

THEA 1310-002 INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE

Summer 2015
Monday-Friday
11:40 am – 1:15 pm
Fine Arts 105 (Studio Theatre)

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Office hours by appointment

Course Description

This is an introduction to the world of theatre. Students will read, analyze, write, watch, and perform plays.

The readings and viewings for this course will introduce students to dramatic texts, provide students with fundamental knowledge of dramatic principles and theatrical styles, and address a range of contemporary social issues. This course also teaches students how to become knowledgeable audience members and to appreciate the significance that theatre holds in a given cultural context.

Students also get the opportunity to perform scenes from selected plays. This course is intended as an introduction to theatre and does not require prior theatrical experience.

Required Texts

No textbook is required for this class. You will receive several handouts (scripts, etc.) therefore I recommend you invest in a binder or folder for this class.

Program Learning Outcomes *The graduating student will demonstrate:*

- 1) Knowledge of eras and contributions made throughout Theatre History and Musical Theatre History.

Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in Acting/Directing will demonstrate:

- 2) The ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance
- 3) The ability to analyze a script.
- 4) The ability to work creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a laboratory theatrical production.
- 5) The ability to apply standard requirements to all aspects of technical production.

Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in technical/design will demonstrate:

- 6) The ability to apply all approaches to the theatrical design and rendering of the design.

7) The ability to address all technical aspects of a theatrical production.

Additionally, the student will be able to:

- 8) Describe the theater process and compose a functional definition of the theatre event.
- 9) Describe the close link between theatre and religion.
- 10) Name the basic responsibilities and roles of the playwright, director, actor, and designer in the theatre production
- 11) Have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic, and absurdist theater.
- 12) Describe the uniqueness of the theatre art.
- 13) Understand and describe the elements necessary to bring about a unified production.
- 14) Identify a variety of theater spaces.
- 15) Know the names and works associated with key figures in the theatre.
- 16) Demonstrate an understanding of acting, directing, playwriting, or design in the areas of set, sound, or makeup.

Course Objectives

Among other topics, students will:

- Articulate a working vocabulary of theatre terminology
- Demonstrate beginner knowledge of basic stagecraft
- Evaluate a performance for its formal qualities
- Demonstrate beginner knowledge of playwriting
- Rehearse and perform a rudimentary theatre scene
- Demonstrate how to read and analyze plays effectively
- Articulate the jobs of different types of theatre professionals
- Analyze the role that theatre plays in contemporary culture, particularly the ways in which theatre addresses issues of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class.

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance is expected and you should come to class prepared to offer thoughtful comments and questions about the material. Your participation grade is 10% of your overall grade, as is your attendance grade. Remember, if you are not present, you cannot participate but attendance does not equal participation. So, speak up!

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructor will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine (9) absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three-hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

CELL PHONES, TEXTING AND DOING THINGS NOT RELATED TO CLASS ON YOUR COMPUTER ARE PROHIBITED. EACH TIME YOU ARE CAUGHT USING YOUR CELL PHONE OR THE COMPUTER FOR ACTIVITIES NOT RELATED TO CLASS YOU WILL LOSE TWENTY PERCENT FROM YOUR TOTAL PARTICIPATION GRADE.

Excused Absences: Excused absences from class include religious holidays, an illness (a doctor's note must be submitted), a death in the family (an obituary or funeral program must be submitted), or court dates (an official notice from the court must be submitted). If you miss a quiz or project deadline due to illness you must provide written documentation from the Health Center (or an outside health care provider), verifying dates of treatment and the time period during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities.

Playwriting Assignment: What happens after happily ever after? As part of our playwriting section, you are required to choose a published fairy tale (in the public domain) and write a dramatic scene that takes place at some point after the original story ends. Most fairy tales end with "...and they lived happily ever after!" As we all know, life is complicated and involves much more than living happily. So, what does a scene from the fairy tale characters' lives look like after the happily ever after? Use your imagination! You may use characters from the original fairy tale and you may also create new characters. Scenes may take place in any time period.

Quizzes: Throughout the term you will have three (3) quizzes. Quizzes will cover assigned readings, videos, and play viewings, as well as material from lectures and discussions. Quizzes may include true/false, multiple-choice, matching, diagrams, short answer, and essay questions. Quizzes cannot be made up, except in the case of an excused absence (see above). If you do have an excused absence that allows you to take a make up, you must contact the instructor immediately and arrange to take the make up no later than one week after the date the quiz was given in class.

Viewing & Analysis: We will view Stephen Sondheim's 1987 Broadway production of *Into the Woods* on DVD. You are required to write a 2-3-page analysis of the production.

Your paper should not be a summary of the story, rather a critique of the production values and performances. Details of this assignment will be available on Blackboard.

Performance Attendance & Analysis: You are required to attend a performance of *Annie Get Your Gun* at the S.A.L.E. Arena. See below for performance dates. Please note all performances begin at 8:15 p.m. You will write a performance analysis that is 2-3 pages in length. The details of this assignment will be available on Blackboard. The analysis is due on Monday, July 6th at the beginning of class. Emailed or late papers will not be accepted.



Performance Project/Final: You will work in pairs and perform a fully developed, memorized scene in front of the class. In addition to participating in the performance, you will each submit a 2-3 page process paper detailing your experience rehearsing and preparing for the performance. Each pair of scene partners must also include a set design *and* costume design for their scene. These designs must include sketches or a collage of images that depict your design concept. A detailed description of this assignment will be provided on Blackboard. **This project will serve as the final exam for this course.**

EXTRA CREDIT: You can earn a maximum of 30 extra credit points through any combination of the options listed below. Extra credit will be added to the total cumulative grade

Play review: You can earn up to 15 points of extra credit by attending a university or professional theatre production (no high school or community

theatre) and writing a review of the production that is two full pages in length in which you discuss how the production you saw fits in with issues addressed in class. You will need to get prior approval for the play from the instructor. You must include the ticket stub with your review.

Play analysis: You can earn up to 15 points by reading one of the pre-approved plays available on reserve at the library and writing a two-page response paper that considers how the play fits in with the topics we have addressed in class.

Other: I'm open to other extra credit options; if you have any ideas, please let me know.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT MANY OF THE REQUIRED READINGS, VIDEOS, AND PLAYS CONTAIN MATURE CONTENT, EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, DIFFICULT THEMES, AND/OR NUDDITY. THEY MAY BE OFFENSIVE TO SOME PEOPLE.

Written Assignments:

Submission: All papers must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class. Emailed papers will not be accepted.

Format: All assignments must be typewritten in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins, and free of errors. You will be graded on both the content of your ideas and the clarity and accuracy of your writing, so I strongly suggest that you visit the Writing Center in MAB102 before turning in your papers.

Late Papers: Papers must be submitted as soon as class begins on the day that they are due. For every *hour* that a paper is late, I will deduct 5% of the total possible paper grade. Unless you make specific arrangements, papers are due in hard copy only.

Academic Integrity: The University has a Code of Academic Integrity, which prohibits, among other things, cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers or portions of papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, forging signatures, and using unauthorized study aids (including old quizzes and exams). This class abides by that code.

Challenges: If you have a concern about a grade on an assignment you must present the graded assignment and one paragraph explaining your comments on the grade (including any supporting evidence) to the instructor no later than one week after the grade is posted. **After one week, questions about grades will not be considered. This policy applies to ALL grades – including quiz grades and missing grades.**

Materials Required:

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- 1) A working e-mail account. You are required to check your Sul Ross email account daily.
 - 2) A working blackboard account.
 - 3) I strongly suggest you bring paper and a writing utensil to every class meeting.

Class Dates: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Class	Date	Topics and Assignments
1	June 2	Review syllabus, assignments, and deadlines. Expected outcomes. Play reading and analysis Read: <i>Man in a Case</i> by Wendy Wasserstein
2	June 3	Play Reading and Analysis Read: selected scenes
3	June 4	Playwriting
4	June 5	Playwriting
5	June 8	Theatre Venues and Jobs in Professional Theatre
6	June 9	Stage Configurations and Areas of the Stage
7	June 10	Assign Scenes for Performance Project Partners will pair up and read scenes in class
8	June 11	Casting/The Rehearsal Process Theatre Games/Flat Scenes Exercise
9	June 12	Acting/The Rehearsal Process QUIZ #1
10	June 15	Read first drafts of playwriting scenes DUE: Fairy Tale Scenes
11	June 16	Read first drafts of playwriting scenes
12	June 17	Technical Theatre. We will spend the class period helping to build the set for <i>Annie Get Your Gun</i>. Please wear closed-toed, hard-soled shoes and comfortable clothing.
13	June 18	Technical Theatre. We will spend the class period helping to build the set for <i>Annie Get Your Gun</i>. Please wear closed-toed, hard-soled shoes and comfortable clothing.
14	June 19	Theatre Design
15	June 22	Theatre Design
16	June 23	<i>View Into the Woods</i>
17	June 24	<i>View Into the Woods</i>
18	June 25	Rehearse Performance Project scenes in class
19	June 26	Rehearse Performance Project scenes in class Quiz #2
20	June 29	View: <i>Show Business: The Road to Broadway</i>
21	June 30	Theatre History
22	July 1	Theatre History DUE: <i>Into the Woods</i> analysis papers
23	July 2	Read final drafts of playwriting assignment
24	July 3	Read final drafts of playwriting assignment
25	July 6	DUE: <i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> analysis papers/Quiz #3

- 26 July 7 FINAL – Performance projects due, including process paper, set and costume designs, and Uta Hagen Six Steps character analysis. All students must be off-book, rehearsed, in costume, with props and set pieces ready.

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Playwriting Assignment	15%
2) <i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> Paper	15%
3) Quizzes (worth 5% each)	15%
4) <i>Into the Woods</i> Paper	10%
5) Final Performance Project	25%
6) Class Attendance	10%
7) Class Participation	10%

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

Students with Disabilities

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartze in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: [432-837-8203](tel:432-837-8203).