

Course description

Descriptif du cours

Department : English

Instructor (s): Imen Abid

Academic year: 2021/2022

Level: 2nd Year (LF)

Course title: British Drama / Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals*

Course outline:

Week 1: The theater of the 18th C and its audience / Sheridan's biography

Week 2: Sheridan and the evolution of comedy

Week 3 – 4: Structure and staging in *The Rivals*

Week 5: The prologue and the epilogue: the moral focus of the play.

Week 6: Sheridan's verbal virtuosity

Week 7 - 8: Satire in *The Rivals*

Week 9: Characterization in *The Rivals*: social and psychological dimensions / the influence of gender.

Week 10: Sentiment and economy in the play.

Week 12: Recapitulation and exam sample

Course objectives:

This course is designed for 2nd year students of English to introduce them to the drama of the Irish playwright and parliamentary orator Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751 – 1816)

through his debut play, *The Rivals* said to be one of the greatest comedies of manners in the 18th century.

The course focuses on how, in his play, Sheridan skillfully combined amusing characters, funny intrigues, jaunty situations, witty dialogue, incisive social satire and penetrating insight of human relationships to create a comedy of intensive qualities. In crude terms, the course targets the connection between Sheridan's comic art, his literary demeanor and the social climate of his time. The course is based on lectures in which the main issues are discussed, the characters are analyzed, and basic theatrical concepts are highlighted. Meanwhile, students are required to thoroughly read the play, check the references and read the handouts given to them, so as to enhance their understanding of the play and create interaction in the sessions.

Method of evaluation:

Dissertation or text commentary

References:

Auburn, Mark. *Sheridan's Comedies: Their Contexts and Achievements*. Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 1977.

Donoghue, Frank. "Avoiding the 'Cooler Tribunal of the Study': Richard Brinsley Sheridan's Writer's Block and Late Eighteenth-Century Print Culture." *English Literary History* 68 (2001): 831–56.

Durant, Jack D. *Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. Boston: Twayne, 1975.

Hogan, Charles Beecher. *The London Stage Part V: 1776–1800*. Carbondale, il: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970.

Kelly, Linda. *Richard Brinsley Sheridan: A Life*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1997.

Loftis, John. *Sheridan and the Drama of Georgian England*. Oxford, uk: Blackwell, 1976.

Mullan, John, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1988),2.

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley. *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. 2 vols. Edited by Cecil Price. Oxford: Clarendon, 1973.

Taylor, David Francis. *Richard Brinsley Sheridan 1751–1816*. <http://www.rbsheridan.com>.