

Course Syllabus

Course Information

**Also posted to Canvas > Course Information*

Section Name: Dramatizing Discovery
Section Number: GRW 101_14

Where & When: MWF 11:30-12:20
Smith Hall, Room 110

Instructor: Prof. Laura J. Eckelman
Assistant Professor of Theatre & Dance
leckelman2@washcoll.edu
office phone: (410) 778-7824
office location: Gibson 220 (2nd floor, overlooking the parking lot)

Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays, 2:30-4:00pm
or by appointment

Description:

How do science and art fit together? What does nuclear physics have to do with memory? Does chaos theory have a place in the theatre? Over the last decade or so, intersections between science and art have become more and more prominent, and a new sub-genre—plays about science—has emerged. In this course we will explore theatrical works that incorporate science and mathematics in a variety of ways: as documentary content, thematic through-line, and even dramatic structure. We will examine plays both dramaturgically and scientifically, through discussion, research, presentation, and hands-on activities. By looking at each piece through these multiple lenses, we will develop a more nuanced understanding of the plays themselves and the genre as a whole, as well as broader insight into how science and art can inform and parallel each other. This course is supported by SANDBOX, Washington College's initiative for interdisciplinary collaboration merging art and science.

Goals & Methods

**Also posted to Canvas > Goals & Methods*

Global Research and Writing seminars (GRW) invite students into the scholarly conversation at Washington College by introducing them to the process of academic writing and research. Thus GRW seminars prepare students to be active participants in upper-level courses and help them develop the research skills needed for upper-level courses and the Senior Capstone Experience.

Learning Goals (the WHAT)

In all GRW courses, students will learn to:

- locate and evaluate appropriate source material
- synthesize diverse sources for a specific purpose and audience
- use sources as a means of constructing an argument
- gain familiarity with at least one system of citation
- revise based on self-reflection as well as the feedback of their peers and instructor
- negotiate and adapt to the conventions of research

In **this** GRW course, students will also learn to:

- read, interpret, and discuss plays, including their internal elements and external context
- understand and articulate how science and math can function in a theatrical context
- write persuasive, elegant prose
- *and hopefully...* draw nuanced connections among the arts, sciences, and humanities

Activities & Methods (the HOW)

In order to accomplish the above goals, students will:

- read and discuss science-oriented plays and related texts
- discuss, explore, and practice strategies for effective writing and research
- research and deliver a formal dramaturgical presentation about a single play
- compose and revise three writing assignments:
 - a short Play Summary
 - a medium-length Analysis Paper
 - a long Research Paper
- engage in peer review of each other's written and presentational work

Materials & Supplies

**Also posted to Canvas > Materials & Supplies*

***If you purchase your books from somewhere other than the WC Bookstore, please check the ISBN numbers to ensure you have the correct edition.

A Writer's Reference with Writing in the Disciplines (8th Ed.), by Diana Hacker & Nancy Sommers
Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011 ISBN: 9781457686498

<i>A Disappearing Number</i> , by Simon McBurney TCG Books, 2008	ISBN: 9781559362252
<i>An Experiment With an Air Pump</i> , by Shelagh Stephenson Dramatists Play Service (acting edition), 2000	ISBN: 9780822217459
<i>Constellations</i> , by Nick Payne Faber and Faber, 2014	ISBN: 9780865477711
<i>Copenhagen</i> , by Michael Frayn Samuel French (acting edition), 2010	ISBN: 9780573627521
<i>Deepen the Mystery: Science and the South Onstage</i> , by Lauren Gunderson iUniverse, 2005	ISBN: 9780595379668
<i>Hapgood</i> , by Tom Stoppard Faber and Faber, 2008	ISBN: 9780571198573
<i>Informed Consent</i> , by Deborah Laufer Samuel French, 2016	ISBN: 9780573799860
<i>Isaac's Eye</i> , by Lucas Hnath Dramatists Play Service	ISBN: 9780822229223
<i>Life of Galileo</i> , by Bertolt Brecht, translated by John Willett Penguin, 2008	ISBN: 9780143105381
<i>Photograph 51</i> , by Anna Ziegler Dramatists Play Service (acting edition), 2011	ISBN: 9780822225089
<i>Proof</i> , by David Auburn Dramatists Play Service (acting edition), 2002	ISBN: 9780822217824
<i>Sequence</i> , by Arun Lakra Playwrights Canada Press, 2014	ISBN: 9781770911970
<i>The How and The Why</i> , by Sarah Treem Dramatists Play Service (acting edition), 2013	ISBN: 9780822227311
<i>Science on Stage: From Doctor Faustus to Copenhagen</i> , by Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (optional) Princeton University Press, 2012	ISBN: 9780691155449

*Additional readings will be posted to Canvas.

Assignments

**Detailed assignment information is posted to Canvas > Assignments.*

**Some papers will be reviewed, revised, and resubmitted. In these cases, only the final grade is counted.*

Class Participation (15%)

- Students are expected to engage actively in all course-related activities and discussions.
- Each student receives a participation grade every day; averages will be posted at the midterm and end-of-semester, and are available anytime upon request.

Reading Notes (10%)

- Students will take notes on all reading assignments, using the +/- format (see attached).
- Notes must be uploaded to Canvas by 10am **and** brought to class for use in discussion.

Dramaturgy Presentation (20%)

- Each student will give a formal presentation to the class about a play from the syllabus.
- Students should arrange to review their presentations with the instructor at least one week before their scheduled presentation date, in order to ask questions and receive feedback.
- Presenters will also help lead class discussion by posing questions and offering context.

Play Summary (5%)

- Early in the semester, students will craft a short summary of one of the plays read thus far, addressing its plot, characters, structure, and style.
- This paper will provide an early opportunity for students to demonstrate and receive feedback on their writing and script analysis skills.

Analysis Paper (10%)

- Around mid-semester, students will write a more substantive analysis of a different script.
- This paper will serve as a written corollary to our in-class discussions, and will require students to investigate more the play's themes/ideas and scientific/performative elements.

Research Paper (40%)

- Throughout the second half of the semester, students will work on a substantial research project in which they will examine and dissect a science-based play of their own choosing.
- This project has several parts—each of which will be submitted and graded separately—including: a Project Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, Outline, and Final Paper.

A Note on Deadlines, Revision, and Mutual Respect

- *Assignments are scheduled to encourage steady progress, useful feedback, and productive revision.*
- *Late writing assignments will not be marked down, but may not be given detailed feedback—unless the student makes an appointment to meet with the instructor in person.*
- *Reading Notes and Presentation Materials serve as preparation for class, and so are not accepted late.*

Course Policies

**Also posted to Canvas > Course Policies*

Communication

- All course information (assignment prompts, readings, due dates, etc.) will be posted and updated on Canvas, which is the best resource for up-to-date materials.
- Assignments, readings, deadlines, and course policies are all subject to change.

Attendance

- You may miss up to 3 class sessions for illness, athletic obligations, personal matters, etc.
- Each additional absence—regardless of reason—reduces your final average by 1/3 letter grade.
- Absence and tardiness do not affect due dates. Work is due whether you're in class or not.
- Please inform the instructor of anticipated absences **as early as possible**, and make arrangements (in advance!) for submitting work and/or making up classroom activities.
- Recurring tardiness will be treated as absence.

Preparedness

- Bring your books, notebook, and reading notes to class, and be prepared to start on time.
- Laptops, tablets, cell phones, and all other devices must be silenced and stowed during class.

Honor Code

- The Honor Code demands that all members of the WC community respect the ideas, wellbeing, and property of others. This covers much more than plagiarism; it's about engaging honestly and respectfully with a community of artists and scholars.
- In both class discussions and written work, you are strongly encouraged to share your views, to pose probing questions, and to disagree with others—including your peers, published academic sources, and the instructor—but you must do so in a considerate manner. Any idea that's not your own must be properly cited in MLA format.
- All written work will be scanned using TurnItIn, a web-based plagiarism prevention service.
- Suspected plagiarism will be discussed with the student before reporting to the Honor Board.

Accessibility

- Students with disabilities or learning differences are strongly encouraged to visit the Office of Academic Services and meet with the course instructor during the first week of class to discuss any special needs or accommodations.

Academic Support

- This course has an embedded tutor from the Writing Center, who will be available to students both in and outside of class.
- Students are strongly encouraged to visit the Writing Center for help on their assignments. For each documented visit, students will receive 1 point of extra credit.

...and finally, a few words of Advice

**Also posted to Canvas > Advice*

- First and foremost, **please ask questions!** If you're confused, someone else probably is too.
- Everyone at WC is here to help you learn and grow, so don't be afraid to ask for help or give feedback. We don't know you're struggling unless you tell us.
- The most important skills you can cultivate in college are those of good communication. Do your best to reply promptly, always be honest, and don't avoid hard conversations.
- Check your email and Canvas frequently, and adjust your settings for "ASAP" email updates.
- The best way to gain people's respect is by taking responsibility for yourself and your actions.
- The success of any class depends on the participation and engagement of every student. Be present, engage vulnerably, and consider your peers' work with respect and an open mind.
- For each 4-credit course, plan to spend at least 10 hours per week *outside of class* working and preparing. If you're spending more than that, talk to the instructor.
- Growth requires discomfort. If you find yourself feeling anxious, vulnerable, or insecure, it's probably because you're learning something. Instead of pushing against that feeling, **lean in**.
- Insight doesn't arrive at the last minute. Give yourself (and your ideas) time to marinate.
- Don't beat yourself up. In the real world, we almost never get things right on the first try.
- Try to see revision as an opportunity, not a burden. Receiving and responding to feedback is how we all grow and learn—in all parts of our lives.
- When you get work back from an instructor or peer reviewer, read the notes carefully and try to address them. Giving good feedback is hard, and it's frustrating to see it ignored.
- Learn the preferences and pet peeves of your various instructors. If you don't know, ask.
- Presentation matters—in classwork, in email, and in person.
- Read your work aloud. It's the best way to catch typos and awkward syntax.
- Whenever possible, take notes by hand. You'll write less but remember more.