

TERM: Fall 2026

COURSE CATEGORY: ENGL 2400: Reading and Writing Genres

COURSE NUMBER & TITLE: The Play's the Thing: Dramatic Storytelling

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MW 1:45-3:25 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Molly Youngkin

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

In this course, we will use “the play” as “the thing,” as Hamlet suggests, to heighten awareness in ourselves and others, by reading plays by a variety of playwrights and by writing our own dramatic works. This course assumes that the acts of reading drama and writing drama inform each other, and each activity can be used to improve our ability to do the other well. We will analyze the language of dramatic writers and critics and improve our ability to use dramatic literary conventions. We will discuss conventions such as character, plot, setting, and dialogue, and we will engage a variety of critical perspectives as we read and write drama.

You will be expected to participate in class discussion, peer response workshops, and other class activities. We will do weekly writing exercises; 10-12 page Dramatic Work ; and write a 5-7 page critical paper involving research. Required textbooks: Dunne, Will. *The Dramatic Writer's Companion: Tools to Develop Characters, Cause Scenes, and Build Stories*. U of Chicago P, 2017. ISBN 9780226494081; Kelly, Joseph, editor. *The Seagull Book of Plays*. 4th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2017. ISBN 9780393631616

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By reading, discussing, and writing about plays by a variety of playwrights, students learn how to analyze the genre of drama.

By reading about the craft of dramatic writing and completing writing exercises about specific conventions used in dramatic writing, students are prepared for writing a short dramatic work in this course.

CLASS LEVEL RESTRICTION:

N/A

RECOMMENDED/PREREQUISITES:

English Major/Minor

COURSE ATTRIBUTES:

- DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH (LD)
- HISTORY OF LIT, MEDIA, AND CULTURE (LD)
- READING AND WRITING GENRES (LD)
- THEORY, POWER, AND RHETORIC (LD)
- PRE-1800 (UD)
- CREATIVE ARTISTRY (UD)
- RACE, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND POWER (UD)
- UPPER-DIVISION ELECTIVE (UD)
- 5000-LEVEL SEMINAR (UD)

CORE ATTRIBUTES:

N/A