



Instructor: Lawrence Switzky

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Course Number: ENG340H5F

Course Title: Drama to World War II

Course Description: This course charts drama between 1865 and 1945 as a series of calculated (sometimes wild) experiments in breaking the rules that previously governed what actions could be represented onstage and how the resources of theater could be mustered to represent them. From the naturalistic theater of scientific observation to the cosmic metadrama of Thornton Wilder to Antonin Artaud's plans to replace institutionalized religion with hallucinatory rituals, we will discuss how modern drama responded to and produced developments in psychology, sex and sexuality, warfare, governance and technology. Two framing questions will guide our investigation: how does the pronounced artifice of drama paradoxically try to satisfy an audience's hunger for reality; and should we think about theater as a fusion of all the arts (e.g. dance, poetry, painting, film) or as a distinct art form that only superficially resembles the others? Special attention will be given to the imaginative challenges of thinking about modern drama as literature – what exactly are we reading when we read these plays? Course texts will be drawn from Wagner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw, Synge, Pirandello, Marinetti, Cocteau, Glaspell, Wilder, O'Neill, Brecht and Artaud, among others.

First Authors to be Studied: Wagner, *Tristan and Isolde*; Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*; Strindberg, *Miss Julie*

Method of Instruction: Lectures, discussions, occasional performances, readings, and/or screenings of texts (as determined by class interest)

Method of Evaluation: 2 essays, 20% and 35%, quizzes 20%, attendance and participation 10%, creative/interpretive project 15%