

# Introduction to Literature: Drama

English 105 | Spring 2023 | CRN: 36596

## Essential Info

### Class Meetings

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00pm-1:20pm  
191 Anstett Hall ([map of 191 ANS](#))

### Instructor Info

**Professor:** Dr. Mattie Burkert (you can call me Dr. Burkert or Professor Burkert)

- Pronouns: she/they
- Office: 235 PLC
- Email: [mburkert@uoregon.edu](mailto:mburkert@uoregon.edu)
- Voicemail: (541) 346-0272

**TA:** Anu Sugathan

- Pronouns: she/her
- Office: 261 PLC
- Email: [asugatha@uoregon.edu](mailto:asugatha@uoregon.edu)

Please allow two full business days for a response to email or voicemail.

### Office Hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00am-11:30am

By default, office hours are in-person in 235 PLC. To request a Zoom link, please email at least 1 hour in advance of our scheduled meeting.

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Drop-ins are welcome, but appointments are given priority. Booking link: <https://tinyurl.com/burkert-office-hours>

## Course Description

This course is an introduction to drama—literature written for performance. We will read and discuss a variety of plays, ranging from the early forerunners of today's romantic comedies, to a one-act murder mystery, to emotionally charged family sagas. Our interpretations of these dramatic works will be grounded in the way they are written on the page, but we will also approach them as acting texts that have enjoyed long lives on stage and screen. At the center of this course, therefore, will be our attendance at the University Theatre's production of *Twelfth Night* – Shakespeare's classic tale of shipwrecked twins, mistaken identity, and queer desire.

## Learning Goals

- recognize the formal features and generic conventions of dramatic literature in the English and American traditions
- situate dramatic texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts
- critically analyze the choices directors and performers make when producing a dramatic text for the stage or screen
- use textual evidence and analysis to develop and support original, interpretive arguments about the effects and meanings of plays
- practice drafting, workshopping, and revising written work in several stages and with input from multiple readers

## Required Texts and Materials

### Technology

You will need day-to-day access to Internet with web browser, Canvas, Zoom, and your UO email account.

### Books You Need to Buy

Quiara Alegria Hudes, *Water by the Spoonful* (TCG 2nd edition, 2017)

- ISBN: 9781559365574
- List Price (New): \$15.25
- Length: 92 pages

## Books You Are Encouraged to Buy

William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (Folger, 2019)

- ISBN: 9780743482776
- List Price (New): \$6.75
- Length: 273 pages

August Wilson, *Fences* (Plume, 1986)

- ISBN: 9780452264014
- List Price (New): \$13.50
- Length: 101 pages

## Materials Available on Canvas

- Streaming video:
  - *Fences*, directed by Denzel Washington [stream via Swank](#)
- PDFs:
  - Elizabeth Glaspell, *Trifles*
  - August Wilson, *Fences*
  - Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*
  - Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

## Event You Are Required to Attend

All students must attend the University Theatre production of *Twelfth Night* in May. Performances are scheduled:

Friday 5.5 | 7:30PM  
Saturday 5.6 | 7:30PM

Friday 5.12 | 7:30PM  
Saturday 5.13 | 7:30PM  
Sunday 5.14 | 2:00PM

Friday 5.19 | 7:30PM  
Saturday 5.20 | 7:30PM

Always check the [University Theatre schedule](#) for up-to-date information about dates, times, and ticket availability for individual shows.

Free student tickets for University Theatre performances are distributed at the door only, beginning 1 hour prior to show time (subject to availability) to students with a valid UO ID. Students who wish to reserve specific seats in advance can expect to pay \$8-10 for their ticket.

## Content Warnings

- *Trifles*: discussions of relationship violence / domestic abuse; discussions of death and murder; discussions of animal cruelty
  - *Twelfth Night*: discussions of death, grief, and loss; scenes of psychological torture; violence (sword-fighting) played as comedic
  - *The Importance of Being Earnest*: nothing in the play, but we will discuss it in the historical context of homophobia and the criminalization of queerness
  - *Fences*: subject matter and themes related to racism, domestic violence, child abuse, the institutionalization of disabled people, and generational trauma; dialog that includes racial slurs (including the n word); scenes of sexism and the objectification of women; death in childbirth (offstage)
  - *Water by the Spoonful*: subject matter and themes include combat-related PTSD and addiction; discussions of child neglect and abuse, in one case leading to death (offstage)
- 

## Assignments

### Ongoing engagement (25 points)

Your active engagement in this class matters for your own learning as well as for the contributions you can make to the learning of others. At minimum, you are expected to:

- check the course Canvas site and your UO email account regularly for announcements and updates (you are strongly encouraged to turn notifications ON);
- complete any assigned reading or homework **before class on the date indicated**;
- read actively, taking notes about any questions, comments, or thoughts you might raise in class;
- bring the assigned readings and materials, your notes, paper, and a pen or pencil to each class meeting;
- remain present and on-task throughout class, avoiding distractions and keeping your devices put away unless you are actively using them for class activities. (Note: listening and focusing in class looks different for different

bodyminds. You are welcome to support your learning in any way that is not disruptive to others.)

Demonstrating this basic level of engagement will earn you a score of 20/25 / 80% (B-).

Beyond this minimum, there are many potential ways to demonstrate your ongoing engagement with course materials, discussions, concepts, and skills. These include:

- annotating the course readings in Perusall
- reading/performing aloud in class when opportunities arise
- contributing to the shared notes document
- gathering and sharing supplemental links and resources for others in the class to explore
- speaking up in small group discussions
- speaking up in large group discussions

In week 1, you will complete an ongoing engagement contract identifying your target Ongoing Engagement score and the areas in which you intend to concentrate your efforts. In weeks 2 through 9, you will complete a weekly, 3-question Canvas survey, due the following Monday at noon (e.g. the Week 2 survey is due the Monday of Week 3). On this survey, you will report the ways you engaged in the class during the preceding week and reflect on how your efforts align with the goals you set on your initial contract. In week 10, you will reflect back on your surveys to date and complete a self-assessment that will inform the holistic grade you earn in this area.

**Each missed survey will reduce your ongoing engagement score by 1 point (out of 25).**

## Major essay (50 points)

Half of your course grade is based on a thesis-driven, interpretive essay you will write on William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. You will take this paper through at least two drafts: a 4-page draft, due at the beginning of week 6; and a 5-6 page revision, due at the beginning of week 8. In between, you will meet with a Writing Associate to discuss your draft and create a revision plan. With your revised essay, you will submit a 1-2 page memo detailing the changes you made and reflecting on the composition and revision process.

The 50 points are broken down as follows:

- 15 points: essay draft
- 25 points: essay revision
- 5 points: writing fellows / revision process

- 5 points: writer's memo

## Final exam (25 points)

A final exam will be administered IN PERSON through Canvas during our scheduled exam period, Wednesday at 8am during finals week. Questions will be objective: multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, labeling a figure or diagram, true/false, etc. The selection and order of questions will be uniquely and randomly generated for each student.

On the day of the test, you may bring a 3.5" x 5" index card with handwritten notes (single- or double-sided), which you will submit with your name on it at the end of the exam period.

An exam guide is appended to this syllabus, and a selection of key terms is associated with each week on the schedule below. Neither the guide nor these lists are necessarily exhaustive; additional concepts, terms, and ideas that arise in our readings and/or in class are fair game for the test.

## Grading

Grading criteria vary by assignment and are located on the assignment prompt.

Grading Scale				
A	B	C	D	F
(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)
98 / 93 / 90	88 / 83 / 80	78 / 73 / 70	68 / 63 / 60	< 60

## Course Policies

### Workload

The workload in this class is calibrated to the [Provost's policy on effort per credit hour](#). The proportion of time spent reading, writing, or completing informal work will necessarily vary from week to week. Likewise, the overall amount of time

you spend on this class per week may fluctuate over the ten weeks of the term. The goal, however, is to move somewhat steadily towards the accumulation of 120 person-hours of work. Here is an estimate for how you can expect to spend your time in this course:

<i>Estimated student workload in ENG 105</i>		
<b>Educational Format/Activity</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Explanation/Justification</b>
Class meetings	30	3 per week, weeks 1-10
Assigned readings	44	3 per week, weeks 1, 2, and 10 = 9 5 per week, weeks 3-9 = 35
Major essay	20	5 per week, weeks 5-8
Attending play	4	week 5 or 6
Studying for and taking final exam	12	4 per week, weeks 9-11
Ongoing engagement activities and surveys	10	1 per week, weeks 1-10
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	<b>120</b>	

## Attendance

As a bare minimum, you must attend 60% of the class meetings (12 of 20) to pass the class. Beyond that minimum threshold, attendance is assessed holistically as part of your “Ongoing Engagement” grade.

Regular attendance correlates strongly with success in this course and with higher grades. Your presence in class matters for your own learning as well as for the contributions you can make to the learning of others. Attendance is taken at every class meeting using a sign-in sheet passed around within the first five minutes. If you arrive after the sign-in sheet has been passed around, you are responsible for checking in with Prof. B after class to make note of your attendance. Late arrivals are disruptive, and routine or excessive tardiness will be documented as absence.

In compliance with the Provost’s reason-neutral attendance policy, no distinction is made between excused and inexcused absences; in general, there is no need to document the reason for your absence. *Please do not send Prof. B. doctors’ notes or offer unsolicited personal information.* Absences associated with religious observance, official university business, or documented AEC accommodations are exempt from consideration as part of your Ongoing Engagement grade provided that these absences meet the narrow and specific definitions in the student code and that you notify Prof. B in writing and with appropriate official documentation within the first two weeks of the term.

If you have to miss class, you are expected to catch up what you missed by reading the shared notes, reviewing any slides or handouts posted to Canvas, and connecting with other students in the class to answer any lingering questions you may have.

## Late and Missing Work

Each student has a bank of 4 “late days” (calendar days) to spend on assignments without penalty. You can turn one assignment in four days late, four assignments in one day late each, or somewhere in between. Note that the revised essay and memo are two separate assignments.

These penalty-free late days will be automatically applied to late assignments in the order of their due date.

Late work will otherwise not be considered for a grade, except in case of documented AEC accommodations or extreme extenuating circumstances. Everyone gets sick, has family emergencies, etc. at some point, so save your late days for when you really need them.

## Accessibility

The professor for this course works hard to create accessible and inclusive learning environments and strives continually to improve. Please notify Professor Burkert if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the [Accessible Education Center](#) in 360 Oregon Hall at (541) 346-1155 or email [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

## Technology Policies

### Electronic Devices in the Classroom

You may use your phone, tablet, or computer in class to access course readings and materials, take notes, or otherwise support your learning. You may not text message, browse the web, or do work for other courses on your devices during our class sessions. If you are found to be doing so, Professor Burkert will stop class to ask you to put your device away for the remainder of the class session. A repeat offense on a subsequent occasion will result in loss of device use privileges in class for the remainder of the term. If you find the temptation towards distraction overwhelming, consider printing out or buying/borrowing hard copies of the readings, using pen and paper to take notes, and keeping your devices turned off and put away during class.



## Privacy

It is your ethical responsibility to respect the legally protected privacy of your classmates and what they share in class and online. It is prohibited to repost, republish, or quote from our class discussions on the web or social media, even if names/identities are anonymized, without the express permission of the instructor and your peers. No personally identifiable information, such as street addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses, should be posted on our course sites or shared note-taking document, nor should any discussion of grades. Any such details arising in the course of class discussion should be redacted from any notes, transcriptions, recordings, etc. to protect against unauthorized access.

## Recording of Class Meetings

You may record or transcribe our class discussions, provided that you (1) use only UO-licensed or UO-approved software; (2) store the resulting files locally on your computer and/or in your UO-licensed cloud storage account; and (3) retain them only for your individual use (as you would handwritten notes). To be clear, you may NOT use freemium software like [Otter.AI](#) [Links to an external site.](#), Descript, ChatGPT, Bard, etc. to process class recordings, as doing so essentially constitutes selling your classmates' federally protected, private educational records in exchange for access to a product.

## Intellectual Property

You **may not** reuse, republish, or remix materials produced by other students in this class.

You **may** reuse, republish, or remix materials created by the professor under the appropriate license provided that you adhere to the indicated terms. For example, this syllabus is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial license, meaning you may reuse it in part or in whole provided that you credit the author (Dr. Mattie Burkert) and that you do not sell or make money from the material.

Under no circumstances should you sell or give anything produced in or related to this class to third-party companies like Course Hero, Shmoop, etc.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Learning to use artificial intelligence systems (such as ChatGPT and Bard) and to recognize their pluses and minuses are important emerging skills. In the context of this course, however, most potential uses of AI would hinder your achievement of the course learning goals, which require you to read carefully, analyze critically, and write persuasively about plays that have been widely studied, in some cases for centuries. The point is not to produce a report on what is known about a particular play; the point is to undertake an experiential learning process through your individual, active engagement with

the text. With this goal in mind, the use of AI is counterproductive; when asked to write about, say, Shakespeare, these Large Language Models will almost always produce text that sounds pretty good to non-experts, but that is mostly hot air: at best, trite and uninteresting; at worst, wildly inaccurate and weirdly confident about it.

Therefore, the use of AI systems is allowed in this course only with explicit permission. If permission is given, you will be required to document your use according to guidelines that will be provided.

Formal and informal writing submitted for credit toward completion of course requirements (e.g. your paper draft and revision, writer's memo, text annotations, etc.) must be your own original work done specifically for this course and without substantive assistance from others, including AI systems. Written work suspected of being AI-generated or plagiarized may be submitted to detection tools to ensure it is human-created and original. Please also carefully read the academic integrity policy below concerning plagiarism.

This policy is based in part on the resource ["Teaching and AI Systems"](#) from UO's Teaching Engagement Program, as well as the instructor's experience last term reading dozens of essays written by English 250 students in collaboration with ChatGPT, as well as their reflections on the experience.

## Departmental and University Policies

### Honoring Native Peoples and Lands

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, at UO, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

In following the Indigenous protocol of acknowledging the original people of the land we occupy, we also extend our respect to the nine federally recognized Indigenous nations of Oregon: the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes. We express our respect to the many more tribes who have ancestral connections to this territory, as well as to all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home.

## Basic Needs

Your safety and wellbeing impacts learning. Please contact resources that can help you to thrive and let me know if you need any help connecting. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support. The [UO Basic Needs Resource Guide](#) also includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support.

## Mental Wellbeing

Life in college can be very complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own—there's help and support on campus. If your instructor believes you may need additional support, they may express concern and refer you to resources that might be helpful.

University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the [Duck Nest](#), located in the EMU on the ground floor, and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates. [University Counseling Services \(UCS\)](#) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

## Academic Integrity

The [University Student Conduct Code](#) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Work completed for previous courses or being developing for other courses this term should not be submitted for this course. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. [Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available here](#). Cases of clearly established plagiarism or cheating will result in an assignment grade of "0" as a minimum penalty; all incidents will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community

Standards, as required by the English Department and University.

## Reporting of Discrimination, Harassment, and Abuse

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at [safe.uoregon.edu](https://safe.uoregon.edu). To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour hotline at 541-346-SAFE [7244]. Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information and resources at [investigations.uoregon.edu](https://investigations.uoregon.edu) or contact the non-confidential Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance at 541-346-3123 or the Dean of Students Office at (541) 346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available in the [Employee Responsibilities section of the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance website](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed-Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration. UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities; [see here for detailed information about Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

## Academic Disruption

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas. In the event that the instructor of this course has to quarantine, this course may be taught online during that time.

## Resources

The following resources are available to you as a student:

Unit	URL	Phone
University Health Services	<a href="http://health.uoregon.edu">health.uoregon.edu</a>	(541) 346-2770
University Counseling Center	<a href="http://counseling.uoregon.edu">counseling.uoregon.edu</a>	(541) 346-3277
Covid-19 Testing & More	<a href="http://coronavirus.uoregon.edu">coronavirus.uoregon.edu</a>	(541) 346-2292
Academic Advising	<a href="http://advising.uoregon.edu">advising.uoregon.edu</a>	(541) 346-3211
Dean of Students	<a href="http://dos.uoregon.edu">dos.uoregon.edu</a>	(541)-346-3216

## Schedule

Weekly schedule is provided for planning purposes only and is subject to change.

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS/TOPIC	KEY TERMS
<b>WK 1</b>	<i>(note: work indicated in <b>bold</b> is due Monday at noon)</i>		<i>drama, act, dramatis personae, stage directions, dialogue, Susan Glaspell, Provincetown Players, one-act play, realism, naturalism, First-Wave Feminism, symbol, exposition</i>
Tu 4.4		Syllabus, Welcome	
Th 4.6		<i>Trifles</i>	
<b>WK 2</b>	<b>Ongoing Engagement (OE) contract</b>		<i>mise en scene, props, set, production design, thrust stage, Elizabethan theatre, William Shakespeare, comedy, tragedy</i>

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DATE	ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS/TOPIC	KEY TERMS
Tu 4.11		<i>Trifles</i> (audio recording)	
Th 4.13		"Introduction to <i>Twelfth Night</i> " "Reading Shakespeare's Language" "Twelfth Night Preface"	
<b>WK 3</b>	<b>Wk 2 OE survey</b>		<i>monologue, soliloquy, aside, prose, verse, iambic pentameter, blank verse, couplet, meter, rhyme, dramatic irony, verbal irony, situational irony</i>
Tu 4.18		<i>Twelfth Night</i> , Act 1	
Th 4.20		<i>Twelfth Night</i> , Act 2	
<b>WK 4</b>	<b>Wk 3 OE survey</b>		<i>dueling, Puritan, coverture, double entendre, direct/indirect characterization, protagonist, antagonist, flat/round/dynamic/static (character)</i>
Tu 4.25	Writing Associates class visit	<i>Twelfth Night</i> , Act 3	
Th 4.27		<i>Twelfth Night</i> , Act 4	
<b>WK 5</b>	<b>Quote/notes outline, Wk 4 OE survey</b>		<i>comedy of manners, art for art's sake, Aestheticism / Aesthetic Movement, Oscar Wilde, proscenium, sodomy laws</i>
Tu 5.2		<i>Twelfth Night</i> , Act 5	
Th 5.4		"Twelfth Night: A Modern Perspective" Thesis workshop	
Fri 5.5, Sat 5.6	Attend <i>Twelfth Night</i> at University Theatre		
<b>WK 6</b>	<b>Essay draft, Wk 5 OE</b>		<i>dramaturgy, satire, exposition, rising action, climax,</i>

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DATE	ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS/TOPIC	KEY TERMS
	<b>survey</b>		<i>resolution, theme</i>
Tu 5.9		<i>Earnest</i> , Act 1	
Th 5.11	Peer review becomes available	<i>Earnest</i> , Act 2	
Fri 5.12, Sat 5.14, Sun 5.15	Attend <i>Twelfth Night</i> at University Theatre		
<b>WK 7</b>	<b>Peer review, Wk 6 OE survey</b>		<i>Black Arts movement, play cycle, August Wilson, Jim Crow segregation, Jackie Robinson</i>
Tu 5.16	Peer review check-in	<i>Earnest</i> , Act 3	
Th 5.18		<i>Earnest</i> , concluded; intro to <i>Fences</i>	
<b>WK 8</b>	<b>Wk 7 OE survey</b>		<i>motif, generational trauma, realism, magical realism</i>
Tu 5.23		<i>Fences</i> , Act 1	
Th 5.25	Writing Associates Feedback returned	<i>Fences</i> , Act 2 Guest lecture: Instructor Anu	
<b>WK 9</b>	<b>Essay revision, Writer's memo, Wk 8 OE survey</b>		<i>Quiera Allegria Hudes, stage left, stage right, downstage, upstage, Iraq War, chat room, Internet cafe, traumatic stress, double casting</i>
Tu 5.30		<i>Water</i> , scenes 1-5	
Th 6.1		<i>Water</i> , scenes 6-10	
<b>WK 10</b>	<b>Wk 9 OE survey</b>		<i>intersectional feminism</i>
Tu 6.6		<i>Water</i> , finish	

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DATE	ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS/TOPIC	KEY TERMS
Th 6.8		Course conclusions	
<b>WK 11</b>	<b>OE final self-assessment</b>		
Wed 6.14	<b>8am: Final Exam</b>		

## Appendix

### "Did I Miss Anything?" by Tom Wayman

Nothing. When we realized you weren't here  
we sat with our hands folded on our desks  
in silence, for the full two hours

Everything. I gave an exam worth  
40 percent of the grade for this term  
and assigned some reading due today  
on which I'm about to hand out a quiz  
worth 50 percent

Nothing. None of the content of this course  
has value or meaning  
Take as many days off as you like:  
any activities we undertake as a class  
I assure you will not matter either to you or me  
and are without purpose

Everything. A few minutes after we began last time  
a shaft of light suddenly descended and an angel  
or other heavenly being appeared  
and revealed to us what each woman or man must do



to attain divine wisdom in this life and  
the hereafter

This is the last time the class will meet  
before we disperse to bring the good news to all people on earth.

Nothing. When you are not present  
how could something significant occur?

Everything. Contained in this classroom  
is a microcosm of human experience  
assembled for you to query and examine and ponder  
This is not the only place such an opportunity has been gathered

but it was one place

And you weren't here