

Theater review: 'Seminar' is all about who's got the write stuff

There is a profound tension at the heart of "Seminar," UAF's Theatre and Film Department's current production at the Salisbury Lab Theatre. This is not surprising since usually, it lies in clashing egos pursuing their interests. And, to be sure, Theresa Rebeck's lean and intelligent comedy is chock full of moments when characters butt heads. That is, when they aren't sleeping with each other. But a deeper issue, like some leviathan circling beneath an agitated sea, supports the action — the question of creative integrity and self-worth.

The play presents four 20-something writers who have each ponied up \$5,000 for a 10-week seminar from a once-celebrated author. Anyone who has ever taken a writing workshop will recognize the types:

- Kate, convincingly played by Sarah Williams, is smart education, but uncertainty stymies her work.

- Actor Kris Luddington strikes all the right notes displaying his character Douglas' pretensions. Douglas knows the right people and slings names and literary terms around for social display.

- Charlotte Gray turns in a solid performance as Izzy, a young woman who sees writing in terms of game theory. She has no qualms about leveraging her physical charms with whomever is best positioned to advance her goals.

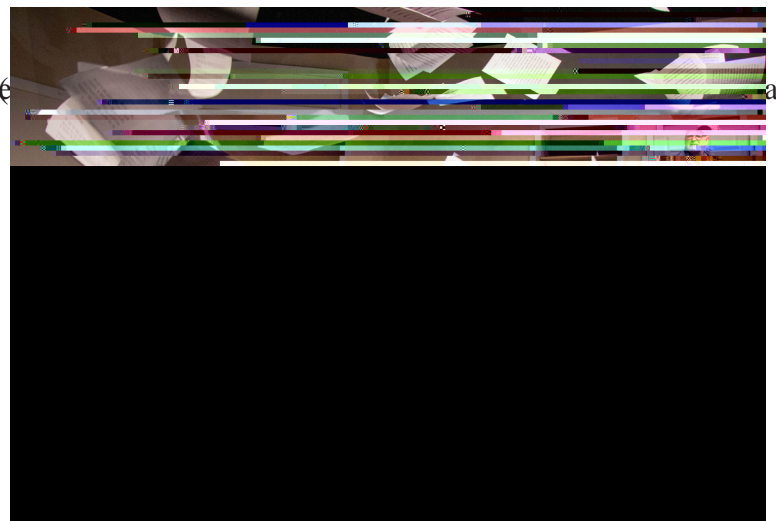
- Martin, played with an engaging neediness by Charles Wolgemuth, is perceptive but reluctant to expose his work to barbs from those he deems unworthy.

of master writer Leonard

in one apartment living room. For the most part, Kade Mendelowitz's set and lighting are serviceable and perfectly proportioned to the Salisbury Lab Theatre's modest size. The closing scene however shifts to Leonard's apartment. The insight into Leonard's psyche, only undermines the scene's expansive tone. Even though she avoids answers, by the play's end, Rebeck is too much of a writer to stint on providing some satisfying resolutions.



From left, Kris Luddington, Sarah Williams, Charlotte Gray, Charles Wolgemuth,



From left, Sarah Williams, Charlotte Gray, Charles Wolgemuth, Kris Luddington and Bruce Hanson star in "Seminar." Photo by Kade Mendelowitz