

LIT 3041 (1816): All Joking Aside: The Art and Craft of Comedy, Mr. Homan, spring, 2016, meeting Tuesdays periods 4, Thursdays periods 4-5, in Turlington 2318

(Please note: I do not allow any cell phones, lap tops iPads, or other electronic devices in class. Our meetings are--more accurately--rehearsals and your role as an audience to the actors and your comments on their performance are the course's main focus. So, if you have to take notes, just use a pencil and paper-- Sid)

Tuesday, Jan. 9: orientation, Pinter's *The Lover* and *Last to Go*.

Thursday, Jan. 11: *Check, Please*: **1.** Scene 1 (pp. 303-305); **2.** Scene 2: (pp. 305-311); **3.** Scene 3 (pp. 310-311); **4.** Scene 4 (pp. 311-313).

Tuesday, Jan. 16: *Check Please*: **5.** Scene 6 (pp. 313-315); **6.** Scene 7 (pp. 315-317); **7.** Scene 9 (pp. 317-320); **8.** Scene 10 (pp. 321-324); **9.** Scene 11 (pp. 325-329); **10.** Scene 12 (pp. 329-331); Scene 13 (pp. 331-333).

Thursday, Jan. 18: *Miss You*: **11.** Woman: Sorry, hold on (p. 9)-Woman 2: (*She hangs up*) (p. 11); **12.** Man 2: Hello? (p. 11)-Woman: I won't (p. 13).

Tuesday, Jan. 23: *Your Mother's Butt*: **13.** Psychologist: So nothing in (p. 18)-Client: sense of humor (p. 19); **14.** Psychologist: Shoes seen to (p. 20)-Client: Oh, God, I'm sorry! (p. 22); **15.** Psychologist: How are you feeling? (p. 20)-Psychologist: This is really good (p. 24).

Thursday, Jan. 25: *Your Mother's Butt*: **16.** Client: And I'm thinking (p. 24)-Psychologist: what would you say? (p. 27); **17.** Client: Get out of my face (p. 27)-Client: buying those shoes (p. 29). *Poodles*: **18.** Tom Finnegan: I knew (p. 49)-caught the bug (p. 50); That was the day I (p. 50)-Ha, ha, ha (p. 52); **19.** Well, I came home (p. 53)-myself a drink (p. 54).

Tuesday, Jan. 30: *Poodles*: **20.** I wonder if we (p. 54)-this is your life (p. 55); *Ties That Bind*: **21.** He's functioning (p. 61)-Ultimate escape (p. 63); *Mistaken Identity*: **23.** Steve: So I know (p. 67)-Steve: I wanted you to like me (p. 69); **23.** Steve: And I'm sure I've seen (p. 69)-Steve: I am very nice (p. 71).

Thursday, Feb. 1: *Mistaken Identity*: **24.** Kali: (Steve, why did you want)-Steve: she didn't say anything (p. 73); **25.** Kali: I can't say, Mum (p. 73)- Kali: Let's just get some desert (p. 75).

Tuesday, Feb. 6: *Outsourced*: **26.** Sonali: I have pulled (p. 82)-Max: You are a person (p. 84); **27.** Max: So you are a *real* woman (p. 85)-Sonali: and zero-zero-cents (p. 87).

Thursday, Feb. 8: *Post-Its*: **28.** [can read from actual post-its] Actor: Had an early meeting (p. 119)-Actress: pick it up (p. 122); **29.** Actress: I can't take this anymore (p. 122)-Actor: We need milk (p. 126). *Wanda's Visit*: **30.** Jim: Our lives had been (p. 129)-Jim: it must be Wanda (p. 132); **31.** [with a volunteer for Jim] Wanda: (With longing) Jim! (p. 132)-Jim: go in the living room (p. 134); **32.** [with volunteer for Marsha] Wanda: Oh, I love this room (p. 134)-Jim: Gosh, Wanda. What is it? (p. 136).

Tuesday, Feb. 13: *Wanda's Visit*: **33.** [with volunteer for Marsha] Wanda: Well it all started (p. 137)-Wanda: Preferably with vodka (p. 139); **34.** [with volunteer for Marsha] Wanda: She really is a jewel (p. 139)-Marsh: Could I have the salt, please? (p. 141); **35.** [with volunteer for Marsha] Wanda: ... and I said (p. 142)-Marsha: I see your point (p. 144);

Thursday, Feb. 15: *Wanda's Visit*: **36.** [with volunteer for Jim] Wanda: So then I thought (p. 144)-Marsha: Good night (p. 146); **37.** [with a volunteer for Jim] Wanda: Oh, is this your bedroom? (p. 147)-Wanda: Good night (p. 149); **38.** Marsha: You know, she doesn't snore (p. 149)-Jim: Don't be mad (p. 151); **39.** [with a volunteer for Marsha] Wanda: Is that life our there? (p. 151)-Wanda: have any bubble bath? (p. 153); **40.** [need volunteer for Waiter and Marsha] Wanda: This is such a pretty restaurant (p. 154)-Marsha: she's insane? (p. 157); **41.** [with actor playing Jim playing Waiter at the top of the scene] Jim: Well, all that happened (p. 160)-Jim: Right (p. 161).

Tuesday, Feb. 20: *The Valerie of Now*: **42.** [two actors dividing up the monologue] Oh, hi, Monica (p. 168)-*I will never forget* (p. 169); **43.** *The Statue of Bolivar*: Jemma: That shit'll kill ya (p. 195)-Jemma: Nice to meet you, Elizabeth (p. 197); **44.** Elizabeth: Excuse me? (p. 197)-Elizabeth: I hate your dad (p. 200).

Thursday, Feb. 22: *The Statue of Bolivar*: **45.** Jemma: Welcome to my life (p. 200)-Jemma: Eighth (p. 202); **46.** Elizabeth: Eighth grade (p. 202)-Jemma: Yeah. Nothing (p. 204).*Surprise*: **47.** Whitney: So you know I'm going to dump you? (p. 221)-Peter: Except ours is here (p. 22); **48.** *The Zig-Zag Woman*: Older Man: Could I ask you (p. 244)-The Zig-Zag Woman: Thank you (p. 246); **49.** [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)

Tuesday, February 27: *The Way of All Fish*: **50.** Ms. Asquith: You know (p. 261)-Ms. Asquith: these things happen (p. 264); **51.** Miss Riverton: Tomorrow night (p. 262)-(Miss Riverton *hangs up*) (p. 266); **52.** Ms. Asquith: How did you develop (p. 268)-Miss Riverton: Joan. Well ... thank you (p. 270).

Thursday, March 1: *The Way of All Flesh*: **53.** [speech divided between two actors] Miss Riverton: But you can be (p. 274)-no special ability (p. 276); **54.** Miss Riverton: You know, this was just (p. 278)-Miss Riverton: (I got so strong (p. 280); **55.** Miss Riverton: Here's to a whole (p. 281)-Miss Riverton: I don't know what you're talking about (p. 284); **56.** Miss Riverton: See? (p. 286)-Ms. Asquith: the reason I stay in shape (p. 287).

[Spring Break, no classes on March 6 or 8]

Tuesday, March 13: no class

Thursday, March 15: *There Shall Be No Bottom*: **57.** Joe: Ahem ... bing-bong (p. 291)-Jeff: Ahh! (p. 293); **58.** Jeff: Really, Inspector! (p. 294)-Jeff: You cure (p. 295); **59.** [with volunteer to play Jane] Jeff: Fanny, you're no longer (p. 295)-Jeff: Good cover (p. 297).

Tuesday, March 20: *2B (Or Not 2B)*: **60.** Franny: AHH! (p. 351)-Bee: How's your job? (p. 354); **61.** Franny: Okay, get out! (p. 355)-Franny: Amelia Earhart? (p. 358).

Thursday, March 22: *2B (Or Not 2B)*: **62.** Bee: I don't want to rush you (p. 358)-Bee: Touch it (p. 360). **63.** Franny: Oh. Oh. It's—it's nice (p. 360)-Franny: let's fly (p. 362); **64.** *Forty to Life*: Paul: HEY! (p. 377)-Susie: What the hell (p. 379)

*****, March 27: *Streak*: **65.** Cesare: So, How are you, Jerry? (p. 405)-Cesare: Mary Joseph (p. 407); **66.** Cesare: Saw him on Sports Center (p. 407)-Jerry: You're the Catholic (p. 409);

Thursday, March 29: *Streak*: **67.** Jerry: So what I hear you saying (p. 411)-Cesare: I'm out! (p. 413). *Rosa's Eulogy*: **68.** what we know is that Rosa is going to heaven (p. 419)-

Sorry, Lord. Sorry (p. 421); experiment with “I never saw a purple cow, / I never hope to see one. / But I can tell you anyhow / I’d rather see than be one.”

Tuesday, April 3: *Chocolate*: **69**. Detective: So you have no (p. 423)-Detective: A parrot? (p. 423); **70**. Mrs. Colby: Yes, we were playing (p. 426)-Detective: Chocolate? (p. 428); **71**. Mrs. Coley: Yes, we had a box (p. 428)-Detective: we’ll be in touch (p. 430).

Thursday, April 5: *The Blueberry Hill Accord*: **72**. Hannah: I thought I was your really (p. 449)-Lindsay: few thing I’d like to get in writing (p. 451); **73**. Hannah: Once we sign this (p. 456)-Lindsay: At east until I get this typed up (p. 458).

Tuesday, April 10: *Please Have a Seat and Someone Will Be with You Shortly*: **74**. David: Sue? (p. 481)-David: All very formal (p. 483); **75**. David: Actually, I’m not entirely (p. 484)-Sue: Well, that explains much (p. 486); **76**. David: I’m doing much better (p. 486)-David: could say goodbye (p. 488); **77**. Sue: I imagined you were a carpenter (p. 488)-Sue: Hello (p. 491).

Thursday, April 12: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **78**. p. 11 (Head)-p. 15 (with light); **79**. p. 18 (Another curious)-p. 21 (they come); **80**. p. 39 (You made)-p. 41 (no practice).

Tuesday, April 17: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **81**. p. 56- (I think)-p. 59 (Draught, yes); **82**. p. 59 (In that)-p. 61 (Double bluff); **83**. p. 69 (What did)-p. 71 (to death)

Thursday, April 19: Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: **84**. p. 85 (That must)-p. 88 (be violent); **85**. p. 97 (Are you)-p. 99 (to sleep); **86**. p. 100 (Well, shall)-p. 102 (from instinct); **87**. p. 107 (Now that)-p. 110 (making conversation); **88**. final speeches of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Tuesday, April 24: Pinter’s *Last to Go*

Notes:

1. Each student chooses and works with a scene partner during the semester. Scene assignments will be made at the first and second class meeting. 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 must be off-book.

If one of the scene partners cannot make it on the day the scene is due, I will take his or her part, 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 later in my office, during office hours, with my taking the role of his or her partner. That actor must also hand in, at the time of the office 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. At the time of your performance with your scene partner, hand in (please *do not* send it by e-mail!) 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. At the next class meeting after your performance, your paper will be returned--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 10 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.

4. Attendance is required at every class meeting, and will be taken by the “stage manger” (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.

5. Books: *Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays*, Eric Lane and Nina Shengold, eds.; Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Arcadia*.

6. Office hour is Thursday, second period (9:00-9:30 AM) in 4109 Turlington Hall.

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 and movement 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, chatting 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.

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. Mmn.

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 . . . whatsisname.

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.
