

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
THEA 1310-002 INTRODUCTION TO THE THEATRE

Fall 2016
Tues/Thurs
9:30 am – 10:45 am
Fine Arts Building
(FAB) Room 105/Studio Theatre

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Communication & Theatre
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Office Hours: MWF 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
All other times by appointment
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Course Description

The readings and viewings for this course will introduce you to dramatic texts and provide you with fundamental knowledge of dramatic principles and theatrical styles. This course also teaches you how to become a knowledgeable audience member and to appreciate the significance that theatre holds in a given cultural context.

This course offers the experience of collaborating with your peers in performing/directing/designing scenes from culturally significant plays. As this course is intended to be an introduction to theatre, no prior theatrical experience is required.

Required Text

None, but I will be giving you scripts and plenty of handouts. Please keep all handouts in a binder or folder and please bring the binder/folder to every class meeting.

Materials Required

- 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.
- 4) A binder in which to keep the copious pages I will be distributing throughout the term. It is your responsibility to keep track of your script pages and handouts. You must bring all assigned reading to class with you.

Student 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 theater terminology
- Evaluate a performance for its formal qualities
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of how to read and analyze stage plays
- Articulate the jobs of different types of theater professionals
- Analyze the role that theater plays in contemporary culture, particularly the ways in which theater addresses issues of gender, religion, 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 ask questions about the material.

Your attendance and participation grades combined comprise 20% of your overall grade. If you're not present, you can't participate. So, show up! But attendance does not equal participation. So, speak up, too! After two (2) unexcused absences, I will deduct one half-letter grade from your overall participation grade for each subsequent unexcused absence.

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

“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 engaging in activities unrelated to class are all strictly prohibited during class time. If I see you using your cell phone during class, I reserve the right to ask you to leave and you will be marked absent.

Excused Absences: Excused absences from class include: religious holidays, an illness (a doctor's note must be submitted to the instructor), 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. All other absences will be marked as unexcused.

Build Hours: You are required to sign up for four hours of building/painting time on one of our Saturday build days from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. for *The Christians* and *Maricela de la Luz Lights the World*. I will pass around a sign-in sheet and you must choose one time slot, fill in your name, and then show up at the theater or scene shop at your allotted time.

Critical Analysis Responses: Throughout the semester we will read three plays aloud as a class. You are required to submit a brief written analysis of each play. I will post a detailed assignment to Blackboard for each play. Responses must be e-mailed to

mscott3@sulross.edu no later than 5 p.m. on their respective due dates. See the calendar section of this syllabus for specific due dates.

Performance Attendance & Analysis: You are required to attend one performance *each* of The Sul Ross Theatre Department's productions of *The Christians* (opening Oct. 21st) and *Maricela de la Luz Lights the World* (opening Nov. 12th). See Blackboard for performance dates and times as well as a detailed assignment. You are required to write a 2-page critical analysis for *each* production. The analysis for *The Christians* is due on Tuesday, November 3rd at the beginning of class. Papers for *Maricela de la Luz Lights the World* are due Tuesday November 22nd at the beginning of class. **I do not accept late papers.** You must also turn in a signed program for each production. Programs must be stapled to your paper and must be signed by the director of the play or by the House Manager. If you fail to submit a signed program with your paper, I will mark your paper down a half-letter grade.

Group Project: You will work in groups of four (4) for your final project. Each group will be given a play script from the instructor and each group must select a scene of 5-7 minutes in length to present to the class. Each group will have two actors, a director, and a designer. The director of each group must meet with his/her actors to rehearse the scene before the final performance. I recommend rehearsing as many times as possible but you must rehearse a minimum of 6 times before the final performance on Monday, December 5th. All directors must provide the instructor with a detailed rehearsal schedule signed by the actors. The actors must be off-book and work collaboratively with the director to develop the scene fully. The designer's job is to discuss the images, language, and ideas of the play with the director, create sketches of the costumes for each character, and design a set for the scene. Designers are strongly encouraged to attend a rehearsal. All members of the group are required to read the full play from which their scene is selected. **This project will serve as the final exam for this course.**

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT MANY OF THE REQUIRED READINGS, VIDEOS, AND PLAYS CONTAIN MATURE CONTENT, EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, DIFFICULT THEMES, AND/OR NUDITY.

Format: All assignments must be typewritten in 12-point type, Times New Roman or Arial 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 MAB 102 before turning in your papers.**

Late Assignments: Papers must be submitted as soon as class begins on the day that they are due. I do not accept late work.

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.**

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Build Day (4 hours)	10%
2) <i>Disgraced/Zoot/Clybourne</i> Responses	15%
3) <i>The Christians</i> Critical Analysis	15%
4) <i>Maricela</i> Critical Analysis	15%
5) Group Project (FINAL)	25%
6) Attendance & Participation	20%

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. High level of scholarship.

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

D = Below Average. 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 Schwartz in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: [432-837-8698](tel:432-837-8698). E-mail: mschwartz@sulross.edu.

Class Dates: Assignments and Deadlines

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

Day	Date	Topics and Assignments
Tues	Aug 23	Review syllabus, assignments, and deadlines. Expected outcomes. Writing assignment in class: What is the role of live theater? (P. 40 of <i>The Empty Space</i>)
Thurs	Aug 25	Script Analysis/Read: <i>Disgraced</i> by Ayad Akhtar
Tues	Aug 30	Read: <i>Disgraced</i>
Thurs	Sep 1	Read: <i>Disgraced</i>
Tues	Sep 6	Read: <i>Disgraced</i>
Thurs	Sep 8	Read: <i>Disgraced</i> /Dramatic Structure
Tues	Sep 13	Areas of the Stage/Theatre Venues ASSIGN GROUPS & SCENES
Thurs	Sep 15	Read: <i>Zoot Suit</i> by Luis Valdez/ <i>Disgraced</i> responses DUE VIA E-MAIL BY 5 pm
Tues	Sep 20	Read: <i>Zoot Suit</i>
Thurs	Sep 22	Read: <i>Zoot Suit</i>
Tues	Sep 27	Read: <i>Zoot Suit</i>
Thurs	Sep 29	Read: <i>Zoot Suit</i>
Tues	Oct 4	Watch: <i>Zoot Suit</i>
Thurs	Oct 6	Watch: <i>Zoot Suit</i>
Tues	Oct 11	Theater Design
Thurs	Oct 13	Theater Design/ <i>Zoot Suit</i> responses DUE VIA E-MAIL BY 5 pm
Tues	Oct 18	First Presentations of Final Scenes IN CLASS
Thurs	Oct 20	First Presentations of Final Scenes IN CLASS
Tues	Oct 25	Acting
Thurs	Oct 27	Acting
Tues	Nov 1	Acting
Thurs	Nov 3	Acting/ <i>The Christians Papers</i> DUE IN CLASS
Tues	Nov 8	Read <i>Clybourne Park</i> by Bruce Norris/ GO VOTE!
Thurs	Nov 10	Read <i>Clybourne Park</i>
Tues	Nov 15	Read <i>Clybourne Park</i>
Thurs	Nov 17	Read <i>Clybourne Park</i>
Tues	Nov 22	Musical Theater (Watch <i>Hamilton</i>)/ <i>Maricela</i> Papers DUE IN CLASS

Thurs Nov 24 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Tues Nov 29 TBD/*Clybourne Park* Responses **DUE VIA E-MAIL BY 5 pm**

Thurs Dec 1 DEAD DAY – NO CLASS

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 5th from 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.