

ENGL 2307: Introduction to Drama
Instructor: Elise Wahn

This course is designed to introduce students to major works of drama from a variety of historical periods and cultures, from the ancient Greeks to modern America. Along the way, we will examine each text to discover how it intersects with wider issues like gender, class, and sexuality. We will consider both the special opportunities and limitations of drama as a format when compared with other literary types such as fiction or poetry. Each unit will also include a “film spotlight” on one of the plays discussed, to further explore the complexities of drama, its elements of performance, and its adaptation to modern media. We will track the changes in conventions for the composition of drama—such as plot structures, character types, and versification—and for the performance of drama—costuming, actors, and props—in order to think critically about the changes in the culture producing the drama.

While using these techniques to improve skills in literary analysis, we will also practice writing about these plays to build scholarly composition and style skills. Students will be expected to produce one short paper (5-7 pages) at midterm, and a longer (8-10 pages) final research paper. In addition, students will be required to participate in a weekly online course blog that will function as a kind of reading journal (~250 words per week). Active participation in class discussions is also required. In addition to 2-3 acts of each play, students may also expect to read supporting scholarly articles to accompany the text for each class meeting. The total reading load will be between 50-200 pages per week.

Required Books:

The Norton Anthology of Drama, Shorter Edition (W. W. Norton, 2009). J. Ellen Gainor, Stanton B. Garner Jr., & Martin Puchner, eds.
The Figaro Plays (Hackett, 2010). Pierre Beaumarchais. Trans. John Wells. John Leigh, ed.