

Theatre From Across the Pond

Spring Semester 2026

Tuesdays 10:45 - 12:15

Instructor - Ellen Royer

Maryland Campus

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Course Overview: Enjoy the experience of a night out at the West End by viewing excellent, well-recorded productions from the National Theatre in London. This course explores a range of styles, from comedy to drama to musicals. Each week, we will engage in lively discussion about the performances—what we loved, what we didn't, and why.

This is Ellen's fourth year teaching courses in theater history and dramatic literature for OLLI. Ellen loves talking about theater to anyone who will listen, and is thrilled to have a captive audience of learners who are interested in the material she presents! Ellen received her doctorate in theater from the University of Oregon in 1988 and has taught at universities in Oregon, Nebraska, New Jersey and Texas.

Syllabus

Tuesday, February 3 *Good* C.P. Taylor (1:53)

Class Intros, Background Info on *Good*.

As the world faces a Second World War, John Halder, a good, intelligent German professor, finds himself pulled into a movement with unthinkable consequences.

David Tenant (Dr. Who) plays the lead.

Tuesday, February 10 *Good* - Finish viewing and discuss

Tuesday, February 17 *Ballet Shoes* by Kendall Feaver (2:24)

Based on the novel by Noel Streatfeild

In a crumbling house full of dinosaur bones and fossils, three adopted sisters – Pauline, Petrova and Posy – are learning who they are and what they want to be. Under the watchful eyes and guidance of their guardian Sylvia, Nana, and some unlikely lodgers, they fight to pursue their individual passions. But in a world that wasn't built for women with big ambitions, can they forge a future, keep their family together, and even learn a dance or two along the way?

Tuesday, February 24 - Finish *Ballet Shoes* and discuss

Tuesday, March 3 *Red* by John Login

Starring Alfred Molina, Alfred Enoch (1:35)

Under the watchful gaze of his young assistant, the artist Mark Rothko takes on his greatest challenge yet: to create a definitive work of art for an extraordinary setting.

Tuesday, March 10 - *Red* - Finish viewing and discuss

March 17 - Spring Break - no class

Tuesday, March 24 - *People, Places and Things* by Duncan Macmillan (2:12)

People, Places & Things is a play by [Duncan Macmillan](#) about Emma, a 30-something actress whose life unravels due to addiction, leading her to rehab where she must confront her past, identity, and the challenges of sobriety, often through a disorienting, immersive portrayal of intoxication and recovery that blurs the lines between acting and reality. The play explores addiction's grip, the struggle with 12-step programs, and the difficulty of finding truth and self amidst trauma, with the title itself referring to relapse triggers in recovery.

Tuesday, March 31 - *People, Places and Things* Discussion

Tuesday, April 7 - *Present Laughter* by Noel Coward (2:22)

As he prepares to embark on an overseas tour, star actor Garry Essendine's colorful life is in danger of spiraling out of control. Engulfed by an escalating identity crisis as his many and various relationships compete for his attention, Garry's few remaining days at home are a chaotic whirlwind of love, sex, panic and soul-searching. *Present Laughter* is a surprisingly modern reflection on fame, desire and loneliness.

Tuesday, April 14 - *Present Laughter* - Finish viewing and discussion