

## English-006-2: Studies in Literature SYLLABUS

Spring 2019

Class: 11:30-12:35, MWF; RH 109

Office Hours: 3:15–5:00 pm MWF or by appointment

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Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature.

—*Hamlet*, 3.2.17-22

When Hamlet instructs the Players “to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature,” he is articulating a mimetic theory of art. That is, he asserts that art exists to imitate human interactions in a recognizable reflection of real life. The work of the literary or dramatic creator—the poet, the playwright, or, more recently, the novelist or film director—is to imitate the created order brought into being by the divine Creator. Anytime we read imaginative literature—whether poetry, fiction, or drama—we encounter an imagined world that exists to reflect the world imagined into being by God.

Studies in Literature seeks to show you how your field of vision can be expanded by looking through the windows on the world, the ways of knowing, that literature offers. In literature, we see the rich variety of human characters, presented in all of their complexity and contradictions. Through it, we witness the breathtaking human capacity for both virtue and depravity, oftentimes within a single individual. From it, we take away images of ourselves, reflected portraits that alternately comfort and challenge, admonish and affirm. Literature affords us the gift of a glimpse into what it means to be human.

But if literature is “an imitation of an action,” as Aristotle described it, drama is “the imitation of an action in the form of an action.” In poetry we can hear about a poet having to choose when “two roads diverged in a yellow wood,” or in fiction we can read about a protagonist having to choose whether to keep drawing when his father denounces art as childish. But in the theatre we actually see an actor who must respond when another actor tells him to revenge his father’s murder at the hands of his uncle who is also his stepfather and king. The actor playing Hamlet may seem more sad or more angry, more distraught or more vengeful. None of these ways of playing Hamlet are “wrong.” But decisions about *how* to play the character are a necessary part of bringing any performance of *Hamlet* to the stage. And until *Hamlet* receives theatrical performance it is not being experienced in the way intended by the playwright, a word which means maker or builder rather than just author.

The poet writes a poem or a novelist writes a novel and you “close the loop” when you sit in your room reading that imaginative literature. And this course fulfills the GE requirement for “Reading Imaginative Literature” (more about that later). You can also sit in your room and read a play, which is another form of imaginative literature. But foundational to this course is the recognition that a play script—like a novel—may be published as a book but the two works are fundamentally different. A script is just a blueprint that does not become fully realized until it is enfolded in a stage performance. Vital to this aspect of the course is recognition of the fundamental corporeality of drama. While you can “close the loop” on a poem or novel by reading it in your room, closing the loop on a play involves

seeing it in a theatre where actors and a director along with lighting, set, sound, and costume designers are all involved in working artistically. And this course also fulfills the GE requirement for “Working Artistically” because you will not only engage in exploring the critical principles which guide theatre artists, and participate in interpreting their work as you expand your perceptual faculties, but you will also play a role in creating theatre by planning, preparing, and performing in a scene.

As a means to the ends outlined above, the course seeks to equip you with the ability to read works of literature—and to respond to dramatic literature in live performance—more perceptively, more discerningly, more intensely. That endeavor will be pursued through discussion rather than lecture.

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**CLASS DISCUSSION:** In a discussion class we are all engaged in learning from one another. You are responsible to participate in this process by contributing your perceptions to our classroom discussion and by considering seriously the remarks of other students. The notion that you can tune out on the class discussion until you get “the answer” from the teacher misses the point of discussion. Take notes on the comments of your fellow students as carefully as you do during those times that I lecture. You are responsible for synthesizing the best of what we all have to say in coming to an informed critical position of your own. Your own contribution to the class will not be measured quantitatively. What matters is that you raise questions about the literature and make intelligent, creative responses to the questions of others.

**TEXTS:** Our texts will consist of the following. You are required to own the texts in hard copy in the edition indicated (used copies are acceptable). You need to have your own book to underline and make marginal comments. You need to have the edition indicated so we may all quickly refer to the same page during class discussion.

Author	Title	Publisher	ISBN
Wm. Shakespeare	<i>Othello</i> , ed. Bate & Rasmussen	Modern Library	978-0812969153
Arthur Miller	<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	Penguin	978-0140481341
Tennessee Williams	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>	New Directions	978-0811214049
Flannery O'Connor	<i>A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories</i>	Harvest/HBJ Book	978-0156364652
Chaim Potok	<i>My Name is Asher Lev</i> trade edition	Anchor	978-1400031047
Darryl Tippens, ed.	<i>Shadow and Light: Literature &amp; the Life of Faith</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition	ACU Press	978-0891120704

**COURTESY:** I require courtesy in the classroom. Save your private conversations for outside of class and make your remarks that apply to the class discussion public for the entire class to enjoy.

**PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Your attendance is expected. After three unexcused absences, each unexcused absence will be recorded as a zero for class participation for that day. Grounds for an excused absence are illness or a family emergency. Exams missed for unexcused absences may not be made up. If you get sick, stay in bed and rest. Illness is grounds for excused absence from class, for delay of papers, for rescheduling of exams. However, exams will not be rescheduled nor excuses for late papers granted for such reasons as travel plans, ski trips, or extracurricular activities. According to college policy, a student may be dropped from a class with a

grade of F if “the number of unexcused absences equals or exceeds twice the number of times the class meets per week.” Our class meets three times a week. Do the math.

**MENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY:** You need to be present mentally as well as physically. Even if you were planning to use a laptop to take notes or a phone to look up something related to class, electronic devices offer such temptations to engage in other activities that electronic devices will be prohibited in class. If a specific occasion arises when you would like to look up the definition of a word or something related to class discussion, please ask for permission. If you use your phone or laptop to check your email, browse the web, play games, update your Facebook status, text or tweet friends, or work on stuff for other classes, your mental absence will be counted as an absence.

**NON-ATTENDANCE POLICY:** If you have flu-like symptoms—fever, cough, body chills and aches, congestion, diarrhea or vomiting—you need to stay in your room and notify the Health Center. Inform me of your situation by email or voice mail if you are able. But you are not to come to class, nor go to any stage production, nor show up in person to report your illness, until you have been free of all of the above symptoms for at least 24 hours.

**POLICY ON CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES:** Please do not bring food to class or chew gum during class. Consumption of liquids is fine as long as you can do so silently (without slurping, chewing ice, or noisily squeezing a plastic water bottle). Please do not wear baseball caps in class—in discussion it helps to be able to see each other’s eyes.

**PROMPTNESS:** Please be on time. Being on time means that you’re present in a cap-free, gum-free state with your book (in physical, non-electronic form). Being late to class three times will be treated as an absence.

**EXAMS:** There will be two one-hour exams and a comprehensive final exam.

**QUIZZES:** You may expect unannounced quizzes. Although quizzes may not be made up, you may drop one quiz grade for every five quizzes that are given.

**PAPERS:** You will write three play reviews of 800–1,100 words (ca. 2½–3½ pages) each, a personal essay (essay # 1) of 950-1,300 words (3-4 pages), a close reading and two analytical essays of 1,300–1,500 words (ca. 4-5 pages) each. In addition, you may expect a series of one-page response papers and paraphrases. The number of words is the operative guideline; the parenthetical reference to pages is an informal guide since font sizes can vary considerably.

**SCENES:** You and from one to four of your classmates will memorize, rehearse, and perform for the rest of the class a scene from one of the plays we study.

**FORMAT FOR PAPERS:** All written work is to be submitted both electronically (as an email attachment) and in hard copy. The electronic copy of your paper should be named using the following convention: your surname—an indication of the assignment—a short title. So, if, perchance, your name is Judaea Bufford and you’re writing your first review on *Death of a Salesman*, your filename might be: Bufford-R1-Salesman.docx. All work must be submitted either as a Word file in .docx format or as a Pages file. Yes, if you use some other word-processing program that means you will need to do a “save-as” since GoogleDocs or .pdf format is not acceptable. Your paper must have a running-head consisting of your surname and the page number. Type your name at the top of your first page, and

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have your word-processing program automatically add a running head to each page except the first. So when Judaea's review goes onto a second page, it would have "Bufford-2" at the top. Do not type "Bufford-2" into the body of your paper; it's a running head.

**POINTERS:** You will receive three pages of "Pointers" designed to help you with matters of format, style, punctuation, incorporation of quotations, in-text citations, and MLA documentation style. I expect to read your writing attentively. Before I do so, I expect you to read my writing attentively. You will be given opportunities to ask about anything you find puzzling in the Pointers. The first paper will offer an opportunity for you to practice applying the Pointers without being penalized for confusion about applying them. After the first essay, you may expect a reduction of one-third of a letter grade for every three instances of violations of the Pointers, so you need to pay close attention to them.

**ESSAY # 1:** Your personal essay offers you an opportunity to reflect on your reading experience. What, if anything, do you remember about learning to read? Were there books in your childhood that you returned to again and again for pleasure? If so what were they (*Narnia*? *Harry Potter*? others?) and what did you enjoy about them? How have your reading interests evolved? You've had a lot of English classes over the years. What literary works (novels, stories, plays, poems) have you read for class that you most enjoyed and what did you enjoy about them? During high school did you read for pleasure apart from what was required for class? If so, what did you read and what did you enjoy about it? What have been your worst reading experiences? Have your reading practices changed over the years. You'll receive a handout claiming that "skim reading is the new normal" in a transformation that profoundly alters our brains along with our capacity "to grasp complexity, to understand another's feelings or to perceive beauty." At some point did skimming become your "new normal"? If so, what changes have you noticed? Since you've been in college, what do you read that's not required for class? What do you enjoy about it? For your personal essay (unlike the writing we will be doing later), feel free to use the first person (*I, me, my*).

**CLOSE READING EXERCISES:** This semester might be regarded as a course in attentive reading (i.e., the opposite of skimming) which should give you practice in grasping complexity or reading in depth in lots of other contexts. To offer practice toward that end, you are to complete a close reading exercise on two of the works we read for this course. Close reading is the most important skill you need for any form of literary studies. In close reading, you read for what is there, for what might be there, and even for what is not there. It means not only reading and understanding the meanings of the individual printed words, it also involves making yourself sensitive to all the nuances and connotations of language as it is used by skilled writers. This can mean anything from a work's particular vocabulary, sentence construction, and imagery, to the themes that are being dealt with, the way in which the story is being told, and the view of the world that it offers. It involves almost everything from the smallest linguistic items to the largest issues of literary understanding and judgment. In close reading, you are trying to read with the same level of care, commitment, and concentration as the author employed in doing the writing. These close readings are not coherent essays; rather, they are exercises that will prepare you for discussions and for your formal essays.

**ESSAY # 2: Reading Potok Literally; Reading Potok Figuratively.** Write a critical paper of 1,300-1,500 words (ca. 4-5 pages double-spaced).

Early in *My Name Is Asher Lev*, Potok's young narrator mentions "the large framed picture of the Rebbe near the living-room window" (6). A bit later Asher tells us that when his father would leave to go to

work “sometimes I would go to the living-room window and see him come out of our apartment house and hail a cab” (10).

That’s a literal window which Asher looks through. But sometimes it is described in language that goes beyond the literal. Asher sees his father “standing in front of the window,” where: “The huge Venetian blind had been pulled up. It stood rigidly perpendicular to the two tall rectangles that were the window’s frame” (15). That description comes very early in the novel, but the words Potok puts in Asher’s mouth are already conveying some kind of meaning that goes beyond the literal. The window is a window, but it’s not *just* a window.

The following night Asher describes hearing his father sing his grandfather’s melody:

There was an unearthly quality to the way he sang that melody that night—as if her were winging through unknown worlds in search of sources of strength beyond himself. His eyes were open, fixed, but gazing inward. There was a sweetness and sadness, a sense of pain and yearning in his voice—soft, tremulous, climbing and falling and climbing again. And when he was done there was a long silence—and in that silence I thought I heard distant cries, and I was afraid. (14)

The silence is literal, but conveys something beyond the literal, and the distant cries will echo throughout the novel.

Choose an image from the novel that conveys meaning that goes beyond the literal, and explain how that image develops and changes in the course of the novel. An image is the literary representation of something that can be perceived by the senses—something you can see, hear, taste, touch, smell, or perceive as movement. Please do not choose a character (e.g., the Rebbe or Asher’s mythic ancestor), do not choose earlocks, and do not choose travel. However, you may choose from any number of possible topics. There are references to walking, to screaming, to melody, to birds and flowers, to hands, to red hair, to ice, and to eyes. In those instances the language Potok uses is literal but also conveys meaning beyond the literal.

When Asher gazes out the window he sees the street—and much more than the street. As his eyes grow and develop, he sees more and more. When you gaze at Potok’s novel, what do *you* see beyond the literal? As you look back, how do you see language conveying meaning that goes beyond what you took in on first glance?

Although I would caution you against using Sparknotes or other online summaries, here’s one tool that *might* be helpful. The British version of Amazon ([amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)) lets you search for individual words in the *Asher Lev* text. The page numbers are different from our edition, but it might still be a helpful resource.

**PARAPHRASES:** In offering a paraphrase of a poem, you are rewording or rephrasing what the author wrote. You are *not* summarizing the poem or analyzing it, and you certainly are not telling us what the author was “trying to say.” Think of what you’re doing as translating the poem from words and phrases used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (or whenever) into words and phrases easily understandable by your friends in 2019. Slang is fine as long as it’s evident that you understand the original meaning of the poem. Although sometimes there are just no alternatives for “is,” “or,” “not,” try to avoid using the words of the original poem. While using different words, show that you know how the words fit together—so it should be clear that you recognize the grammatical subject and the main verb of a

sentence. Sometimes the sense of a sentence requires looking at two lines of poetry together rather than just looking at each line in isolation.

**ESSAY # 3: INTER-ILLUMINATION.** Write a paper of at least 1,300–1,500 words, typed, double-spaced on the following topic:

Since literature is human experience shaped into form, a novel, play, or poem can often be a mirror in which we see ourselves. In this essay assignment, I want you to note your own reflection in this literary mirror. Find a theme, situation, relationship, action or character in a work we have read that you especially identify with. Explain how the text helps you to understand this aspect of your own experience; also explain how your own life situation helps you to understand the text. Provide specific detail from both your own experience and the text you have chosen to make the paper both clear and interesting. If reading the text has caused you to reframe your own experience, or to view it in a different light, explain how. The end result should be an *inter-illumination* of life and literature.

In contrast to the advice I've given you regarding earlier papers, for this essay it is entirely appropriate to use the first person (e.g., *I, me, my*). All the advice you received in the Pointers on Format, Style, Punctuation, and Quotations still applies.

**PLAY REVIEWS:** In writing a review you should respond to the actual production you have seen. If you have seen the play before, or read it before, or have an insight related to our class discussion, by all means feel free to use those perceptions in your review. But be sure that you tell us not only how a play *might* be performed but how it *was* performed in the production you witnessed. As with all of the written work in this course, play reviews will be evaluated for style and clarity as well as for content. Offer a clear statement of what you see as central to the production as a whole, then support that clear, central statement with insightful arguments and reasons to accept that understanding. Some sample reviews will be available. Each play review is due at the first or second class session after we've seen the performance (see the course calendar for details). See the appendix for more detailed guidelines.

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**LATE PAPERS:** Late papers not excused for illness will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each academic day they are late. Thus a "B+" paper handed in one day late would receive a "B," etc. Work not submitted will receive a zero. A zero is to an "F" as 0% is to 50%.

**DOCUMENTATION:** For written work submitted in this course you are required to provide a "List of Works Consulted." That list must identify any source you have consulted about your subject (including SparkNotes, Wikipedia, other on-line sources of information, books, articles in periodicals, or other students' papers) whether or not you have used material from that source. The List of Works Consulted needs to provide full bibliographic information in MLA format (see the Purdue Online Writing Lab: <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>>). In addition, you need to provide parenthetical documentation (including specific page numbers) for any direct quotations or paraphrased ideas from any source.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Plagiarism consists in taking the words or the ideas of someone else and presenting them as if they were your own. Copying someone else's paper is an obvious form of plagiarism. But finding ideas on a website and paraphrasing them in your own words as if the ideas were your own is an equally serious form of plagiarism. Any piece of work guilty of plagiarism will receive a zero and may result in failure for the course. Please familiarize yourself with the Westmont

College Plagiarism Policy, which explains different levels of plagiarism and the disciplinary consequences for each. See: <http://www.westmont.edu/academics/pages/provost/curriculum/plagiarism/>

**PERFORMANCES:** We will on a number of occasions go to the theatre together to see a play related to works we are studying. An individual can read in solitude a novel or poem that was written by another individual in solitude. But drama, the most communal of the arts, requires a company of actors and a body of people for an audience. We will go to the theatre together and share the experience of seeing a performance. Your participation in this aspect of the course is expected, but you need not feel that you have to attend each production if you have conflicts some nights. As an educational expense, a fee of \$75 for drama field trips will be collected along with tuition. The field trips fee covers your theatre tickets, the cost of transportation, and group booking costs for productions we attend as a group.

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**BASIS OF EVALUATION:** Your grade will be determined by your performance on examinations and quizzes, your papers and your participation in class discussion. Your grade for class participation gauges your conscientiousness in reading the material, the depth of your understanding of the literature, and your ability to articulate your ideas in comments and significant questions. The weighting of these factors is as follows: each one-hour exam—2 grades, final exam—3 grades, each review—2 grades, personal reading essay—1 grade; second and third essays—2 grades each; close reading—1 grade; paraphrases—1 grade; scene performance—2 grades; quizzes—2 grades, class participation—3 grades. Translated into percentages, that weighting is approximately as follows: each one-hour exam—7.4%, final exam—11.1%, each review—7.4%, personal reading essay—3.7%, second and third essays—7.4% each; close reading—3.7%, paraphrases—3.7%, scene performance—7.4%, quizzes—7.4%, class participation—11.1%.

**GENERAL EDUCATION:** This course fulfills the goals of Reading Imaginative Literature and Working Artistically (in the Common Inquiries section of General Education) and serves as a writing-intensive course (in the Common Skills portion of General Education).

**LITERATURE AS A MODE OF INQUIRY:** Reading imaginative literature invites us to consider how literature can inform our lives and deepen our faith. Moving across space (to other places and other cultures) and time (to historical periods other than our own), we will seek to discern what is essentially human from what is particular to the place and time we inhabit. Within this mode of inquiry we will explore different literary genres with the goals of helping you to

- ❖ understand how the context in which a text was written helps shape how it should be read
- ❖ respect the benefits of paying close attention
- ❖ notice the interplay of form, style and content
- ❖ demonstrate an understanding of language beyond its literal level
- ❖ encounter the other with empathy, compassion and love
- ❖ articulate and wrestle with the ethical questions implicit in a text
- ❖ examine the assumptions we bring to our reading
- ❖ appreciate presentational (as opposed to propositional) approaches to truth
- ❖ discern issues of social and economic justice and the abuses of power
- ❖ deepen your understanding of what it means to read as people of faith
- ❖ increase regard for the significance of story for people of the book

**WORKING ARTISTICALLY AS A MODE OF INQUIRY:** As a class we will attend five or more live theatre productions which we will discuss in class. In writing performance reviews on three of those productions you will have ample opportunity to hone your interpretive skills in assessing live performance. In class we will not only discuss criteria for interpreting live performance and reflect on the principles that undergird live performance, we will also get on our feet to take part in readers' theatre explorations of how intonation, facial expression, or body movement can alter the effect created by live performance. Through such exercises you will participate directly in the processes of enactment that characterize the art of the theatre. Your engagement in this aspect of the course will culminate in participating with one to four of your classmates in performing a scene from one of the plays we study.

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**SCENE PERFORMANCE:** If your performance group of two to five students perform a scene from a Shakespeare play, each actor should have 25-35 full-length lines. If you want to stage a longer scene and learn more lines, feel free. If you perform a non-Shakespearean scene, it should be of at least 10 minutes' duration with each actor having at least 200-300 words to speak. Again, if you want to go longer, feel free. All actors are to have their lines memorized and each scene is to be rehearsed at least four times for an hour each. In presenting your scene to the rest of the class, you may either perform in the classroom or you may choose some other location on campus. However, any place you choose must not pose a risk of injury to performers or to college property nor a risk of disrupting some other class. Members of your group should be appropriately costumed and provided with props if called for by the scene. By preparing and performing this scene you will be making theatre by participating in the very processes of enactment that characterize the art of the theatre.

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**WRITING FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS:** This course seeks to contribute to your development as a writer. Writing in a variety of modes throughout your college career will, we hope, equip you to

- ❖ express yourself clearly, cogently, and grammatically
- ❖ develop the ability to distinguish information from opinion
- ❖ marshal evidence in support of points you wish to make
- ❖ disagree with others without expressing disrespect
- ❖ agree with others without plagiarizing their views
- ❖ structure your presentation of ideas in ways that prove persuasive
- ❖ use words skillfully, craft sentences forcefully, and develop paragraphs robustly

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs):** As the above lists indicate, the goals for this course are many and various. But for assessment purposes we specify measurable things you will all be able to do by the end of the course. The expected learning outcomes for this course will be assessed through the papers you write and the scene you perform. You will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate an understanding of language beyond its literal level** (an outcome as a GE Reading Imaginative Literature course)  
In your essay analyzing imagery (essay # 2), you will show how a particular image pattern evolves over the course of the novel to convey figurative meaning that deepens our understanding of characters and thematic conflicts within the novel.
2. **Demonstrate the capacity to respond with empathy and compassion to human experience represented in literature** (an outcome as a GE Reading Imaginative Literature course)  
In your "inter-illumination" paper (essay #3), you will explain how a character, situation, or

relationship in the literature we have read particularly resonates with your own experience. Although you may not be male, or Jewish, or female, or a member of a royal family, or a blue-collar worker, or African American, or married, or of Asian descent, or a 16<sup>th</sup>-century subject of a monarch, or a member of a 17th-century Puritan community, you will show how you can enter into the experience of someone who is quite unlike you in some ways—and how the human experience represented in literature can help you to reframe your own experience.

3. **Demonstrate effective interpretive processes in analyzing live theatrical performance** (an outcome as a GE Working Artistically course)

In your three play reviews you will explain how the interpretive choices of directors and actors affect the emphases and meaning of live theatrical performance. Rather than just offering plot summary or character sketches, you will analyze what individual actors do to convey the mannerisms, mindset, and emotions of their character. Further, you will interpret the significance of how the actors interact with each other on stage to create the dynamics of a given situation. You might, for example, be able to explain how the performance of one actor affects how we see the significance of behavior by a different actor. You may also show how the choices made by costume designers, set designers, and sound or lighting designers contribute to our understanding of characters. For new plays, you will also assess the work of the playwright in crafting a theatrical script that does justice to whatever conflict he or she chooses to dramatize.

4. **Demonstrate emerging levels of skill in the creation, development, and presentation of theatrical performance** (an outcome as a GE Working Artistically course)

In exercises when we get on our feet to enact scenes in class and to a much greater degree in the scene you memorize and perform, you will demonstrate an understanding of how intonation, facial expression, and physical movement contribute to the effectiveness of theatrical performance. At the most rudimentary level, you will show that you recognize theatre exists to be seen and heard by ensuring your actions are visible to your audience and your lines are enunciated clearly enough for your audience to hear, process, and understand the words you speak. Beyond that, you will “suit the action to the word, the word to the action,” as Hamlet says, so that you “hold as ’twere the mirror up to nature.” That is, you will be seeking to reflect in your performance the personality of the character you are embodying.

5. **Demonstrate the capacity to communicate in written form for a variety for purposes and audiences** (an outcome as a GE writing-intensive course)

In your play reviews, you will be engaging in a journalistic form of writing consisting of brief paragraphs and beginning with a compelling “hook” that conveys the most significant feature of the production you are reviewing. With an intended audience of, say, *Horizon* readers, you will be writing for fellow students in a mode in which contractions, somewhat casual diction, and pop culture references are all fair game.

By contrast, in analyzing imagery (essay # 2) you will be writing more formally with an introductory paragraph spelling out an original thesis and using effective argumentative transitions as you progressively build a case using topic sentences at the start of well-developed paragraphs and culminating in a conclusion which goes beyond a mere restatement or summary of what has preceded. In such formal writing, you will avoid contractions and pop culture references as you write for a more scholarly audience.

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Both in your play reviews and in your imagery analysis, you will avoid altogether (or be very sparing in your use of) the first person. However, in your “inter-illumination” essay, you will be synthesizing the literary representation of experience with your own personal experience and, as a result, will necessarily be relying on the first person.

6. **Incorporate all quotations into your own prose grammatically**, either by embedding brief quotations into your own sentence or by crafting an introductory sentence that identifies the speaker and context of the passage. This learning outcome contributes to
  - ❖ the GE expectation regarding your capacity to communicate in written form, and also to
  - ❖ a Program Learning Outcome of the English Department that students will “engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards.”
7. **Employ MLA citation and formatting style for incorporating sources into written work.** This learning outcome, which you will demonstrate in all of your written work including play reviews, contributes to
  - ❖ the GE expectation regarding your capacity to communicate in written form, and also to
  - ❖ a Program Learning Outcome of the English Department that students will “engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards.”
8. **Practice close analysis of literary texts from diverse historical and cultural traditions.** Your reading, our class discussion, and your written work will expose you to diverse historical and cultural traditions. Your adeptness at close analysis will be assessed through the close reading exercises, which will hone your skills in this area, as well as all of the reviews and essays you write. This CLO contributes to the English Department’s Program Learning Outcome that students will
  - ❖ Read literary texts carefully, analyzing both the contexts and the techniques (e.g., literary devices and genre characteristics) that shape their meaning.
9. **Write an essay that engages Christian faith.** Essay #3 will provide an opportunity for you to address issues of Christian faith and will be the means for assessing this learning outcome. This CLO contributes to the English Department’s Program Learning Outcome that students will:
  - ❖ Demonstrate critical discernment in their examination of literary texts in ways that expand their affections and sympathies, by assessing their own cultural and theological assumptions.

**STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (learning, physical or psychological) are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by ODS staff. These accommodations may be necessary to ensure your equal access to this course. For more information, contact Sheri Noble, director of disability services (Voskuyl Library 310A, snoble@westmont.edu) or visit the ODS website: <http://www.westmont.edu/offices/disability> .

**LIBRARY ASSISTANCE:** Westmont librarians are available to help you. You can go to the Research Help Desk in the library for help with research for your assignments. You can also set up an appointment with the librarian who serves your academic department. To identify a specific librarian and to find subject-specific resources, consult the library’s research guides at [libguides.westmont.edu](http://libguides.westmont.edu).

**WRITERS’ CORNER**, the campus writing center, is an academic support service that is free for all students. Peer tutors, who offer help with your writing, are available for one-on-one tutorials in Voskuyl Library 215. Students with appointments get first priority, but drop-ins are also welcome (on a first come, first served basis). You can make an appointment at: <https://westmont.mywconline.com/> .

## APPENDIX 1:

### Play Review Assignment Guidelines

The writing of play reviews requires a journalistic style of prose, which means leaping into your subject, writing brief paragraphs, and communicating your main observations and opinions clearly within the first few sentences. In writing a review you should respond to the actual production you see, and not enter into a discussion of matters related solely to the text of the play. If you have seen the play before, or read it before, or have an insight related to our class discussion, feel free to use those perceptions in your review. But be sure that you focus primarily not only how a play *might* be performed but how it *is* performed in the production you witness.

As you reflect on the performance, remember that doing theatre is about making choices. Some choices work well, some don't. One choice may appeal to you, and strike another person as bizarre. However, in theatre, it is rare that an actor, director, or designer will make a choice that is not motivated by some idea. Before you dismiss a choice as foolish, try to figure out why the theatre artist made that choice in the first place.

- ❖ Your subject for a play review is the play as performed, not the plot. If I want to know the plot of a play, I can read the text. What I can't know from the text is how the actors are interpreting that text, what the set designer is doing to create an environment for those actors, or how the costume designer saw the physical attributes of each character. More importantly, I can't know your insights into these interpretive choices.
- ❖ Your audience wants to know right away what stands out about this production as a whole. Because this is a journalistic style of writing, using several sentences to introduce your topic isn't really a good idea. You should just plunge in, giving your audience a snapshot of the distinctives of the production from the very earliest sentences of your review. Your audience will want to know some specific details, whether they are of actor choices, design choices, or directorial choices, so notice what you notice in the production. Your audience will also want to know what the overall effect of the production was, so reflect analytically on how all the individual choices coalesce to create a unified and meaningful whole.
- ❖ Your purpose in writing a play review is to give your audience both a vision of the production as a whole and an analysis of some critical details that are revelatory of that whole. You should strive to be simultaneously descriptive and analytical. Avoid simply saying, "It was good; I liked it." Instead, tell *how* it was done, and why it matters. The best reviews will be ones where every paragraph does a great deal of work, simultaneously delineating production choices, analyzing those choices, and revealing how those choices contribute to making up the larger whole. Questions to bear in mind while writing reviews include:
  - What is the director's concept in producing the play as he or she does?
  - What works, or doesn't work, in this production?
  - What key moments from this production really stand out?
  - How is the actor bringing meaning to the language she is speaking?
  - How do acting choices complicate, support, or undercut the words being spoken?
  - How does setting, costume, or lighting enrich or expand the world of the play?

- Why are the artists making the choices they are?
- Why are these choices effective or not?
- Why is this play being produced in this manner?

### Stylistic requirements

- ❖ the name of the play, the playwright, and the group producing the play must all appear early in the review; do not, however, simply dedicate one sentence to the pedestrian reporting of this information—incorporate it into the flow of engaging sentences instead
- ❖ actors must be discussed by name, not by character name: you may not say, “the guy playing Hamlet”; you must say, “Ethan Hawke” (or Mel Gibson, or Stephen Dillane, or Kenneth Branagh, or Kevin Kline, etc); this means, of course, that you must obtain a program
- ❖ the title of your review must not be the title of the play you just saw, or anything as uninspired as “a review of the title of the play I just saw”
- ❖ your review must deal with the production, not with a narrative of your journey to the production, your exhilaration as you found your seat, your dismay when you realized you were sitting behind Yao Ming in a big hat, etc
- ❖ your review should make sparing use of the first person, eschewing it entirely if possible
- ❖ paragraphs should be relatively brief, as suits a journalistic style, but ought to flow nicely from one to the next, as suits good writing in general
- ❖ your review should be 800-1,100 words long—that’s roughly 2½–3½ pages

### Your objectives for your play review are to:

- ❖ present and evaluate the choices made by the theatre artists in production, using vivid language to describe key moments and relating those moments to the overall objectives of the production and its relative success
- ❖ describe the leaf in order to show us the forest (in other words, find the particular that is revelatory of the general)
- ❖ make it clear what your overall view of the production is, whether your thesis is explicit or implied, as it often is in review writing
- ❖ discuss the play as performed, not the plot
- ❖ move from what to how to why in your examination of the production
- ❖ offer specific and meaningful evidence to support your claims
- ❖ analyze and comment on this evidence fully and originally
- ❖ write in a journalistic style, opening with your most important observations, and making every sentence count
- ❖ plunge into your subject in your opening paragraph, and offer some meaningful synthesis of your evaluation of the production in your closing paragraph

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## Appendix 2: Scene Preparation Work

### Ten Questions

To ask and answer for yourself (as your character)  
every time you attempt to create a role.

1. Who am I? Answer both in the general sense, and in the sense of “Who am I now rather than in any other circumstances?”
2. Where am I? Country, region, city, neighborhood, house, room, part of room. (Why?)
3. What time is it? Year, month, week, day, hour, minute. (Why?)
4. What surrounds me physically? Include everything seen and unseen. Determine the importance of several things.
5. What are the given circumstances? Everything relevant that makes my situation specific. Consider social class, economic status, marital status, family situation, and any special circumstances of life.
6. What are my relationships? With self, with others in the play, with objects?
7. What do I want? In the play, scene, moment. In my life? This year? Today? This minute? What’s the positive outcome?
8. What’s in my way? External and internal obstacles.
9. What do I do to get what I want? In the play (my “life”); in the scene (at this moment).
10. What could I lose in this scene? Consider the array of things being risked in the scene.

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