing in particular its significance with regard to an understanding of the character's moral life. The two readings and commentary together should not exceed 10 minutes, and the performance will be worth 10% of the final course grade.
- Visual Analysis of a Character. Each student will sign up for a date on which to present orally to the class a visual analysis of a character chosen from the play under consideration on that date. Using a non-representational painting both to drive and to illustrate the analysis, the student will explore the principles, behavior, moods, motives, ideas, feelings, etc., involved in that character's moral life. The presentation, including an opportunity for audience questions, 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. Both value of analysis and quality of communication will be considered in assigning a grade that will encompass both the oral and written aspects of the visual analysis, and the grade will be worth 20% of the final course grade.
- Mid-term examination. A mid-term examination on February 24 will be worth 20% of the final course 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 27. During the semester each student will identify three critical essays addressing this moral issue in the play. One of the three critical essays may be a theater or film 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 10, a second on March 16, and a third on April 13. Using the three critical essays previously summarized and two additional sources, one of which may be a theater or film review, a student will develop a paper supporting a thesis about the play's treatment of 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.

Grading

The final grade will, in general, be computed according to the percentages noted above. Late work will be penalized. An examination missed for a valid, documented reason may be re-scheduled at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor will apply both quantitative and qualitative judgments in determining grades for individual assignments and for the course.

Grading equivalents:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	94-96	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63
						F	0-59

Academic Honesty

- Students in this course should refer to the statement on academic honesty at Moravian College in the current *Student Handbook*, available online. (Search AMOS, keywords “honesty policy.”)
- 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.
- Assigned readings should be completed prior to the class meeting noted on the following schedule.
- To be successful, students should expect to work at least ten hours per week outside of class preparing for this class.
- In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in the senior capstone seminar, English majors are advised to save both digital and hard copies of work written for English 361, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.
- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability must contact the Academic Support Center, on the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

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

- Jan.** **18** Introduction to the course; readers' theatre presentation of *Trifles* (1916)
 20 *A Doll House* (1879), Act 1
- 25** *A Doll House*, Acts 2-3
 27 *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), Act 1
- Feb.** **01** *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Acts 2-3
 03 Readers' theatre presentation of *Soul Gone Home* (1936)
- 08** Performances and reflections . . . and a choice
 10 Student choice; **1st critical summary due**
- 15** Student choice
 17 *Waiting for Godot* (1953), Act 1
- 22** *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2
 24 **Mid-term examination**
- 29** *Cloud 9* (1979), Act One
- Mar.** **02** *Cloud 9*, Act Two
- 14** Performances and reflections . . . and a choice
 16 Student choice; **2nd critical summary due**
- 21** Student choice
 23 "*MASTER HAROLD*". . . *and the boys* (1982), read entire play
- 28** "*MASTER HAROLD*". . . *and the boys*, discussion continues
 30 Readers' theatre presentation of *Mud* (1983)
- Apr.** **04** *M. Butterfly* (1988), Act 1
 06 *M. Butterfly*, Acts 2-3
- 11** *Angels in America* (1991), Act 1
 13 *Angels in America*, Acts 2-3; **3rd critical summary due**
- 18** Performances and reflections . . . and a choice
 20 Student choice
- 25** Student choice
 27 Final reflections; **research paper due**