

## Lesson plan #1: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Objective: Students will understand elements of modern American and absurdist theater.

Estimated time: 5 days (90-minute, block schedule classes)

Day 0 homework: read Act I of play in preparation for first class.

Day 1:

- Daily writing and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Brief overview about Edward Albee (5 minutes).
- Discussion of Act I for basic plot points (15 minutes).
- Covering some of the finer points: (rest of time).
  - So who IS this Virginia Woolf, anyhow?
  - Why is the Act named “Fun and Games”?
  - What was Carthage? Hannibal? Why is the town named New Carthage?
  - Why is everyone so obsessed with people's age?
  - Compare Nick and George; what are your impressions of them? What are their objectives. Is one threatened by the other? Why?
  - Is there a power struggle going on here? Who is fighting who? Who's winning? Who's vulnerable?
  - Nick is in the Biology (math?) department, George is in the History department. How do their specialties influence their characters?
  - Who are you cheering for?
- Homework: Read Act II.

Day 2:

- Five Minute Write and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Basic plot points (15 minutes).
- Finer points: (rest of class).
  - What is “Walpurgisnacht”? Why did Albee name this Act after it?
  - What truths have we learned about people's pasts? How much from Act I was a lie?
  - Did George really kill his parents?
  - What is Martha's primary motivation? Nick's? George's? Honey's?
  - Who are you cheering for now?
- Homework: Read Act III.

Day 3:

- Five minute write and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Basic plot points (15 minutes).
- Finer points: (rest of class).
  - What is an “exorcism”? Why did Albee name this act after one?
  - Who wins the war? Who loses?
  - What things turned out to be true? Lies?
- Homework: Martha ends the play by saying that she's afraid of Virginia Woolf. What does she mean by this? Are you afraid of Virginia Woolf? Paper due at end of unit.

Day 4:

- Five Minute Write and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Show first half of the movie (60 minutes).

- Discuss the details, characters, how plays moves from speech to animation.
- Is this how you envisioned Martha? George? Nick? Honey?

Day 5:

- Five Minute Write and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Second half of the movie (45 minutes).
- Last chance questions and discussion (rest of class).
- The paper is due tomorrow: “Martha ends the play by saying that she's afraid of Virginia Woolf. What does she mean by this? Are you afraid of Virginia Woolf?”

Lesson plan #2: Three plays in two days

Objective: Students will explore effective dramatic writing that operates in short timespans.

Estimated time: 2 days (two 90-minute, block schedule classes)

Day 0 homework: read Edward Albee's The Zoo Story in preparation for first class.

Day 1:

- Daily writing and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Discussion of The Zoo Story (60 minutes).
  - There's that Edward Albee guy again.
  - What happened at the zoo?
  - Discussion of hopelessness and success.
  - Who is the savage person? Is it Peter or Jerry?
  - Did Jerry plan this or not?
  - Who do you identify with?
- Was this story effective? If so, what made this story effective?
- Homework: read All in the Timing (the play, not the book) and Variations on the Death of Trotsky by David Ives. We will be reading All in the Timing out loud, so be prepared. Read it in the mirror.

Day 2:

- Daily writing and upkeep (5 minutes).
- Discussion of Variations/Trotsky (30 minutes).
  - *Extremely* brief history of the real Trotsky.
  - Is this funny? Why? Why not?
- Discussion of All in the Timing (30 minutes).
  - Perform All in the Timing. Jump between pairs of students every 30 seconds or so, teacher runs the bell.
  - Talk about Groundhog Day, the movie, and show a clip. Five minutes or so.
  - Is this funny? Why? Why not?
- Show clips from Saturday Night Live.
- What is the difference between David Ives's one-acts and sketch comedy?
- What can a play portray in 10 minutes or less? Can it have meaning and worth? A message?

(Next day, the next unit might start with Swift's A Modest Proposal and follow up comedy with short written satirical essays.)