

English 158 (Introduction to Writing Plays)

Fall 2004

In this course, we will be working as a group to develop our skills as playwrights. Our purpose is to collaborate in language and writing in a context that promotes discussion and interpretation. As a prerequisite, students should already be able to write college-level essays with coherent organization (this is covered in English 150).

Instructor: Jeanne Iribarne (Call me "J" or Jeanne)
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Texts:

- Jerry Wasserman, ed. *Modern Canadian Plays, Volume II*, 4th edition

Calendar Description:

This course offers students with strong writing ability a chance to explore and develop their skills and possible goals in writing plays. This course alternates with ENGL 154.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course the students should:

- Identify at a beginner's level, what it means to be a playwright.
- Analyse some sense of how the theatre works and what the playwright's role is in the production of a new play.
- Evaluate the importance of conflict is for an effective play.
- Practise dialogue with a fair degree of facility, and with due attention to sub-text.
- Practise and hone skills for playwriting through a comprehensive set of exercises, such as monologues various short statements about what is happening with the characters,
- Evaluate and produce plots, settings, characters and appropriately nuanced language with effective use of figures of speech.
- Practise effective journal keeping, to understand its importance for the playwright.
- Practise appropriate research for giving plays credibility.
- Identify the various resources available for playwrights.
- Prepare a play for submission for publication following the guidelines of The Playwrights' Union of Canada (PUC).

Important Course Policies:

1. Participation in this course requires a climate of respect and collaboration. This means offering peers constructive feedback and commitment in class.
2. Late assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will lose 10% per day for the first two days. After this they will not be accepted at all.

3. If you miss in-class work/exams, you will receive a zero (unless you can prove a medical emergency). Check with me beforehand if you know in advance that you will be unable to attend.
4. Please be careful when using other people's words or ideas. Using them without identifying the author constitutes fraud (plagiarism) and can have a lasting impact on this course and your future studies. See me if you are in any doubt about where to draw the line between your work and someone else's.

Evaluation:

Assignment 1 (first draft)	10%
Assignment 2 (second draft)	15%
Assignment 3 (first draft)	15%
Assignment 4 (second draft)	30%
Participation (including "acting," feedback, self-evaluation, exercises, etc.)	30%

Important notes:

1. **Students who cannot pass the in-class assignments or exams will NOT pass the course.**
2. **"Participation" means contributing to discussions in class in a genuine and generous way. Obviously, you can't participate if you aren't here. I will give you a detailed breakdown of how I determine the participation mark later in the term.**