



English (ENGL) 303

A History of Drama - Part I: Early Stages (Revision 6)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Humanities

Prerequisites:

ENGL 211 and **ENGL 212** or equivalent first year English course(s)

Precluded:

ENGL 300. (ENGL 303 may not be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for ENGL 300.)

Challenge:

ENGL 303 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty:

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Overview

This course traces the history of Western theatre from its Greek origins to the beginning of the eighteenth century in England and France, with specific references to the plays in a core anthology, *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*.

It provides an analysis of individual plays as theatre and as literature, and includes brief background notes on the authors and on the significance of the plays in the context of Western theatre. It traces the common elements of drama from ritualistic and ceremonial dance and song, through the liturgical drama of the Middle Ages, English Renaissance tragedy and tragi-comedy, French neo-classical comedy and tragedy, and the social comedy of the Restoration. It also shows the development of the theatre as a physical structure, from the early Greek open air amphitheatres to the modified tennis courts in London, investigating the relationship of the physical theatre and the structure and style of the drama.

Outline

- Act I — The Golden Age: Tragedy and Comedy in Athens
- Act II — Medieval Roots and Renaissance Flowerings: Mysteries and Moralities, Tragedy and Tragicomedy
- Act III — Sentiment and Wit: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Comedy and Tragedy

Evaluation

To receive credit  for this course, you must achieve a minimum grade of **D (50 percent)**  on all of the below assignments and final exam and an overall grade of D (50 percent) for the entire course. All assignments and final examination must be submitted or completed by the end of your course contract date.

Activity	Weight
Scene Analysis	10%

Activity	Weight
Critical Review	20%
Essay Proposal	5%
Essay	25%
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the **Exams and grades**  section of the Calendar.

Materials

Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Worthen, W. B., ed. *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. 6th ed. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2010.

Wallis, Mick and Simon Shepherd. *Studying Plays*. 4th ed. New York: Bloomsbury, 2018.

Other Materials

All other course materials are online.

Special Course Features

Many of the plays in ENGL 303 are available online via the [Athabasca Landing](#) and the [Athabasca University Library's Theatre in Video database](#).

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about [challenge for credit](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To [receive credit](#) for the ENGL 303 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least D (50 percent) on the examination, and a grade of at least **D (50 percent)** overall.

Activity	Weight
Critical Essay	50%
Exam	50%
Total	100%



[Challenge for credit course registration form](#)

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#)
- › [Program planning](#)
- › [Request assistance](#)

› **Support services at AU** 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 6, February 5, 2025

Updated January 29, 2026

View previous revision 
