# **COURSE OUTLINE**

**English 126**

**The Modern Drama**

1. **Catalog Statement**

English 126 is a survey of modern plays and playwrights. Representative works of European and American dramatists are read with special attention given to the literary and sociological importance of plays written since 1870. Also considered are important developments in stagecraft and theatre construction which have had an influence on the playwrights. The aim of the course is to enable students to recognize differing views of human problems as dramatized by a wide variety of playwrights in the last one hundred years and to encourage objective, analytical judgments of literary excellence.

#### Units – 3.0

Lecture Hours – 3.0

Prerequisite: Eligibility for English 101

1. **Course Entry Expectations**

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

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Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. organize and write thesis-based essays
2. use detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support for thesis statements
3. critically analyze selected prose works dealing with important contemporary issues
4. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions
5. gather and organize information through library research

demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.

1. **Course Exit Standards**

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. read critically and write critical, thesis-based essays,
2. analyze the significance of changing trends in the drama,
3. compare and contrast the works of major playwrights,
4. objectively evaluate the views of playwrights from different countries and cultures,
5. recognize and synthesize universal themes.

**IV. Course Content**

Instruction in each unit of study consists of critical discussion of the reading assignments. Students are expected to analyze, criticize, and synthesize related and differing themes and views expressed in the plays. Writing assignments emphasize support of these from rhetorical perspectives, use and discussion of examples, and formulation of logical conclusions.

A. Romanticism 8 hours

1. The influence of the romantic movement in drama
2. The actor-manager
3. The physical theatre
4. Playwrights: Hugo, Rostand, Maeterlinck

B. Realism and Naturalism 10 hours

1. Emergence of the director
2. Ensemble acting
3. Experimental theatres
4. Playwrights: Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Gorki, Shaw

C. Expressionism, Symbolism, “New” Realism 15 hours

1. Radical reactions to realism
2. Influence of German expressionism
3. New stagecraft, lighting devices
4. Depersonalization of the actor
5. Theatre of the Absurd
6. Playwrights: Brecht, Ionesco, Kaiser, Sarte, Camus, Pirandello, Beckett, Osborne, Williams, Miller, Lorca

D. Contemporary Developments 15 hours

1. Eclectic styles
2. New actor-director relationship
3. European theatre
4. Commercial theatre vs. avant gard
5. Regional theatre
6. Playwrights: Albee, Shepherd, Mamet, Wilson, Norman, Pinter, Stoppard, Shaffer, Fo, Weiss, Fugard
7. **Methods of Presentation**

The following instructional methodologies may be used in the course:

1. lectures, directed class discussions, small-group discussions, peer group writing workshops, individual conferences, small-group conferences, and student presentations
2. writing, both in and out of class, will be an integral part of the course
3. collaborative learning
4. educational technologies including word processing, Internet, and electronic presentation.
5. **Assignments and Methods of Evaluation**
6. four unit essays and an essay final examination are administered. Unit essays include questions which require students to draw conclusions from materials studied and to formulate justifications for their conclusions.
7. written assignments are of sufficient length and complexity to require students to independently select and order their ideas as well as to express them clearly.
8. **Textbook**

Haskel Block and Robert Shedd, eds. Master of Modern Drama, New York Random House, 1963

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

1. understand the development of modern drama; identify the literary and sociological importance of plays written since 1870 as well as elements in stagecraft and theater construction that have had an influence on the playwrights.
2. read critically in order to analyze literary works for themes and other literary elements.
3. write thesis-centered essays which analyze and interpret the literary and sociological importance of plays written since 1870 as well as elements in stagecraft and theater construction that have had an influence on modern drama.