
LIT 3041, Comedy, fall semester, 2020, M, W, R, second period, Mr. Homan

Monday, August 30: orientation, Pinter's *The Lover* (printed in the back of the syllabus).

Wednesday, September 2: *Check Please*: **1.** Scene 1 (pp. 303-305); **2.** Scene 2: (pp. 305-310).

Friday, September 4: *Check Please*: **3.** Scene 3 (pp. 310-311); **4.** Scene 4 (pp. 311-313); **5.** Scene 6 (pp. 313-315).

Monday, September 7: **no class.**

Wednesday, September 9: *Check Please*: **6.** Scene 7 (pp. 315-317); **7.** Scene 9 (pp. 317-320); **8.** Scene 10 (pp. 321-324).

Friday, September 11: *Check Please*: **9.** Scene 11 (pp. 325-329);
Miss You: **10.** Woman: Sorry, hold on (p. 9)-Woman 2: (*She hangs up*) (p. 11).

Monday, September 14: *Miss You*: **11.** Man 2: Hello? (p. 11)-Woman: I won't (p. 13);
Your Mother's Butt: **12.** Psychologist: So nothing in (p. 18)-Client: sense of humor (p. 19);
13. Psychologist: Shoes seen to (p. 20)-Client: Oh, God, I'm sorry! (p. 22).

Wednesday, September 16: *Your Mother's Butt*: **14.** Psychologist: How are you feeling? (p. 20)-
Psychologist: This is really good (p. 24); **15.** Client: And I'm thinking (p. 24)-Psychologist: what would
you say? (p. 27).

Friday, September 18: *Your Mother's Butt*: **16.** Client: Get out of my face (p. 27)-Client: buying those
shoes (p. 29).
Poodles: **17.** Tom Finnegan: I knew (p. 49)-caught the bug (p. 50);

Monday, September 21: *Poodles*: **18.** Well, I came home (p. 53)-myself a drink (p. 54); **19.** I wonder if
we (p. 54)-this is your life (p. 55).

Wednesday, September 23: *Mistaken Identity*: **20.** Steve: So I know (p. 67)-Steve: I wanted you to like me
(p. 69); **21.** Steve: And I'm sure I've seen (p. 69)-Steve: I am very nice (p. 71).

Friday, September 25: *Mistaken Identity*: **22.** Kali: (Steve, why did you want)-Steve: she didn't say
anything (p. 73); **23.** Kali: I can't say, Mum (p. 73)- Kali: Let's just get some desert (p. 75).

Monday, September 28: *Post-Its*: **24.** [can read from actual post-its] Actor: Had an early meeting (p. 119)-
Actress: pick it up (p. 122); **25.** Actress: I can't take this anymore (p. 122)-Actor: We need milk (p. 126).

Wednesday, September 30: *Wanda's Visit*: **26.** Jim: Our lives had been (p. 129)-Jim: it must be Wanda (p.
132); **27.** [with actor playing Jim also playing Waiter at the top of the scene] Jim: Well, all that happened
(p. 160)-Jim: Right (p. 161).

Friday, October 2: no class, Homecoming

Monday, October 5: *The Valerie of Now*: **28**. [two actors dividing up the monologue] Oh, hi, Monica (p. 168)-*I will never forget* (p. 169);

The Statue of Bolivar: **29**. Jemma: That shit'll kill ya (p. 195)-Jemma: Nice to meet you, Elizabeth (p. 197);

Wednesday, October 7: *The Statue of Bolivar*: **30**. Elizabeth: Excuse me? (p. 197)-Elizabeth: I hate your dad (p. 200); **31**. Jemma: Welcome to my life (p. 200)-Jemma: Eighth (p. 202).

Friday, October 9: *The Statue of Bolivar*: **32**. Elizabeth: Eighth grade (p. 202)-Jemma: Yeah. Nothing (p. 204);

Surprise: **33**. Whitney: So you know I'm going to dump you? (p. 221)-Peter: Except ours is here (p. 22).

Monday, October 12: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **34**. p. 11 (Head)-p. 15 (with light); **35**. p. 18 (Another curious)-p. 21 (they come).

Wednesday, October 14: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **36**. p. 39 (You made)-p. 41 (no practice); **37**. p. 56- (I think)-p. 59 (Draught, yes).

Friday, October 16: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **38**. p. 59 (In that)-p. 61 (Double bluff); **39**. p. 69 (What did)-p. 71 (to death).

Monday, October 19: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **40**. p. 85 (That must)-p. 88 (be violent); **41**. p. 97 (Are you)-p. 99 (to sleep).

Wednesday, October 21: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **42**. p. 100 (Well, shall)-p. 102 (from instinct); **43**. p. 107 (Now that)-p. 110 (making conversation).

Friday, October 23: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **44**. p. 124 (Deaths for all ages)-p. 126 (now you--).

Monday, October 26: Pinter, *Last to Go*. (printed in the back of the syllabus)

Wednesday, October 28: *The Way of All Fish*: **45**. Ms. Asquith: You know (p. 261)-Ms. Asquith: these things happen (p. 264); **46**. Miss Riverton: Tomorrow night (p. 262)-(Miss Riverton *hangs up*) (p. 266).

Friday, October 30: *The Way of All Fish*: **47**. Ms. Asquith: How did you develop (p. 268)-Miss Riverton: Joan. Well ... thank you (p. 270); **48**. [speech divided between two actors] Miss Riverton: But you can be (p. 274)-no special ability (p. 276).

Monday, November 2: *The Way of All Fish*: **49**. Miss Riverton: You know, this was just (p. 278)-Miss Riverton: (I got so strong (p. 280); **50**. Miss Riverton: Here's to a whole (p. 281)-Miss Riverton: I don't know what you're talking about (p. 284).

Wednesday, November 4: *The Way of All Fish*: **51**. Miss Riverton: See? (p. 286)-Ms. Asquith: the reason I stay in shape (p. 287); **52**. Miss Riverton: See? (p. 286)-Ms. Asquith: the reason I stay in shape (p. 287).

Friday, November 6: *Streak*: **53**. Cesare: So, How are you, Jerry? (p. 405)-Cesare: Mary Joseph (p. 407); **54**. Cesare: Saw him on Sports Center (p. 407)-Jerry: You're the Catholic (p. 409).

Monday, November 9: *There Shall Be No Bottom*: **55**. Joe: Ahem ... bing-bong (p. 291)-Jeff: Ahh! (p. 293); **56**. Jeff: Really, Inspector! (p. 294)-Jeff: You cure (p. 295).

Wednesday, November 11: no class, Veterans' Day

Friday, November 13: *There Shall Be No Bottom*: **57**. [with one of the actors playing two parts] Jeff: Fanny, you're no longer (p. 295)-Jeff: Good cover (p. 297); **58**. [with one of the actors playing two parts] Jeff: Fanny, you're no longer (p. 295)-Jeff: Good cover (p. 297).

Monday, November 16: *2B (Or Not 2B)*: **59**. Franny: AHH! (p. 351)-Bee: How's your job? (p. 354); **60**. Franny: Okay, get out! (p. 355)-Franny: Amelia Earhart? (p. 358).

Wednesday, November 18: *2B (Or Not 2B)*: **61**. Bee: I don't want to rush you (p. 358)-Bee: Touch it (p. 360); **62**. Franny: Oh. Oh. It's—it's nice (p. 360)-Franny: let's fly (p. 362).

Friday, November 20: practice doing Pinter's *The Black and White* (printed at the back of the syllabus).

Monday, November 23: *Forty to Life*: **63**. Paul: HEY! (p. 377)-Susie: What the hell (p. 379); **64**. *Forty to Life*: Paul: HEY! (p. 377)-Susie: What the hell (p. 379).

Wednesday, November 25: no class, Thanksgiving

Friday, November 27: no class, Thanksgiving

Monday, November 30: **65.** *The Zig-Zag Woman*: Older Man: Could I ask you (p. 244)-The Zig-Zag Woman: Thank you (p. 246); **66.** [with two actors dividing up lines of Middle Man, and no need for Zig-Zag Woman] Oh, yeah, but I (p. 248)-told it was olive oil (p. 250).

Wednesday, December 2: *The Blueberry Hill Accord*: **67.** Hannah: I thought I was your really (p. 449)-Lindsay: few thing I'd like to get in writing (p. 451); **68.** Hannah: Once we sign this (p. 456)-Lindsay: At least until I get this typed up (p. 458); **69.** Hannah: Once we sign this (p. 456)-Lindsay: At least until I get this typed up (p. 458).

Friday, December 4: *Chocolate*: **70.** Detective: So you have no (p. 423)-Detective: A parrot? (p. 423); **71.** Mrs. Colby: Yes, we were playing (p. 426)-Detective: Chocolate? (p. 428).

Monday, December 7: **72.** Mrs. Colby: Yes, we were playing (p. 426)-Detective: Chocolate? (p. 428); **73.** Mrs. Coley: Yes, we had a box (p. 428)-Detective: we'll be in touch (p. 430).

Wednesday, December 9: [repeating two earlier scenes here] *Wanda's Visit*: **74.** Jim: Our lives had been (p. 129)-Jim: it must be Wanda (p. 132); **75.** [with actor playing Jim playing Waiter at the top of the scene] Jim: Well, all that happened (p. 160)-Jim: Right (p. 161).

Notes:

1. Each student chooses and works with a scene partner during the semester. Scene assignments will be made before the first class—by request or assignment as you choose. Scene work must be performed on the day assigned since the scene work is the “text” of that day’s class; scene work cannot be rescheduled. Scene work should be off-book.

I repeat here my suggestions (expressed in an earlier e-mail) about the options for rehearsal, given the fact that actors will be online for the actual performance and the challenges presented by the virus. You, of course, should pick the one that works best for you: 1. rehearsing in person, on campus, while, of course, maintaining a safe distance; 2 rehearsing by Zoom (especially if you are in different locations--say, one actor on campus and the other at home); 3. rehearsing by face-time or other means; or 4. even rehearsing by phone and/or communicating by e-mail. Being online, actors will, of course, not be able to do any extensive stage movement (though you might suggests stage movement and blocking in your paper), and so the focus, by necessity, will be on the delivery, the sub-text you give your character, gestures, and such small movements that would be compatible with an online performance.

Please be assured that I realize you will be rehearsing under something less than ideal conditions, and I will take this into account in assessing your work. Please have no worries here

If one of the scene partners cannot make it on the day the scene is due, the course stage manager will take his or her part, with my giving some compensation to the actor who does perform since that actor will be working with someone “new.” The partner who was unable to perform must do the scene

online later, with my taking the role of his or her partner. That actor must also hand in, at the time of this performance, a ten-page paper on an assigned topic (on the play in question), as well as the 2-3 page paper (see #2 below) normally written about the actor's experience rehearsing the scene with a partner. The grade for scene work will be the average of the performance, the short paper, and the ten-page paper.

2. By noon on the day of your performance with your scene partner, please send me by e-mail (shakes@ufl.edu) a 2-3-page paper, where you discuss your experience during rehearsals. Not just an account, the paper should be an assessment of what you learned, what "discoveries" you made, the way the scene evolved during rehearsals. The paper should be specific, rooted in the script, and should be geared to the dialogue as it evolves in the scene. General points should always be grounded in these specifics. See below for some more detailed comments about what makes a "good paper."

3. The day after your in-class performance your paper will be returned by e-mail--with two grades. One is for your acting, the other for the paper. If the two grades are 5 or less points apart, you will be given the higher grade; if they are more than 6 or more points apart, you will be given the average of the two. The grading scale is: F--anything 59 or below; D--60-66, D+--67-69; C- --70-72, C--73-76, C+--77-79; B- --80-82, B--83-86, B+--87-89; A- --90-92, A--93-100.

Please note that your grade in the course is the average of all your performances/scene-work papers. There is no provision for extra credit or redoing work.

During class, the stage manager will record the names of students who volunteer comments and reactions following each performance—this is an essential part of the class and I can tell you from experience that the actors are eager for your thoughts on their performance. I've never given a grade on discussion or such participation; I would prefer it to be natural, given freely. But I also recognize the "impersonality" of a Zoom class, and so, with the stage managers making a list of who participates in discussion at each class, I will give extra credit (in the form of points added to your final grade average) to students who thus participate freely and with some frequency. The decision here, as I hope you will understand, must be unilateral.

4. Attendance is required at every online meeting, and will be taken by the stage manager (a student who has volunteered for this position) during the class. Each student is allowed 2 excused absences. Excuses must be made at least one day ahead of time by Professor Homan, preferably by e-mail: shakes@ufl.edu. Excuses made the day of the absence, let alone after the fact, cannot be accepted. In very, very rare cases a student can be excused for more than two class meetings, but this must also be approved ahead of time. For each unexcused absence, the student's grade will be lowered by a letter. Please note there are no exceptions to this. If you miss a class without being excused, the stage manager will e-mail you about this later in the same day.

But, again, I am sensitive to the fact that holding a class online presents difficulties, inconveniences. I am grateful for your help here, and, no less, appreciate any comments or concerns you have about the conditions under which we all are working.

5. Books: *Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays*, Eric Lane and Nina Shengold, eds.; and Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Grove Press).

Some Suggestions for Writing Papers on Scene Work:

1. Try to work as closely with the dialogue, the actual script as possible, and back up every general point with reference to the script.

2. Go through the entire scene, most often in sequence, both the dialogue and what gestures you chose.
 3. Don't just say what happens or what is said, and don't just explicate or "translate" the words and lines. Rather, discuss the script in terms of: a. your actor's choices; b. the character's object (what he or she is after), and c. the character's subtext (what the character is thinking and saying to himself or herself beneath the dialogue).
 4. Don't spend time setting up the paper, talking about how and where you met, talking about topics not immediately linked to the script—get right to the scene in question.
 5. Your "text" is ultimately not the script itself, not even the playwright's words, but your actor's/director's take on the script and on your character as he or she exists in the script.
 6. Have some sense of the larger play, and of the character's role in that larger play, but make sure you don't jump too far from your specific scene. The largest part of your paper should be spent on your particular scene.
 7. Be sure that one paragraph follows logically from the preceding one; and make sure there are segues not only between paragraphs but between sections of the individual paragraph—and, for that matter, segues from one sentence to the next.
 8. You can be informal as you want, and can use the first person—but observe all the rules of good writing, from spelling to punctuation, from clear word choice to correct grammar.
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Pinter, *The Lover*

RICHARD (*amiably*). Is your lover coming today?

SARAH. Mmnn.

RICHARD. What time?

SARAH. Three.

RICHARD. Will you be going out ... or staying in?

SARAH. Oh ... I think we'll stay in.

RICHARD. I thought you wanted to go to that exhibition.

SARAH. I did, yes ... but I think I'd prefer to stay in with him today.

RICHARD, Mmn-hmmm. Well, I must be off.

(He goes to the hall and puts on his bowler hat.)

RICHARD. Will he be staying long do you think?

SARAH. Mmmnnn ...

RICHARD. About ... six, then.

SARAH. Yes.

RICHARD. Have a pleasant afternoon.

SARAH. Mmmn.

RICHARD. Bye-bye.

SARAH. Bye.

Harold Pinter, *LAST TO GO*

A coffee stall. A BARMAN and an old NEWSPAPER SELLER. The BARMAN leans on his counter, the OLD MAN stands with tea.

Silence.

MAN: You was a bit busier earlier.

BARMAN: Ah.

MAN: Round about ten.

BARMAN: Ten, was it?

MAN: About then.

Pause.

I passed by here about then.

BARMAN: Oh yes?

MAN: I noticed you were doing a bit of trade.

Pause.

BARMAN: Yes, trade was very brisk here about ten.

MAN: Yes, I noticed.

Pause.

I sold my last one about then. Yes. About nine forty-five.

BARMAN: Sold your last then, did you?

MAN: Yes, my last "Evening News" it was. Went about twenty to ten.

Pause.

BARMAN: "Evening News", was it?

MAN: Yes.

Pause.

Sometimes it's the "Star" is the last to go.

BARMAN: Ah.

MAN: Or the . . . whatsisname.

BARMAN: "Standard".

MAN: Yes.

Pause.

All I had left tonight was the "Evening News".

Pause.

BARMAN: Then that went, did it?

MAN: Yes.

Pause.

Like a shot.

Pause.

BARMAN: You didn't have any left, eh?

MAN: No. Not after I sold that one.

Pause.

BARMAN: It was after that you must have come by here then, was it?

MAN: Yes, I come by here after that, see, after I packed up.

BARMAN: You didn't stop here though, did you?

MAN: When?

BARMAN: I mean, you didn't stop here and have a cup of tea then, did you?

MAN: What, about ten?

BARMAN: Yes.

MAN: No, I went up to Victoria.

BARMAN: No, I thought I didn't see you.

MAN: I had to go up to Victoria.

Pause.

BARMAN: Yes, trade was very brisk here about then.

Pause.

MAN: I went to see if I could get hold of George.

BARMAN: Who?

MAN: George.

Pause.

BARMAN: George who?

MAN: George . . . whasisname.

BARMAN: Oh.

Pause.

Did you get hold of him?

MAN: No. No, I couldn't get hold of him. I couldn't locate him.

BARMAN: He's not about much now, is he?

Pause.

MAN: When did you last see him then?

BARMAN: Oh, I haven't seen him for years.

MAN: No, nor me.

Pause.

BARMAN: Used to suffer very bad from arthritis.

MAN: Arthritis?

BARMAN: Yes.

MAN: He never suffered from arthritis.

BARMAN: Suffered very bad.

Pause.

MAN: Not when I knew him.

Pause.

BARMAN: I think he must have left the area.

Pause.

MAN: Yes, it was the "Evening News" was the last to go tonight.

BARMAN: Not always the last though, is it, though?

MAN: No. Oh no. I mean sometimes it's the "News". Other times it's one of the others. No way of telling beforehand. Until you've got your last one left, of course. Then you can tell which one it's going to be.

BARMAN: Yes.

Pause.

MAN: Oh yes.

Pause.

I think he must have left the area.

The Black and White, by Harold Pinter

The FIRST OLD WOMAN is sitting at a milk bar table. Small. A SECOND OLD WOMAN approaches. Tall. She is carrying two bowls of soup, which are covered by two plates, on each of which is a slice of bread. She puts the bowls down on the table carefully.

SECOND: You see the one come up and speak to me at the counter?

She takes the bread plate off the bowls, take two spoons from her pocket, and places the bowls, plates, and spoons.

FIRST: You got the bread, then?

SECOND: I didn't know how I was going to carry it. In the end I put the plates on top of the soup.

FIRST: I like a bit of bread with my soup.

They begin the soup. Pause.

SECOND: Did you see that one come up and speak to me at the counter?

FIRST: Who?

SECOND: Comes up to me, he says, hullo, he says, what's the time by your clock? Bloody liberty. I was just standing there getting the soup,

FIRST: It's tomato soup.

SECOND: What the time by your clock? He says

FIRST: I bet you answered him back.

SECOND: I told him all right. Go on, I said, why don't you get back into your scraghole, I said, clear off out of it before I call a copper.

Pauses.

FIRST: I not long got here.

SECOND: Did you get the all-night bus?

FIRST: I got the all-night bus straight here.

SECOND: Where from?

FIRST: Marble Arch.

SECOND: Which one?

FIRST: The two-nine-four, that takes me all the way to Fleet Street.

SECOND: So does the two-nine-one. [*Pause.*] I see you talking to two strangers, as I come in. You want to stop talking to strangers, old piece of boot like you, you mind who you talk to.

FIRST: I wasn't talking to any strangers.

Pause. The FIRST OLD WOMAN follows the progress of a bus through the window.

That's another all-night bus gone down. [*Pause.*] Going up the other way. Fulham way. [*Pause.*] That was a two-nine-seven. [*Pause.*] I've never been up that way. [*Pause.*] I've been down to Liverpool Street.

SECOND: That's up the other way.

FIRST: I don't fancy going down there, down Fulham way, and all up there.

SECOND: Uh-uh.

FIRST: I never fancied that direction much.

Pause.

SECOND: How's your bread?

Pause.

First: Eh?

Second: Your bread.

FIRST: All right, How's yours?

Pause.

SECOND: They don't charge for the bread if you have soup.

FIRST: They do if you have tea.

SECOND: If you have tea they do. [*Pause.*] You talk to strangers they'll take you in. Mind my word. Coppers'll take you in.

FIRST: I don't talk to strangers.

SECOND: They took me away in a wagon once.

FIRST: They didn't keep you though.

SECOND: They didn't keep me, but that was only because they took a fancy to me. They took a fancy to me when they got me in the wagon.

FIRST: Do you think they'd take a fancy to me?

SECOND: I wouldn't back on it.

The FIRST OLD WOMAN gazes out the window.

FIRST: You can see what goes on from this top table. [*Pause.*] It's better than going down to that place on the embankment, anyway.

SECOND: Yes, there's not too much noise.

FIRST: There's always bit of noise.

SECOND: Yes, there's always a bit of Ilkkife.

Pause.

FIRST: They'll be closing down soon to give it a scrub-round.

SECOND: There's a wind out.

Pause.

FIRST: I wouldn't mind staying.

SECOND: They won't let you.

FIRST: I know. [*Pause.*] Still, they only close hour and half, don't they? [*Pause.*] It's not long. [*Pause.*] You can go along, then come back.

SECOND: I'm going. I'm not coming back.

FIRST: When it's light I come back. Have my tea.

SECOND: I'm going. I'm going up to the garden.

FIRST: I'm not going down there. [*Pause.*] I'm going up to Waterloo Bridge.

SECOND: You'll just about see the last two-nine-six come up over the river.

FIRST: I'll just catch a look of it. Time I'm get up there.

Pause.

It don't look like an all-night bus in daylight, do it?
