

Elements of Drama
CTY Course Syllabus

DAY 1

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help students become comfortable with each other ▪ Establish how the class will operate ▪ Develop understanding of what drama is ▪ Assess where students are starting out in this class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Icebreaker activity ▪ Set up class rules/philosophies ▪ Sign Honor Codes ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What is drama? ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise with class; develop class definition of drama ▪ Complete pre-assessment
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce how to read a play (different speakers, how stage direction works, etc.) ▪ Put play reading skills into practice ▪ Recognize differences between the play and other writing forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read aloud Aesop’s fable “The City Mouse and The Country Mouse” ▪ Class discussion/brief lecture to introduce the mechanics of reading a play ▪ Split the class into two groups to act out Sandra Fenichel Asher’s <i>Country Mouse and the Missing Lunch Mystery</i> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What was it like to read this scene? What was challenging about it? What did you notice? ▪ Share Writing Exercises with class ▪ In pairs, brainstorm a list of what was different between the story and the play ▪ Share list of differences with the class, discuss why we think these the playwright made these elements different
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about character ▪ Show don’t tell in drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class Exercise: Defining the characters of the city mouse and the country mouse. Either/or exercise (ex. Is this character mature or immature; sophisticated or unsophisticated; confident or unconfident; smart or dumb). Discuss how the students came to each choice for each of the characters. ▪ Go outside and observe an animal, taking notes on the animal’s behaviors(birds, squirrels, bugs; if there isn’t much wildlife on campus, consider showing a series of brief clips of animals in movies) ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: Using the same either/or adjectives from the previous class exercise, write a description of the animal you observed and explain why you’re describing the animal the way you are. Use your

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		<p>imagination!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise with class ▪ Discuss the power of showing versus telling; how the class came to conclusions about their animals based on what the animals showed them
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DAY 2

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about setting ▪ Elementary level workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Go outside to a selected spot on campus; have students take ten notes about the place ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: Write a description of the place we visited based on your notes. ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise with class, ask volunteers to read aloud ▪ For each piece read aloud, have students share what they liked about the piece; strong turns of phrase, commonalities with their own writing ▪ Discuss differences in what students noticed and how they described the place ▪ Brainstorm a list of activities/things that could happen at the space visited ▪ Brief lecture on setting, how setting is established in a play, and why it's important
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue thinking about identifying differences and similarities ▪ Continue thinking about setting ▪ Begin <i>Earnest</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In pairs, students compile a list of how they think the space visited in the morning would have been different 100 years ago ▪ Share lists with the class ▪ Introduce <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (time period, setting, Oscar Wilde) ▪ Read Act I as a class (if class is large enough, split into 2-3 groups to read so more students have an opportunity to actively take on roles)
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue learning about character. ▪ Begin to develop material for assignment #1 ▪ Check reading comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What do we know about Jack's character so far? What are his characteristics? ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise with class, create a class list of Jack's characteristics ▪ Read Act II of <i>Earnest</i> as a class (if class is large enough, split into 2-3 groups to read so more students have

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		an opportunity to actively take on roles)
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DAY 3

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about dialogue ▪ Revisit show don't tell ▪ Elementary introduction to workshop ▪ Check reading comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: With a partner write the script for two characters running into each other at a grocery store. One character wants very badly to talk to the other character. The other character is running late, and wants to wrap up the conversation as quickly as possible. Neither character is allowed to actually say what he or she wants. ▪ Read Writing Exercises aloud for the class. After each reading, have the other students suggest one thing they liked about each dialogue and one constructive criticism ▪ Discuss how each dialogue showed what the characters wanted without telling ▪ Brief lecture on dialogue-- what can we tell about two people from seeing them talk to each other? Does it matter <i>how</i> someone says something? Read aloud lines from student dialogues to illustrate the point. ▪ Recap the first two acts of <i>Earnest</i>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin thinking about drama critically ▪ Begin thinking about individual aesthetics—different elements of drama that attract different people ▪ Continue reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class Discussion: What was your favorite scene/moment from <i>Earnest</i> so far? Why? ▪ Read Act III of <i>Earnest</i> individually; recalling class discussion, take notes on what they do and do not like about the text ▪ If students finish reading early, use extra time to write a summary of what they did and did not like about the scene

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Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to develop material for assignment #1 ▪ Continue exploring how drama is unique—designed to be performed/read aloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt/Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Using images from the Internet or cut-outs from magazines, create a collage to represent Algernon’s character. B. Create a list of at least five characteristics/personality traits of Algernon (give examples to support claims) ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise with class ▪ Play a recording of Act III, and have students follow along in books ▪ Class discussion: How was the experience of reading the play aloud different from reading it individually?
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DAY 4

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Think creatively ▪ Character analysis ▪ Comparing and contrasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Split class discussion: One group focuses on Jack, one on Algernon. If you were in this character’s position, what might you have done differently? ▪ Reconvene class to share results of each discussion. ▪ Whole class discusses the character of Gwendolen with class—how would we define his character? (List characteristics on board) ▪ Discuss the character of Cecily with class—how would we define her character? (List characteristics on board) ▪ Give out compare/contrast templates; in small groups, complete a compare contrast for Gwendolen and Cecily
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue thinking about comparing and contrasting ▪ Essay construction; prepare for Assignment #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: How are you different from or the same as your brother, sister, or best friend? ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise Prompt with class ▪ Independently complete compare/contrast template for Jack and Algernon. Instructor and TA circulate ▪ Brief lecture on essay construction—emphasis on writing around a thesis; touch base on the five paragraph essay and how to work with/around/against that model
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write Assignment #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write first draft of Assignment #1: essay comparing and contrasting the

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		characters Jack and Algernon
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DAY 5

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue writing ▪ Plant seeds for revision process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What’s one thing you really like about the essay you have been writing? What’s one thing you don’t like about the essay, or that has been challenging for you? ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise Prompt with class ▪ Student who need more time continue writing Assignment #1 ▪ Students who have completed essays go back to see if they can improve upon the area they didn’t like in their first drafts; instructor and TA help with initial revisions
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion: Each student shares a time when someone else’s advice or help has improved his or her ability to do something ▪ Relate advice and help to the workshop format ▪ Brief lecture on what workshop is, introduce sheet of topics to consider in offering criticism; refer to elementary workshop exercises from day 2 and day 3 ▪ As a class, brainstorm a list of workshop rules and philosophies ▪ As a class read aloud a short, flawed model essay on an unrelated topic ▪ Hold a workshop on the model essay ▪ Split class into two groups for workshop on Monday
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read the essays of the other students in their workshop groups, begin compiling workshop notes using the sheet of topics to consider in offering criticism

DAY 6

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about writing to an audience ▪ Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: Write a letter to explain to someone that you forgot to water their plant so it died. (Students have different people they’re writing

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		<p>to—a family member, a teacher, a friend, an enemy, a complete stranger)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volunteers read letters aloud ▪ Discuss how the audience affected how they wrote ▪ Workshop in groups
Afternoon	▪ Workshop	▪ Finish workshops
Late Afternoon	▪ Revision	▪ Revisions of Assignment #1

DAY 7

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revision ▪ Reflecting on revision ▪ Students gain a base level of experience watching plays; begin to look at drama with a critical eye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students finish revisions of Assignment #1; each student should conference at least once with the instructor to ensure global revision is successfully achieved ▪ For students who have completed revisions sooner: Writing Exercise Prompt: What is my favorite movie and why? Students who are finished will share this with each other. ▪ Class discussion: How did revision go? ▪ Spend extra time watching some clips from different plays; ask students to take notes about what they like and don't like about what they see.
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing criticism ▪ Introduce Shakespeare; comprehending Shakespeare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small group activity: Discuss what everyone's least favorite food is, and, as a group create a poster depicting a meal which includes everyone's least favorite food. In drawing make sure something about the picture of each food demonstrates why you don't like it/why it's gross. ▪ Present pictures to class—share everyone's least favorite food and at least one reason why it isn't liked. ▪ Brief lecture on criticism—developing vocabulary for theatre criticism; relate Writing Exercise Prompts to writing about what you do or do not like about a play; distribute sheet of theatrical terms ▪ Very briefly introduce Shakespeare and <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ▪ Read aloud in groups of two the balcony scene of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ▪ Discuss the balcony scene as a class for comprehension

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In pairs, paraphrase the balcony scene ▪ Watch the balcony scene from 1968 version of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, taking notes ▪ Individually brainstorm list of critical observations from the scene ▪ Share observations in small groups
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for writing critical essay ▪ Introduce Assignment #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watch a clip of Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert discussing a film (example: <i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>), taking notes on how they structure their reviews ▪ In pairs write the script for a Siskel & Ebert style review of the balcony scene of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> based off of notes ▪ Volunteers read their reviews to the class ▪ Individually read a model critical essay or review; each student pulls three critical observations from the reading ▪ Class discussion—each student shares at least one observation ▪ Introduce Assignment #2: A Critical Review of a play/movie; discuss note-taking strategies

DAY 8

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field trip/guest speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All day field trip to see a play/dress rehearsal of play/meet with members of theatre company <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Have a guest speaker in the class—a playwright/director/actor
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field trip/watch film of play 	<p>IF NOT ON ALL DAY FIELD TRIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What did I learn from the guest speaker? ▪ Share Writing Exercise Prompt with small groups ▪ Watch <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (1992)
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field trip/begin writing Assignment #2 	<p>IF NOT ON ALL DAY FIELD TRIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss initial reactions to the film version of the play ▪ Begin Assignment #2

DAY 9

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write Assignment #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students write Assignment #2

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Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write Assignment #2 ▪ Thinking about people who write plays; the process of writing plays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student who need more time continue writing Assignment #2 ▪ For students who have completed the essay sooner: Writing Exercise Prompt: Write your imaginary account of a day in the life of a playwright; students share with each other; discuss with instructor perceptions of what it's like to be a playwright ▪ Assign students to partners for peer review of essays
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer review ▪ Revision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read partner's essay ▪ Peer conferences on essay ▪ Instructor and TA check in with each student to discuss revision strategy for essay ▪ Revise Assignment #2

DAY 10

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finish revision ▪ Students begin thinking about creative writing in drama, and the differences between comedy and drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise Assignment #2 ▪ For students who are done early, form separate group outside with Instructor; brainstorm how they could make a scene from <i>Earnest</i> dramatic, rather than funny; alternatively, read a brief dramatic scene from another work, and discuss how they could take the same situation and make it a comedy. As the rest of the students finish revisions, the TA can run an abbreviated version of the same activity in the classroom.
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thinking about people who write plays; the process of writing plays ▪ Develop research skills ▪ Learning about people who write plays; the process of writing plays; seeing themselves in that role ▪ Develop research skills in the library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: Who is your favorite book or story and why? ▪ Students are share Writing Exercises in small groups. ▪ Introduce playwright mini-research project; research skills ▪ Students visit the library, research an assigned playwright or one chosen from a list
Late afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unpack learning about playwrights ▪ Prepare for oral presentations ▪ Discuss library research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What did you learn about your playwright that surprised you? ▪ Class discusses Writing Exercise. ▪ Students prepare for oral presentations on their playwrights ▪ If time allows, discuss the experience of library research in small groups. What was challenging about it? What

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		were the most useful resources?
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DAY 11

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice oral presentation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students orally present on their playwrights
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify elements that attract students to particular characters ▪ Begin developing a character sketch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion: Who is your favorite character from <i>Country Mouse</i>, <i>Earnest</i>, or the staged production the class saw, and why? ▪ Students individually write down three key characteristics of their favorite characters. ▪ Discuss what characteristics attracted people to characters ▪ Explain that students can borrow characteristics of the character they chose, and create their own original character around them. Students write a description of their original character.
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin thinking about conflict, dramatic tension—how they drive a plot; are unique to characters ▪ Introduce Assignment #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What is a problem you or someone you know has overcome in life? ▪ Discuss Writing Exercise Prompt with class ▪ Give your characters a problem they need to overcome ▪ Introduce Assignment #3: Write a One Act play in which your original character is the protagonist, and faces a problem. ▪ Students begin brainstorming their plays.

DAY 12

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about blocking and stage direction—precision in writing ▪ Write Assignment #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very brief lecture on blocking and stage direction ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: Write a bullet point list of how to tie your shoelaces ▪ Instructor attempts to tie shoe laces, following instructions as literally as possible; demonstrate different ways instructions can be interpreted, need for specificity ▪ Students continue writing assignment #3; instructor coaching on working blocking and stage direction into scripts

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Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write Assignment #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students continue writing assignment #3
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write Assignment #3 ▪ See how performance of drama shapes what playwrights write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students continue writing assignment #3 ▪ For students who have completed their plays sooner: With TA or Instructor supervision, move to a different space to perform small pieces of their plays. Discuss how seeing their play performed affects how they have written it; if they would change anything. ▪ All students should identify their favorite scene or part of a scene from their own plays ▪ Split into two groups and inform class of their parts in performing a scene from each play the next morning.

DAY 13

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See how performance of drama shapes what playwrights write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform the favorite scene/piece from each student's play (budgeting how much is performed so that it fits in the morning period. If possible, allow for all students to see each other's plays. If class is too large, have two separate groups performing for themselves and the instructor/TA simultaneously)
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop ▪ Revision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In groups from the morning, informally workshop each student's play (workshop the writing, not the performance) ▪ Begin revising assignment #3
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revision ▪ Introduce monologues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finish revising assignment #3; discuss continuing the revision after CTY ▪ As a class, read a model monologue ▪ Discuss what was different about the monologue as opposed to the plays

DAY 14

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about monologues ▪ Introduce Assignment #4 ▪ Write Assignment #4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing Exercise Prompt: What is the most interesting thing that any of the characters from your play might have to say that you did not write in your assignment? ▪ Introduce Assignment #4: A monologue from the perspective of one of the characters from your play

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		▪ Students begin writing Assignment #4
Afternoon	▪ Write Assignment #4 ▪ Peer conferencing	▪ Students finish writing Assignment #4 ▪ Peer conferencing on Assignment #4
Late Afternoon	▪ Complete post assessment ▪ Revision	▪ Post-assessment ▪ Revise monologues

DAY 15

When	What	How
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students share writing ▪ Students reflect on what they have learned ▪ Students consider future writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Put on reading for rest of class of all monologues; invite other classes/staff to stop in ▪ Wrap up discussion—discuss what we learned in the course, how we can continue to write and write about drama

Supplementary exercises:

In the event that the class gets ahead of the syllabus, here are some supplementary exercises to consider:

Preparing for Assignment #1 (Analytical Essay):

- Select two entirely different photographs. In small groups, the students create a list of 15 things that the pictures have in common, and 15 differences.
- Draw a picture of Algernon and a picture of Jack. How are they similar or different?
- Create a catchphrase or slogan for Algernon, and one for Jack. How are they similar or different?

Preparing for Assignment #2 (Critical Essay):

- Class discussion on the effects of reviews.
 - Does a positive review make you more likely to see a play? A negative review less likely?
 - What makes you trust a review?
 - Does the critic support his or her claims?
 - The critic's values, as evidenced in the review?
 - How could a playwright, director or cast member use a review to alter what he or she is doing?

Preparing for Assignment #3 (One Act Play):

- Rewrite the ending to one of the plays we have read/watched.
- Write the next scene that might occur after the ending of one of the plays we have read/watched.
- Brief lecture on suspense in a play; students practice communally writing scenes that build suspense.
- Draw a story map to help visualize the play.

Preparing for Assignment #4 (Monologue):

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- Take all but one of the characters out of a scene we have read in class, or out of another famous scene. What would the remaining character say to communicate the same ideas?
- Diary entry: Write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the characters we have read, or even that you have written.

Further Enrichment Discussion/Writing Exercise Topics

- Students brainstorm how they would produce a play read in class and/or one they have written (this exercise works best with a play of which they have not yet seen a production). Consider:
 - Celebrity cast
 - Props
 - Costume
 - Special effectsHow could you get these elements of drama across in the writing of the play (stage direction, description of setting, description of character, dialogue)
- What are the respective roles of the playwright and the director? Is one more important than the other? More powerful?
 - What is the interplay between the playwright and other stakeholders/constituents—the director, the producer, the cast, the tech crew, the set designers, the critic, the audience?
 - How is each party powerful in shaping a play?
 - Whose perspective matters the most?
- Exposure to genre: Discuss different genres in drama. Have groups of students rewrite scenes, each group using a different genre. Alternatively, give the groups a situation, and have them write original scenes using the genre.