The Drama of Henrik Ibsen

Scand 422 / LitTrans 335 / Theater 335
Fall 2015, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Professor: Dean Krouk, krouk@wisc.edu
Class time: Monday / Wednesday 4:00-5:15, 155 Van Hise Hall
Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00, 1308 Van Hise Hall

Course Description

The Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) is a major figure of world literature whose dramatic works remain fascinating and globally influential today, both as texts and through performances and adaptations. In this course we read and discuss the "father of modern drama" in English translation, using a variety of critical approaches. We consider Ibsen's dramatic techniques and the historical and literary contexts of his work, as well as Ibsen's various connections to feminism, psychoanalysis, moral philosophy, and modern culture. This course emphasizes not only the familiar Ibsen of the socially critical realist drama, but also the fascinating strangeness of much Ibsen, which prompted Harold Bloom to write in *The Western Canon*, "I cannot think of any other Western dramatist of true magnitude who is as consistently weird as Ibsen" (355).

Required Books Available at the University Book Store

Please DO NOT purchase other translations or editions.

1. Ibsen, *Brand* (Translated by Hill, Penguin Classics)
2. Ibsen, *Peer Gynt* (Trans. by Fry and Fillinger, Oxford World's Classics)
3. Ibsen, *Four Major Plays* (Trans. by McFarlane and Arup, Oxford World's Classics)
4. Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People, The Wild Duck, Rosmersholm* (Trans. by McFarlane, Oxford World's Classics)
5. Ibsen, *The Master Builder and Other Plays*, (Trans. by Haveland and Stanton-Ife, Penguin Classics, the 2015 version)
6. Supplemental PDF readings will be distributed by email

Course Objectives

1. Learn to read Ibsen with nuanced understanding and informed appreciation.
2. Identify and explain central socio-political, ethical, and psychological themes and patterns in Ibsen's dramas.
3. Analyze Ibsen's dramatic texts in papers that rely on close reading and are informed by contextual knowledge and secondary criticism.

Expectations

1. Complete all readings before the date listed in the schedule
2. Participate actively in seminar discussions
3. Write two critical response papers: 4 pages each (3 pages if you're taking the course for 3 credits)
4. Write one final paper: 8 pages (5 pages for 3 credits, 15 pages for grad students – or 8 pages in target language)
5. Lead discussion one day (grad students only)

Grading System

84 points. Participation in class (0 - 3 points per day).
200 points. Two Critical Response Papers (100 points each).
200 points: Final Paper
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484 points total

Letter grade point values for Critical Response Papers (double for Final Paper)

A	100 / 95	C	70
AB	90	D	65
B	85 / 80	F	60 or below
BC	75		

Course grading scale:

A	93-100 %	C	68-74 %
AB	86-92 %	D	60-67 %
B	80-85 %	F	below 60 %
BC	75-79 %		

Ibsen Course Schedule	
Monday	Wednesday
	September 2: Introduction
September 7: Labor Day	September 9: *Brand* Act 1-2
September 14: *Brand* Act 3-4	September 16: *Brand* Act 5
September 21: *Peer Gynt* Act 1-2	September 23: *Peer Gynt* Act 3-4
September 28: *Peer Gynt* Act 5	September 30 No Class **Critical Response Paper 1 Due**
October 5: *A Doll's House*	October 7: *A Doll's House* *Mabou Mines A Dollhouse* (Watch online through library electronic resources)
October 12: *Ghosts*	October 14: *Ghosts* Joan Templeton, "Mrs. Alving's Ghosts" from *Ibsen's Women*
October 19: *An Enemy of the People*	October 21: *An Enemy of the People*
October 26: *The Wild Duck*	October 28: *The Wild Duck* Toril Moi, "Losing Touch with the Everyday" from *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*

November 2: *Rosmersholm*	November 4: *Rosmersholm* Sigmund Freud, "Some Character-Types met with in Psycho-analytic Work" (especially page 333 on)
November 9: *Hedda Gabler*	November 11: *Hedda Gabler* Guest lecture by Prof. Leonardo Lisi, Johns Hopkins University **Critical Response Paper 2 Due**
November 16: *The Master Builder*	November 18: *The Master Builder* Toril Moi, "Introduction" to *The Master Builder and Other Plays* (To be read along with the late plays in coming weeks)
November 23 *Little Eyolf*	November 25 *Little Eyolf*
November 30 *John Gabriel Borkman*	December 2 *John Gabriel Borkman*
December 7 *When We Dead Awaken*	December 9 *When We Dead Awaken*
December 14 Harold Bloom, "Ibsen: Trolls and *Peer Gynt*" from *The Western Canon*	December 16 **Final Paper Due December 18**

Participation Self-Evaluation Form – Ibsen Course – Professor Krouk

For each day of class, you will give yourself a score out of three points. Always bring this sheet to class with you, and give yourself a score before leaving the class session. Hand this sheet in to the instructor at the end of the semester.

* Your final score is subject to approval by the instructor, who will also be keeping a record and may decide to raise or lower the score. This sheet may be checked during the semester. Please ask if you have questions about how to evaluate your participation!

- **0, 1, 2, or 3 points for participating in class**
    - 3 = (Very good) Listens actively to peers and instructors. Arrives on time and fully prepared with all readings completed, and with notes and observations on readings. Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of assigned text(s), attention to previous contributions, and insights about the material. Comments and questions frequently help move the discussion forward.
    - 2 = (Good) Listens actively to peers and instructors. Comments sometimes help advance the discussion, but other times the student is not helpfully engaged. Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous contributions.
    - 1 = (Developing) Shows little evidence of having read or thought about assigned readings. Comments do not reflect understanding of lectures, readings, or previous student contributions to discussion. Comments do not advance the conversation or are harmful to it. Participation is seldom and student is generally not engaged.
    - 0 = absent, unexcused

(see reverse)

NAME:	
Monday	Wednesday
	September 2
7 Labor Day	9
14	16
21	23
28	30 No Class
5	7
12	14
19	21
26	28
November 2	4
9	11
16	18
23	25
30	**December** 2
7	9
14	16

TOTAL SCORE: _____