

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
THEA 1310 Intro to Theater**

Summer II 2018
Mon thru Fri
9:50am-11:25am
Marshall Theater, Morelock Academic
Building

Bret Scott, Asst. Professor
Office: FAB 208
432/837-8794
bscott@sulross.edu
Regular Office Hours:
9-10AM MWF, on walk-in basis
All others by appointment

Course Description

The readings and viewings for this course will introduce students to dramatic texts, knowledge of dramatic principles and theatrical styles, and address a range of contemporary social issues. This course also teaches students how to become educated 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

Arnold, Stephanie, (2015) *The Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre* (6th Ed.). New York. McGraw-Hill.

Disgraced, by Ayad Akhtar

Buy them at Amazon. Or wherever's cheapest.

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
- Evaluate a performance for its formal qualities
- Demonstrate beginner knowledge of the rehearsal and performance process
- Articulate basic theatrical design principles
- Demonstrate beginner knowledge of script analysis
- 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 attendance and participation grades are worth 10% *each* of your overall grade. Remember, if you are not present, you cannot participate but attendance does not equal participation. So, participate!

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 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 six (6) absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty (50) 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 ACTIONS NOT RELATED TO CLASS ON YOUR COMPUTER ARE PROHIBITED. YOU MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE CLASS FOR THE DAY IF YOU ENGAGE IN ANY OF THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES. REPEAT OFFENDERS MAY BE DROPPED FROM THE CLASS WITH A GRADE OF AN "F."

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 an assignment 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.

Performance Attendance & Analysis: You are required to attend a performance of Theatre of the Big Bend's summer production *The Fantasticks* at the Kokernot Outdoor Theatre. *The Fantasticks* opens on Friday, July 7 and runs through Sunday, July 23rd. All performances begin at 8:15 p.m. You must write a 1-2-page response to the performance addressing the questions/topics in the assignment. I will post the assignment to Blackboard by the second week of class. You must also submit a *signed* program along with your analysis paper. Programs must be signed by the director of the show (Dona Roman) or the House Manager, and stapled to your paper.

Performance Project: You will work in pairs to prepare and perform a scripted scene in front of the class. I will select the scenes from published plays and assign scene partners. You must be off-book for the final performance (August 10) and include scenic and costume designs for your scene. These designs must include sketches or a collage of images that illustrate your design concept for costumes. Each pair must submit ONE detailed ground plan for the set. **These scenes and the accompanying designs will serve as the final exam for this course.**

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

Written Assignments

Chapter Responses: You are required to respond to the questions at the end of several of the chapters in the required textbook (see syllabus calendar for specific chapters). Each set of questions is worth 10% of your overall grade. All responses must be typed and submitted in HARD COPY at the beginning of class on the due dates listed in the calendar portion of the this syllabus.

Format: All written assignments must be typed, in 12-point type, Times New Roman font or similar, double-spaced, 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 assignments.

Late Assignments: Assignments must be submitted on the day 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.**

Materials Required:

- 1) A working e-mail account. **You are required to check your Sul Ross email account daily.**
- 2) A working Blackboard account. I will post some assignments and reminders to Blackboard.
- 3) Paper and a writing utensil for every class meeting.
- 4) Please bring your textbook with you to class each day.

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 | July 10 | Review syllabus, assignments, and deadlines. Expected outcomes. What is theatre? |
| 2 | July 11 | Attending a play. Musical Theatre. Review assignment for <i>Smokey Joe's Cafe</i> |

- 3 July 12 Discuss Chapter 1 in class. **READING & WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE: READ CHAPTER 1 AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS (page 23).**
- 4 July 13 Chapter 2 Discussion. **READING DUE: CHAPTER 2.**
- 5 July 16 Assign partners and scenes for final. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE: CHAPTER 2 QUESTIONS (PAGE 44).**
- 6 July 17 Begin reading *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar. **READING DUE: CHAPTER 3 (pages 46-57)**
- 7 July 18 Continue reading *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar.
- 8 July 19 Continue reading *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar.
- 9 July 20 Continue reading *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar.
- 10 July 23 Discuss *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar. **READING DUE: P 95-109. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE: Chpt 3, Question 2 (a, b, & c).**
- 11 July 24 Chapter 4 - The Actor. **READING DUE: CHAPTER 4, P. 110 – 122.**
- 12 July 25 The Actor (Continued). In-class exercises.
- 13 July 26 The Actor (Continued). In- class exercises.
- 14 July 27 Chapter 6 – The Designers. **READING DUE: Chapter 6.**
- 15 July 30 Chapter 6 – The Designers continued. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE: Chapter 6 Questions #1 and #2 (page 191). IN-CLASS SOUND EXERCISE.**
- 16 July 31 Chapter 7: The Nature of Style. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE: *Smokey Joe's Cafe* ANALYSIS PAPER.**
- 17 Aug 1 TBD
- 18 Aug 2 WATCH: The Grapes of Wrath (Blackboard)
- 19 Aug 3 WATCH: The Grapes of Wrath (Blackboard)
- 20 Aug 6 **GRAPES OF WRATH WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE.**
- 21 Aug 7 Theatre Venues/Who's Who in the Theatre
- 22 Aug 8 Chapter 10 – Expressing a World View Through Theatricalism. **READING DUE: CHAPTER 10 PAGES 285-295.**
- 23 Aug 9 Read first act of *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner.
- 24 Aug 10 Evaluations/Read first act of *Angels in America*
- 25 Aug 13 TBD
- 26 Aug 14 FINAL – PERFORM SCENES IN CLASS
- 27 Aug 15 FINAL – PERFORM SCENES IN CLASS
- 28 Aug 16 TBD

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1) <i>Smokey Joe's</i> attendance and paper | 15% |
| 2) Chapter responses | 20% |
| 3) Final Performance Project | 30% |
| 4) The Grapes of Wrath Paper | 15% |
| 5) Class Attendance | 10% |
| 6) 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)