



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב

BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
ABRAHAM-CURIEL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LITERATURES AND
LINGUISTICS

MODERN BRITISH DRAMA: THE COMEDY OF THE ABSURD

0-132-1-298

2/3 year Elective

2 points

Mondays 1000-1200

Course Description

The course will study the theatre of the absurd on the British postwar stage, focusing on two plays by Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard. We will look at the ways in which these plays address existential issues of meaning in everyday life, as well as the comedy in the absurd that brings out the fine lines between real and unreal, sane and insane. In particular, we will examine how language in these plays draws our attention to identity and memory, menace and desire, parody and intertextuality.

Course Objectives

Students will become familiar with basic notions in modern drama and will study the relations of politics and the theatre, as well as existentialist thought. Skills to be acquired include interpretive reading and dramatic performance.

Keywords: absurd; drama; modern literature; existentialism

Course requirements

Active participation required in all classes 10%

Preparatory questions for discussion in class (to be distributed at the beginning of semester) 10%

1 Personal Project (including presentation in class and written academic paper, 5-6 pages) 40% (paper due March 10, 2020)

1 Final Paper (on a topic to be approved by the lecturer from one of the texts in the required reading list, 7-8 pages, 10 maximum) 40% (due March 10, 2020)

Required Reading

Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Copies of required texts may be borrowed from the lecturer or from the library; if you wish to own your own copy you should order it from the university bookstore or internet suppliers. It is your responsibility to have your own copies and bring them to class.

We will also view screenings of Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* and Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, as well as clips from Hitchcock, *Psycho*.

Personal Project

The student will choose a text not on the required reading list (an absurd play written after World War Two). The personal project will be presented in class on a prearranged date and submitted in writing by the end of the semester. The oral presentation will focus on a specific issue and include analysis of a passage from the text, with copies to the class and class discussion of the issues raised. It will be submitted in writing as a 5-6 page academic paper (not a transcript of the oral presentation). No less than seven days before the presentation in class, a handout will be distributed including short passages from the text and 3-4 questions to guide the discussion. Failure to present in class on the scheduled date will result in a zero grade on the whole assignment.

You are urged to use the lecturer's conference hours for consultation and guidance. All references must be cited. Any papers suspected of containing work that is not original will be graded zero and forwarded to the university authorities for possible disciplinary action.

Conference hours:

Room 530 Thursdays 11-12 or by appointment sicher@bgu.ac.il

Deadlines are final. There will be no extensions, exemptions or excuses.

הקומדיה של האבסורד : דרמה מודרנית
קורס בחירה 2 נ"ז סמ' ב'
חדר 74-516
פרופ' אפרים זיכר

הקורס בוחן סוגיות מרכזיות בתיאטרון הבריטי המודרני ומתמקד בתיאטרון האבסורד. ידונו נושאים כגון קשרי השפה לתשוקה המינית, אקסיסטנציאליזם, תורת הסבירות, אינטרטקסטואליות ועוד.

קריאה חובה :

Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*
Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

ציונים :
רפרט 40%
עבודה 40%
תרגול 10%
השתתפות פעילה חובה 10%
אין מבחן