



Instructor: Lawrence Switzky

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Course Number: ENG340H5F

Course Title: Modern Drama to World War II

Course Description: This course charts drama between 1865 and 1945 as a series of experiments in breaking the rules that previously governed what actions could be represented on stages and how the resources of theater could be mustered to represent them. Some of the topics we will cover include: drama's role in the birth and development of modern psychology; naturalism and other dramatic attempts to place "real life" on stage; representations of sex and sexuality; new varieties of comedy, from philosophical farces to plays of ideas to "happy tragedies"; metadrama and plays about playing; and competing models of late modernist drama as a rational political inquiry or as an ecstatic religious ritual. 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 the plays and theoretical writings of Richard Wagner, Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, Bernard Shaw, Luigi Pirandello, Eugene O'Neill, Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud.

First Three Texts/Authors to be Studied: Richard Wagner, *Tristan and Isolde*; Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll House*, *The Wild Duck*

Method of Instruction: Lectures, discussions, performances

Method of Evaluation: Two midterms (30%), review assignment (15%), participation (15%), performance project (15%), final paper (25%)