

## HSS Course Syllabus: ENGWRT 1650 (Playwriting)

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### Course Information

Credit hours: 3	Instructor: Professor Emily Jane O'Dell
	Email: Emily.odell@scupi.cn
	Office: 317
	Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday (4:30-6 pm); and by appointment Wednesday (2-5 pm) & Friday (2-5 pm)
Room: Zone 4-204	Prerequisites: None

Required Texts: See Blackboard

### Course Description

A beginning course in writing for the stage. Starting with short scenes, students will work towards understanding the craft and art of constructing theatre stories to be performed by actors. The final project will be a one-act play. Throughout there will be emphasis on the stage effectiveness of the writing and opportunity for informal performance of student scripts. Students will also produce and perform a One Page Play Festival.

### Student Learning Outcomes

With successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- understand dramatic structure and the fundamentals of theatre history
- construct three-dimensional characters
- create an imaginative script with a clear playworld and conflict
- write engaging monologues and dialogue
- use language in innovative ways to express emotion, conflict, and character
- perform dramatic and comedic dialogue
- produce new writing for an audience

### Assignments and Evaluation:

Though the class will be a writing workshop, students will also read and/or watch selections from the following plays for inspiration: *Antigone*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Happy Days*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *The Dance and the Railroad*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *Our Town*, *Fires in the Mirror*, *Suicide Forest*, *We're Gonna Die*, *June is the First Fall*, *M. Butterfly*, *Theatre of the Green Goose*, *Stop Kiss*, *Fences*, *Three Sisters*, *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf*, *The Crucible*, and *Twilight: Los Angeles*.

Students will be evaluated in many activities according to the grading policy. Activities include:

Assignment	Course Outcome	Percent of final grade
Participation	Students will engage in a variety of creative writing tasks and perform scenes from published plays and their classmates' work	30%
Playworld Presentation	Students will present their "playworld" to the class	5%
One Page Play & Festival Contribution	Students will write a "one page play" and work with their classmates to produce a "One Page Play" Festival	10%
One Act	Students will write a well-written One Act play for their final submission	30%
Final Portfolio	At the end of the semester, students will submit a portfolio of all of their writing (revised versions as well)	25%

Students will keep a "writing journal" during the semester which is a collection of their research, writing, drafts, ideas, and exercises. This will help them create the portfolio in the end of the semester.

This course is designed to be a professional, artistic workshop. As such, you are expected to participate for the improvement of your own work and the development of your classmate's work. Please be respectful to your classmates and support their development, analysis, and contributions.

**Schedule:**

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>Materials</i>	<i>Major Assignments</i>
<b>1</b> <b>(September 8<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Investigate the elements & meaning of "drama"	In-class theatre clips	Writing Exercise #1
<b>2</b> <b>(September 15<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Discuss the six elements of Aristotle	In-class theatre clips and scenes	Write a "found character" monologue
<b>3</b> <b>(September 22<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	Workshop: Present the found character monologues.	Read aloud: Selected scenes from chosen plays	Begin reading <i>Our Town</i>
<b>4</b> <b>(September 29<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Dialogue  We will discuss language, rhythm, imagery, and sound	In-class theatre clips	Students will experiment with writing dialogue

<b>5 (October 13<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Character	In-class theatre clips	Students will create several characters and write monologues for each one
<b>6 (October 20<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Workshop: Students will present their characters and monologues	Student writing	Students will incorporate the feedback into their revisions
<b>7 (October 27<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Create a scene that has conflict, climax, and resolution. Think about obstacles, opportunities, suspense, and tension.	In-class theatre clips and scenes	Finish writing the “conflict” scene
<b>8 (November 3<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	Workshop: Students will present their scenes with conflict	Student writing	Start building a “playworld” through research and contemplation
<b>9 (November 10<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Spectacle: We will incorporate visuals, video, music, movement, and other devices. We will also explore stage direction possibilities.	In-class theatre clips and scenes	Students will write a scene without dialogue
<b>10 (November 17<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Students will present their “playworld” to the class (including photos, writing, music, videos, art, whatever!)	Student writing	Students will continue writing their One Acts
<b>11 (November 24<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Subtext	In-class theatre clips and scenes	Students will continue writing their One Acts
<b>12 (December 1<sup>st</sup>)</b>	Workshop One Acts	Student writing	Students will continue writing their One Acts
<b>13 (December 8<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Rehearse for One Page Play Festival	Student writing	Students will continue writing their One Acts and preparing for our class performance
<b>14 (December 15<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Rehearse for One Page Play Festival	Student writing	Students will continue writing their One Acts and preparing for our class performance

<b>15 (December 22<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	Rehearse for One Page Play Festival  Turn in your final draft of your One Act	Student writing	Students will continue writing their One Acts and preparing for our class performance
<b>16 (December 29<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Feedback & Critique of Scripts	Student writing	Assessment of a semester's progress

Note: Scheduled assignments, lectures, materials, and activities may be subject to change based on the needs of the class at the instructor's discretion.

### **Attendance Policy**

After two unexcused absences students will lose 3 points or half a letter grade from their final grade. Students with more than five absences will fail the course. Students who are late or leave early three 3 times or more will be counted as one absence.

### **Student Use of Electronic Technology Policy:**

Students must use electronic technology (including cell phones, laptops, tablets, and iPads) in appropriate ways during classes. Out of respect, cell phones should generally be turned off or on silent and stored out of sight. They should not be used during classroom activities unless the instructor has given permission. Electronic devices are forbidden during quizzes, tests or other in-class graded assignments, unless the instructor has given permission.

Technology use in this class is meant to improve the learning environment for all students. Please be respectful of your instructor and classmates and use the technology appropriately.

If you have questions about what this means, please talk to your individual instructor.

### **Recording:**

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may NOT record classroom lectures, discussions, and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly recorded in advance can be used solely for the student's own private study.

Any reposting of recorded course materials may result in expulsion from course.

### **Make-up Policy for Missed Assignments and Tests:**

Students are responsible for the assignments in their classes. Assignments include in-class activities, quizzes, tests, homework, and any other work related to classes.

- If you are absent from class, you should try to contact one of the students in your class to find out what work was missed.
- If you cannot find out from another student about what work you have missed, when you return to class you must talk to your instructors about the missed work and if/when you can make up the work. You are responsible for talking to your teacher; your teacher is not responsible for reminding you about missed work.
- If you are absent from class on the due date of an assignment, you must hand in the assignment and be prepared to make up tests the day that you return to class or on a date decided with your teacher.
- If you know you will be absent, talk to your teacher before you leave or email your teacher to find out about the work that you will miss while you are away.

- If you have not been absent from class and you want to hand in an assignment late, you must first discuss the reason with your teacher before or on the due date. Do not assume that your teacher will accept late assignments. Also, you may lose points for late work based on teacher discretion.
- If you and your teacher arrange to meet so that you can make up an assignment and you miss that meeting, you may receive a “0” for that assignment.

### **Use of Machine Translation and Other Online Writing and Language Tools**

While students are encouraged to use dictionaries and other language resources, they should not rely on machine translators for large sections of text. Papers must be written in English. Any paper that is written in Chinese and then processed through an online translator will be considered unacceptable.

If an instructor believes that a paper was written using machine translation, the instructor reserves the right to ask the student to re-write (potentially with a different topic), or give an alternative assignment, which may include a timed-writing essay assignment. Until the re-write is submitted the student will have an F for the assignment.

### **Use of non-English sources**

All non-English sources must be cited. The translation of non-English sources is equivalent to quoting. When using Chinese sources, use quotation marks to directly quote the sources and include the original text in brackets. For example:

Wang Chao in describing nanocarriers says, “Interaction between nanomaterials and organisms, especially Interaction between the Immunological Effect of Nanomaterials and the Immune System in vivo further clarification is needed to optimize the shape, physicochemical properties, size and surface of nanocarriers [纳米材料与生物机体内的相互作用，特别是纳米材料本身的免疫学效应与体内免疫系统的相互作用需要进一步阐明，优化纳米载体的形状、大小、表面、理化性质等]” (Wang 96).

### **Policy on Graduating Seniors Course Requirements During the Spring Semester of Their Senior Year**

Seniors taking HSS courses during the spring semester will have to complete course assignments by week 14. The instructor will provide an alternative final project/exam for graduating seniors that will be due by week 14. If a senior does not submit all work, fails assignments, or does not attend class regularly, the student may not graduate, and will have to retake the course in its entirety in a later semester in order to graduate. This may delay graduation for a complete calendar year.

### **SCUPI Honor Code:**

Students in this course must follow the SCUPI Honor Code. This includes:

- must not get help from anyone to do his/her work without the teacher’s permission.
- must not get help from any outside sources to do his/her work without the teacher’s permission.
- must not copy the words of another and present those words as his/her own work.

Participating in these activities can result in an F. Turning in work that is not your own can result in an F.

Writing Center Policy on Plagiarism: first instance will result in a failing grade with option of re-writing the assignment; a second instance will result in failure of assignment and meeting with Writing Center director and no option for re-writing the assignment; a third instance will result in failure in the course and referral to university officials for Honor Code violation.

**Participation:**

Active participation is crucial for language learning. Participating in class makes you an engaged learner of English. In this class, participation means:

- arriving to class on time
- staying on task (including appropriate use of technology)
- actively listening to your classmates and teacher when they speak in class
- asking questions
- bringing all class materials
- attending class regularly
- completing all homework on time
- actively and constructively participating in class activities
- being prepared to answer questions
- using English in class

**Student Responsibility**

This syllabus is a contract between you and the instructor. It is the first place you should look for answers to your questions about course requirements, expectations, and policies. By enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to adhere to the requirements, expectations and policies outlined in this syllabus, including sections on the SCUPI Honor Code. Students who fail to submit their work on time or miss more than 5 classes could receive a failing grade and may not graduate.