

## WORD PLAYS

**Coordinator: Marcia Hearst**

POLONIUS: What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET: Words, Words, Words.

Theater is about many things, action, character, thought, spectacle. But in this study group we concentrate on the words. And not just words used to advance the plot but the artful use of language by playwrights to obfuscate, manipulate, shock and delight. Pinter's dialogs, Ionesco's absurdities, David Ives' distichs and Shakespeare loosely rapped are all best appreciated when read aloud. We read short plays and scenes by these playwrights as well as Beckett, Stoppard, Mamet, Albee and others to examine and enjoy their verbal techniques. While not an acting workshop, some attention is paid to different approaches to reading the texts. This is essentially the same study group as was offered in Spring 2015.

### **Readings and other Required Materials:**

All readings to be handed out in class. A copying fee of \$15.00 to be collected at the first session.

**Marcia Hearst** is a cofounder of the Theatre Special Interest Group (SIG). She has coordinated study groups on Gilbert and Sullivan, Lewis Carroll, the Algonquin Roundtable, Translation, the English Language and American Musical Theater.

### **\* \* \* \* \* Syllabus \* \* \* \* \***

Week 1 Intro, "Audition Pieces," Pinter: Applicant

Week 2 Beckett: Waiting for Godot, Ionesco: The Bald Soprano,  
The Lesson

Week 3 Pinter pauses and interrogations, The Birthday Party, Old  
Times

Week 4 Made-up Languages: Ives: The Universal Language, Shue:  
The Foreigner

Week 5 Hamlet Variations: Ives: Words, Words, Words, Stoppard:  
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

Week 6 Foreign Language Representation: Fornes: The Danube,  
Friel: Translations, Horovitz: The Primary English Class

Week 7 Shakespeare-ish, Much Ado About Nothing, Henry V

Alan Dutton et al: The Bomb-itty of Errors

Week 8 High Style, Ives: School for Lies, Moliere: The Misanthrope  
Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest

Week 9 Park Bench Dialogs: Albee: The Zoo Story, Mamet: Duck  
Variations

Week 10 Speech Difficulties: Lindsay-Abaire: Fuddy Meers

Week 11 Non-sense, Churchill: Hong Kong, Ives: Enigma  
Variations

Week 12 Shock Value: Mamet: American Buffalo, Wrap party and  
final exam