

# EN6483: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Modern and Contemporary Drama

### Subject Code

EN - English

### Course Number

6483

### Academic Unit

English (EN)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course offers an advanced study of modern and contemporary drama (US and European) through an exploration of pivotal works, influential playwrights, and key movements from the late 19th to the 21st centuries. Students will engage in close reading, performance analysis, and research to understand how drama responds to social changes and participates in aesthetic experimentation. The course will incorporate both conceptual and practical components, including script analysis, performance-based activities, and writing tasks. Through their engagements with and discussions of the course materials, students will form a comprehensive understanding of drama as both a written script and live performance event. Topics covered include: the evolution of naturalism, realism, and modernist experimentation in drama; absurdist theatre and its legacy in contemporary plays; the relationship between theatre and broader social questions regarding gender, race, religion, climate change, and technology.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs |                                                                                             | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1     | Develop advanced knowledge of key concepts and movements in modern and contemporary drama   | 25                  | x      | x      |        |
| 2     | Analyse diverse dramatic texts and performances                                             | 25                  | x      | x      |        |
| 3     | Examine the historical, social and aesthetic contexts shaping modern and contemporary drama | 25                  | x      | x      |        |
| 4     | Apply research, critical thinking, and communication skills in written and oral assignments | 25                  |        | x      | x      |

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

| LTAs | Brief Description    | CILO No.                                                                                                                                                                  | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1    | Interactive Lectures | Students will attend and participate in interactive lectures that explain the histories, social contexts, and aesthetic theories informing modern and contemporary drama. | 1, 2, 3                    |

|   |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |  |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--|
| 2 | Collaborative Activities    | Students will work collaboratively in groups to discuss, evaluate, and analyse dramatic texts and to prepare scene studies that interpret character, language, and dramatic situation through performance. | 1, 2, 3, 4 |  |
| 3 | Performance-based exercises | Students will participate in performance-based activities that practice critical thinking, communication, and creative expression.                                                                         | 1, 2, 4    |  |
| 4 | Writing Tasks               | Students will apply their understanding of the course materials and concepts in formative and summative writing assignments.                                                                               | 1, 2, 3, 4 |  |

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

|   | ATs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | CILO No. | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("- for nil entry) | Allow Use of GenAI? |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Reading Responses:<br>Students will write regular responses that reflect on the course readings and demonstrate a developing understanding of the course concepts. Prompts for the reading responses will be given by the instructor and posted on the course' s online learning platform.) | 1, 2     | 30            | -                          | No                  |

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |            |    |   |     |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|---|-----|
| 2 | Research Essay:<br>Students will write an argumentative essay that applies research and analytical skills to a play(s) of their choosing. Research topics will emerge from the reading responses and will be developed into a coherent argument that demonstrates independent thought and understanding of the play, its context, and its critical reception.                                                                                                                                                                 | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 30 | - | No  |
| 3 | Scene Study : In small groups, students will research, prepare, and perform a scene from one of the plays studied, demonstrating knowledge of character, language, and dramatic style. Students are permitted to use GenAI during the process of researching their chosen scenes. Along with performing their scene, groups will submit a 500-word document that includes: 1. their approach to interpreting the scene; 2. a critical reflection on how GenAI contributed to their understanding of the scene and characters. | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 30 | - | Yes |

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |         |    |   |     |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----|---|-----|
| 4 | In-class Discussion and Preparation: Students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions, engage with peers, and demonstrate their preparedness with relevant reading materials. Students are permitted to use GenAI during in-class formative writing activities that are structured and facilitated by the course teacher. | 1, 2, 3 | 10 | - | Yes |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----|---|-----|

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Reading Responses (30%)

Criterion

Understanding and Support

Excellent

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrates a very detailed understanding of the course readings. Specific and accurate support.

Good

Good

(B+, B, B-) Demonstrates a good understanding of relevant texts with some specific support.

Fair

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Demonstrates fairly good understanding of relevant texts, but may be lacking in detail and sufficient support.

Marginal

Marginal

(D) Demonstrates a superficial understanding of relevant texts. Support is neither detailed nor accurate.

Failure

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a minimal understanding of relevant texts and/or lacking in content.

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Assessment Task

Reading Responses - continued

### **Criterion**

Clarity, Originality, and Organisation

#### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Ideas are communicated with clarity and originality; response is logically and coherently structured.

#### **Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Ideas are clear and demonstrate some originality; response has a definable structure.

#### **Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Ideas are adequately clear, but response may be lacking in terms of originality or organisation.

#### **Marginal**

Marginal

(D) Ideas lack clarity and originality, and the structure of the response is incoherent and arbitrary.

#### **Failure**

Failure

(F) The response is off topic and/or ideas are generally incoherent.

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### **Assessment Task**

Research Essay (30%)

### **Criterion**

Argument and Analysis

#### **Excellent**

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Argument is clear, focused, and sustained with ideas that are clearly expressed, original, and supported with relevant research.

#### **Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Argument is clear and mainly focused; there is some originality in the ideas and good support from relevant research.

#### **Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Argument is evident but may need clarification and additional support from relevant research.

#### **Marginal**

Marginal

(D) Argument is evident but may need clarification and additional support from relevant research.

#### **Failure**

Failure

(F) Argument is unclear and unsupported by relevant research OR thesis has no relation to the writing task.

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### **Assessment Task**

Research Essay - continued

## **Criterion**

### **Organisation**

#### **Excellent**

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Organisation within and across paragraphs is logical and effective and supports argument. Cohesive structure and sustained development of ideas throughout.

#### **Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Organisation supports argument; transitions between ideas are clear and functional; introduction and conclusion demonstrate development of ideas.

#### **Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Organisation is not always clear or logical; transitions between paragraphs may be arbitrary; paragraphs may lack focus; development of ideas is not entirely clear.

#### **Marginal**

Marginal

(D) Some signs of organisation, but there may be abrupt or illogical shifts that cause confusion; lack of cohesion within and between paragraphs; little development of ideas.

#### **Failure**

Failure

(F) Ideas are not clearly organised; structure does not support the reading, understanding, or evaluation of the essay.

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## **Assessment Task**

Research Essay - continued

## **Criterion**

### **Language and Source Use**

#### **Excellent**

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Exceptionally well composed; words are used with precision and accuracy. Sources are engaged with fully and with understanding.

#### **Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Strong control of language and a wide lexical range; small errors may persist, but the meaning is clear. Effective engagement with sources.

#### **Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Basic ideas are communicated effectively; errors do not significantly impair reading and comprehension. Some engagement with sources.

#### **Marginal**

Marginal

(D) There is a high density of errors that impair reading; meaning is sometimes lost or unclear. Sources are not engaged with effectively.

**Failure**

Failure

(F) Persistent errors severely impair reading; meaning is often lost or distorted. Very limited engagement with sources.

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**Assessment Task**

Scene Study (30%)

**Criterion**

Interpretation

**Excellent**

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Characters are well-defined and clearly interpreted; performance demonstrates an excellent understanding of the scene and style of play.

**Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Characters are clearly interpreted; performance demonstrates a good understanding of the scene and style of play.

**Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Characters are adequately interpreted; performance demonstrates some understanding of the scene and style of play.

**Marginal**

Marginal

(D) Characters are flat, with little evidence of interpretation; performance demonstrates minimal understanding of the scene and style of play.

**Failure**

Failure

(F) No evidence that characters have been interpreted; performance demonstrates very limited understanding of the scene and style of play.

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**Assessment Task**

Scene Study - continued

**Criterion**

Clarity of Delivery

**Excellent**

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Spoken delivery is polished and highly effective; meaning is sharp and precise.



**Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Spoken delivery is highly effective; meaning is clear.

**Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Spoken delivery is basically effective; meaning sometimes lost.

**Marginal**

Marginal

(D) Spoken delivery weak; meaning is often lost.

**Failure**

Failure

(F) Spoken delivery is poor; meaning does not come through.

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**Assessment Task**

Scene Study - continued

**Criterion**

Nonverbal Communication

**Excellent**

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Gestures, body language, and movement are used deliberately and effectively to communicate character and situation.

**Good**

Good

(B+, B, B-) Gestures, body language, and movement are mainly used effectively to communicate character and situation.

**Fair**

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Gestures, body language, and movement are inconsistent and may not always communicate character and situation.

**Marginal**

Marginal

(D) Gestures, body language, and movement are arbitrary and do not clearly communicate character and situation.

**Failure**

Failure

(F) Gestures, body language, and movement are used ineffectively and do not communicate character or situation.

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**Assessment Task**

In-class Discussions and Preparation (10%)

**Criterion**

Engagement and Preparation

**Excellent**

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Consistent contributions to in-class discussions and activities, demonstrating excellent knowledge of readings; regularly responds to peers.

**Good****Good**

(B+, B, B-) Good contributions to in-class discussion and activities, demonstrating appropriate knowledge of readings; some engagement with peers.

**Fair****Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Occasional contributions to in-class discussion and activities, demonstrating some knowledge of readings; little engagement with peers.

**Marginal****Marginal**

(D) Limited contributions to in-class discussions and activities; difficult to assess understanding; very limited engagement with peers.

**Failure****Failure**

(F) Fails to participate in class discussions and activities; no engagement with peers.

## Part III Other Information

**Keyword Syllabus**

Modern and contemporary drama; realism; naturalism; expressionism; theatre of the absurd; live performance; drama and society.

**Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

| Title |                                             |
|-------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Henrik Ibsen, A Doll's House                |
| 2     | Sophie Treadwell, Machinal                  |
| 3     | Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot           |
| 4     | Arthur Miller, The Crucible                 |
| 5     | Paula Vogel, How I Learned to Drive         |
| 6     | Caryl Churchill, A Number and Escaped Alone |
| 7     | Ayad Akhtar, Disgraced                      |
| 8     | Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig, Snow in Midsummer    |

**Additional Readings**

| Title |                                                                                    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | C.W.E Bigsby. 1999. Contemporary American Playwrights. Cambridge University Press. |
| 2     | C.W.E Bigsby. 2000. Modern American Drama. Cambridge University Press.             |

|   |                                                                             |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | R. Darren Gobert. 2014. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury.         |
| 4 | W.B. Worthen. 2010. Drama: Between Poetry and Performance. Wiley-Blackwell. |