

Playwriting
THEA 5303
MW 12:30-1:45 LH 303

Liz Castillo

Office: Ferguson Hall 107 Telephone: 837-8843
Office Hours M-F 11:00-12:30 or by arrangement; e-mail: ecastillo@sulross.edu

Course Description: This course will focus on the theory and practice of playwriting.

Course Requirements: Students will be expected to attend the class and actively participate in classroom discussions and activities. Students will also complete several “starts”, a one-act play, take quizzes and a mid-term. All students are also required to attend all Sul Ross State University Theatre productions and write a one-page response paper.

Required Textbooks:

William Missouri Downs and Robin U Russin. *Naked Playwriting: The Art, The Craft, and the Life Laid Bare*.

Program Learning Outcomes

The graduating student will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of eras and contributions made throughout Theatre History.
2. Describe the theatre process and compose a functional definition for the event.
3. Name the basic roles and responsibilities of the playwright, director, actor, and designers in the theatre production.
4. Have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic, and absurdist theatre.
5. Identify a variety of theatre spaces
6. Know the names and works associated with key figures in the theatre.

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

7. The ability to express themselves creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a laboratory theatrical production.
8. The ability to work creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a laboratory theatrical production.
9. The ability to apply standard requirements to all aspects of technician production.

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

10. The ability to apply all approaches to theatrical design and rendering of the design.
11. The ability to address all technical aspects of a theatrical production.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Identify and analyze the major dramatic elements of a play.
- Have experience in working with the elements of plot, character, idea, language, music, and spectacle in writing exercises.
- Have the ability to respond sensitively and critically to original works in progress
- Distinguish the difference between story and plot.
- Apply all learned elements to create an original work.

Grading Breakdown: 1,100

Response Papers – 2 @ 50 - 100

Starts – 5 @ 25 – 175

Quizzes - 200

Midterm - 125

One-Act Play – 400

Play Analysis - 100

Starts: Starts are 10 page writing exercises based off of prompts that are provided by the professor. They are intended to stimulate your writing. Sometimes the hardest part about writing is actually sitting down and writing. Full credit will be given if the 10 pages are completed.

Response Paper: Students are required to attend all Sul Ross State University Theatre productions and write a one-page response paper. The paper must address the script and the treatment there of. Each paper is due the class period immediately following the closing of the production.

Quizzes: Students will take quizzes based on readings from the required textbook.

Midterm: A comprehensive midterm based on the readings from the textbook and class notes.

October 19, 2015

One-Act: Students will complete a one-act play. A one act is defined as being complete in action; having a beginning, middle, and end, and whose action takes place from beginning to end in one single act. **The first draft of the one-act is due on November 23, 2015. The final draft along with a character breakdown and a short synopsis is due no later than Wednesday, December 9th.**

Play Analysis: Students will choose a playwright with a considerable body of work and write a paper analyzing a minimum of 3 plays in a 5 page paper.

Participation: Effective participation consists of completing the reading for the day and being prepared to engage with it during the duration of the class meeting. I reserve the

right to call on any student at any time. Students will be expected to work efficiently on any in-class exercises or small group work.

Attendance: Students will be dropped with an “F” if they reach a total of 9 absences. Please refer to the online catalog for further information.

<http://www.sulross.edu/docs/admissions/catalog-2010-2012-07.pdf>

Availability of Instructor: I enjoy speaking with students and am available most of the day. You may drop by my office or make an appointment to go over any ideas or ask any questions.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of claiming another’s words or ideas as your own. Any instance of plagiarism will be dealt with according to the policies outlined in the SRSU Student Handbook.

Special Needs: *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 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.*

This course will observe the university’s guidelines for avoiding sexual harassment. However, because theatre imitates life and because sexuality is a part of life, some materials in this course may deal with sexual behaviors, situations, or language.

Late work will NOT be accepted. Presentations must be given on the day they are assigned. Turn off your cell phone!

*****I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed.*****

Schedule

Aug. 24	Discuss the Syllabus. Introduction Activity (Read Chapter 1)
26	Where do plays come from? (Read Chapter 2, Start #1)
31	Schools of Thought (Read 10min play)
Sept. 2- Oct. 19	Structure (Read Chapters 3,5,6,7. Starts #2, #3, #4, #5)
Oct. 21-Dec 2	(Workshop plays in class)
Dec. 9	Completed play due