

Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Beginnings to 1960

Fall 2004

Instructors: Professors Oscar Brockett and Douglas Dempster

Course Numbers: Undergraduates: TD 357T (Unique No: 24960)
Graduate students: T D 387M (Unique No: 25195)

Classroom: Winship 2.112

Time: MWF 11-12

Office: Winship B.104C

Office Hours: Professor Brockett: 2:00-3:00 MWF
Professor Dempster: 3:00-4:00 Thursday

Phone and Email

Professor Brockett: 232-5310

obrockett@mail.utexas.edu

Professor Dempster: 475-7024

ddempster@mail.utexas.edu

Required Text

Bernard F. Dukore, Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski (Thomson-Heinle, 1974). Additional readings will either be on e-reserve, or in a file drawer ("Brockett") in front of the FAL circulation desk.

Course Description

This course examines theories of drama, from the Greeks until 1960, concerning the nature, function, and significance of drama as seen by major theorists, dramatists, and philosophers. The course relates these theories to dramatic and theatrical practice in specific historical periods, thereby seeking insights into the philosophical, artistic, and political underpinnings of the art forms in their own time and how they might relate to later periods, including the present.

Course Requirements and Grading

The majority of the course will be devoted to reading and discussing representative theoretical treatises, most of which are contained in an anthology edited by Bernard Dukore: "Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski." Other pertinent treatises not contained in this anthology (a relatively small number) will be placed on reserve. Students will be expected to attend all classes, prepared to discuss the assigned reading. You will be expected to write two papers (5-7 pages each for undergraduates; 10-12 pages each for graduate students) based on the readings, class discussions, and additional research. The topics for these papers can be quite varied, with students being encouraged to exercise their own research and writing interests. We'll try to make suggestions about possible topics.

Students will also be required to read a minimum of 5, previously unread plays through the course of the semester. For each play students will write a brief Reading Report. Reading Reports will be posted to the Blackboard site for the course. Students may choose to read any play so long as it is from a period we are studying and so long as it is a play that you have not already read or studied. We will also offer some suggested readings.

Grading will be based on two papers (undergraduates: 5-7 pages; graduate students: 10-12 pages) (50%), the Reading Reports (15%), a final exam (25%), and regular attendance and class participation (10%). (See course calendar for due dates of papers and exam schedule.)

Course Calendar

Week 1 (August 25 & 27)

(Aug 30 last day for drop/add without approval.)

--Introduction, course requirements, etc.

--Before Aristotle: Can Drama Make us Virtuous?

Aristophanes (c. 445-385 B.C.), The Frogs (3-12)

Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.), excerpts from The Republic (12-31)

Week 2 (Aug 30-Sept 3)

--Aristotle and the Roman Rhetorical Tradition: Method or Madness?

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), excerpts from the Poetics, the Rhetoric, and the Nicomachean Ethics (31-64)

Week 3 (Sept 8-10)

(Monday 6 Sept: Labor Day Holiday: No class.)

(Friday 10 Sept: 12th Class Day)

Aristotle (continued)

Cicero (106-43 B.C.), excerpts from "On the Best Style of the Orators" (67)

Horace (65-8 B.C.), excerpts from the "Art of Poetry" (67-76)

Longinus (1st c. A.D.?), "On the Sublime" (76-82)

Week 4 (Sept 13-17)

--Drama in the City of God and the Rise of Humanism

Tertullian (155-220 A.D.), "On the Spectacles" (85-94)

St. Augustine (354-430), The City of God (94-99)

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), "Letter to the Lord Can Grande della Scala" (102-103)

Boccaccio (1313-1375), "The Genealogy of the Gentile Gods" (103-112)

... ..

Week 5 (Sept 20-24)

--The Renaissance and the Emergence of a Neoclassical Ideal (Raising Aristotle)

Scaliger (1484-1558), Poetics (138-143)
Castelvetro (1505-1571), "On Aristotle's Poetics" (143-150)
Minturno, The Art of Poetry (FAL file drawer)
Guarini (1538-1612), "Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry" (150-156)
Lope de Vega (1562-1635), "The New Art of Writing Plays" (198-204)
Gosson (1554-1623), The School of Abuse (162-166)
Sidney (1554-1586), The Defence of Poesy (168-177)
Jonson (1573-1637), "Induction to Everyman Out of His Humour", "Preface to Sejanus,"
"Dedication to Volpone, and Timber (185-195)

Week 6 (Sept 27-Oct 1)

--The Cid Controversy and French Neoclassicism

Georges de Scudéry (1601-1667), "Observations on The Cid" (211-217)
Corneille (1606-1684), "Apologetic Letter" and The Discourse (217-220, 226-238)
The French Academy (1638), "The Opinions of the French Academy" (220-226)
Hédelin (1604-1676), "The Whole Art of the Stage" (238-249)
Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711), "The Art of Poetry" (256-264)
Racine (1639-1699), Selections (253-255)
Molière (1622-1673), Selections (249-253)

Week 7 (Oct 4-8)

--English Neoclassicism and the Morality of Drama

Dryden (1631-1700), Essay of Dramatic Poesy, Preface to All for Love (317-337)
Rymer (1641-1713), A Short View of Tragedy (341-351)
Pope (1688-1744), Essay on Criticism (FAL file)
Collier (1650-1726), A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage (351-359)
Congreve (1670-1729), Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations etc. (359-363)
Dennis (1657-1734), The Usefulness of the Stage to the Happiness of Mankind. . . (363-369)
Steele (1672-1729), Selections from The Spectator, Preface to The Conscious Lovers (390-398)
Lillo (1693-1739), Dedication to The London Merchant (398-400)

Week 8 (Oct 11-15)

(FIRST PAPER DUE FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER)

--The Decline of Neoclassical Doctrine

Voltaire (1694-1778), "Preface to Oedipus", "A Discourse on Tragedy," "Letter to Horace Walpole" (278-287)
Johnson (1709-1784), Selections (400-418)
Hume (1711-1776), Of Tragedy (418-424)
Diderot (1713-1784), Excerpts from Encyclopedia, "On Dramatic Poetry" (287-293)
Rousseau (1712-1778), Politics and the Arts (293-297)

Week 9 (Oct 18-22)

--German Romantics & Coleridge too

Kant (1724-1804), Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Judgment (FAL file.)

Lessing (1729-1781), Hamburg Dramaturgy (429-437) and Laokoon (FAL file)

Week 10 (Oct 25-29)

Schiller (1759-1805), The Stage as a Moral Institution, On the Cause. . ., On the Tragic Art, The Pathetic, Reflections on the Use of the Vulgar and Low (440-471)

Schlegel (1767-1845), Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature (493-516)

Schopenhauer (1788-1860), The World as Will and Idea (516-522)

Hegel (1770-1831), Selections in Dukore (522-545)

Coleridge (1772-1834), Selections (581-598)

Week 11 (Nov 1-5)

--Realism (naturally!—whad' ya expect?)

Ibsen (1828-1906), Selections (559-564)

Strindberg (1849-1912), Preface to Miss Julie, “An Effective Play” (564-575)

Wilde (1856-1900), The Decay of Lying, Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray (624-630)

Shaw (1856-1950), Selections (630-650)

Hugo (1802-1885), Preface to Cromwell (683-692)

Zola (1840-1902), Naturalism on the Stage (692-719)

Taine (1828-1893), “Introduction” to a History of English Literature (FAL file)

Dumas, Fils (1824-1895), “How to Write a Play” (719-721)

Bergson (1859-1941), Laughter (737-745)

Week 12 (Nov 8-12)

Realism (cont.)

Week 13 (Nov 15-19)

--The Modernists

Wagner (1813-1883), “The Art-Work of the Future” (777-795)

Nietzsche (1844-1900), The Birth of Tragedy (820-827)

Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895), Selections (795-804)

Artaud (1895-1948), “No More Masterpieces” (760-767)

Freud (1856-1939), “On Oedipus and Hamlet”, “Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious” (827-836)

Jung (1875-1961), “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” (836-847)

Week 14 (Nov 22-24)

(THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, FRIDAY 26 NOV)

Marinetti (1876-1944) , “The Variety of Theater” (FAL file)

Brecht (1898-1956), “The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre”, “Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction” (847-855)

Esslin (1918-2002), The Theater of the Absurd (FAL file)

Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy”, “The Affective Fallacy” (FAL file)

Grotowski (1933-1999), “The Theater’s New Testament” (978-995)

Week 15 (Nov 29-Dec 3)

(SECOND PAPER DUE FRIDAY 3 DEC)

--Catch-up, Course Review, and Exam Preparation

FINAL EXAM: ?