



Nanchang University ENG 12: Interpretation of Literature

Credit: 4

Contact Hours

This course is composed of 24 lecture sessions, 3 tutorial sessions and 9 office contact hours. Each lecture session takes 2 contact hours in length; each tutorial session takes 3 contact hours in length; There will be a Q-A review session(3 contact hours) and Final Exam (3 contact hours) at the end of this term. This course has 72 contact hours in total.

Course Description

This course aims to introduce students to strategies for interpreting dramatic literature, including some of the key literary and critical theories related to the study of theatre and performance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A compelling conflict – with significant stakes – is, arguably, necessary for a play text to appeal to a reading or listening audience and for a production team to desire to stage its own version of it. For this reason, we will focus our exploration of dramatic literature on different scales of conflict and confrontation: local/personal, collective/societal, and global/transnational. We will use these encounters and struggles as jumping-off points to discuss how we read and interpret these plays, which may offer perspectives or articulate events that seem very different from our everyday life. Our playwrights contribute points of view from the United States, Canada, Ireland, England, South Africa, India, and Scotland.

Required Textbook

The America Play by Suzan-Lori Parks;
Cloud 9 by Caryl Churchill;
Translations by Brian Friel;
Splash Hatch on the E Going Down by Kia Corthon;
Harvest by Manjula Padmanabhan;
Black Watch by Gregory Burke

Grading

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| ● Participation | 25% |
| ● Critical Analysis Paper 1 | 25% |
| ● Critical Analysis Paper 2 | 20% |
| ● Performance Critical Reflection | 5% |



A+ 96-100	A 90-95	A- 85-89
B+ 82-84	B 78-81	B- 75-77
C+ 71-74	C 66-70	C- 62-65
D 60-61	F < 60	

Course Schedule

The course has 24 class sessions in total. All sessions are 2 hours and 15 minutes in length. Note: the course outline and required readings are subject to change.

Class 1:

Critical Performances

- Mathew Goulish, 39 Microlectures in Proximity of Performance (43-47)
 - Keir Elam, "Concluding Comments: Theatre, Dram, Semiotics" The Semiotics of Theatre and Dram (208-209)
- (DUE: Syllabus Email Assignment)

Class 2:

Structuralism: Themes and frames

- Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics (65-67)

Class 3:

Structuralism: Themes and frames (Cont.)

- Petr Barry, "Structuralism" Beginning theory: an introduction to literacy and cultural theory (39-53)

Class 4:

Susan Glaspell, Trifles

Class 5:

Writing Workshop I: Process, Argumentation, Citation

Class 6:

Practicing Writing; Postmodern Perspectives

- Nick Kaye, "Introduction: Limiting the Postmodern" Postmodernism and Performance (1-4)

Class 7:

Practicing Writing; Postmodern Perspectives (Cont.)

- Bel Hooks, "Postmodern Blackness" Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics (23-31)



Class 8:

Role-Playing: Race and Gender

- Suzan Lori Parks, *The America Play*

Class 9:

Role-Playing: Race and Gender (Cont.)

- Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, eds. Michael Huxley and Noel Wits (120-121)
- Mark Fortier, "Feminist and Gender Theory" *Theory / Theatre* (70-77)

Class 10:

Class Conflict & Labor Relations

- Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9*

Class 11:

Class Conflict & Labor Relations (Cont.)

- M.A.R. Habib, "Marxism" *A History of Literacy Criticism* (528, 530-531)
- David Bel, "A Theatre for Democracy" *Ways of Writing: Critical Essays on Zakes Mda* (15-23)
- Zakes Mda, *And the Girls in their Sunday Dresses*
(*DUE: First Draft - Critical Analysis)

Class 12:

Writing Workshop I: Revising and Editing

Class 13:

Performing (in) the Margins: Re-writing/staging America

- Monique Mojica, "Ethnostress: Women's Voices in Native American Theatre" *Footpaths & Bridges: Voices from the Native American Women Playwrights Archive* (1-2)

Class 14:

Performing (in) the Margins: Re-writing/staging America (Cont.)

- Jaye T. Darby, "Re-imagining the stage: tradition and transformation in Native theater" *The Color of Theater: Race, Culture and Contemporary Performance* (61- 64)
- Monique Mojica, *Princes Pocahontas and the Blue Spots*

Class 15:

Postcolonial Concerns: Language, Place, Identity

- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (13-20)
- Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-colonial Dram: Theory, practice, politics* (1-7)

Class 16:

Brian Friel, *Translations*

- (*DUE: Final Draft - Critical Analysis)



Class 17:

Environmental Issues: Center Stage

- Greg Gard, "Beginnings: Pollution" Ecocriticism (1-5)

Class 18:

Environmental Issues: Center Stage⁹ (Cont.)

- Theresa May, "Beyond Bambi: Towards a Dangerous Ecocriticism in Theatre Studies" Theatre Topics 17.2 (07) (95-97)

Class 19:

Kia Corthron, Splash Hatch on the E Going Down

Class 20:

Going Global: Circulating Theatres, Traveling Bodies

- Zygmunt Bauman, "Tourist and Vagabonds" Globalization: The Human Consequences (89-8)

- Dan Rebellato, Theatre & Globalization (1-2)

Class 21:

Manjula Padmanabhan, Harvest

Class 22:

Performing Warfare: How? Why?

Gregory Burke, Black Watch

- Final Groups Assigned [Mandatory Attendance!]

(DUE: Optional Revision of Drafts)

Class 23:

Group Discussion / Planning

(DUE: Final Draft - Critical Analysis)

Class 24:

Review

(DUE: Group Performances)

(DUE: Final Draft - Performance Critical Reflection)

(Portfolios Returned)

Attending Policy

Regular and prompt attendance is required. Under ordinary circumstances, you may miss two times without penalty. Each absence over this number will lower your course grade by a third of a letter and missing more than five classes may lead to a failing grade in the course. Arriving late and/or leaving before the end of the class period are equivalent to absences.



Policy on "Late Withdrawals"

In accordance with university policy, appeals for late withdrawal will be approved **ONLY** in case of medical emergency and similar crises.

Academic Honesty

Nanchang University expects all students to do their own work. Instructors will fail assignments that show evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, and will also report the student's name to the University administration. A student reported to the University for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

General Expectations:

Students are expected to:

- Attend all classes and be responsible for all materials covered in class and otherwise assigned;
- Complete the day's required reading and assignments before class;
- Review the previous day's notes before class and make notes about questions you have about the previous class or the day's reading;
- Participate in class discussions and complete required written work on time;
- Refrain from texting, phoning or engaging in computer activities unrelated to class during the class period;
- While class participation is welcome, even required, you are expected to refrain from private conversations during the class period.

Special Needs or Assistance

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.