

THEA 1310:001 INTRODUCTION TO THE THEATRE

COURSE SYLLABUS

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

Spring, 2020

Class Meets: MWF 10-10:50 in Studio Theatre

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Required Texts: *Zoot Suit + other plays* by Luis Valdez; *Man of La Mancha* by Dale Wasserman; *Blood Wedding* by Hughes. Must bring to class for assigned readings. Ebooks are not allowed.

Course Description: An introduction to dramatic texts and dramatic principles, script analysis, and theatrical styles. This course will also prepare students to become knowledgeable audience members with an appreciation for the significance that theatre productions can provide in a given cultural context.

This course offers students an opportunity to collaborate with their peers as actors, directors, and designers. Students will work together to rehearse, design and perform scenes from culturally significant plays. This course is intended to be an introduction to theatre. No prior theatre experience is required.

Marketable Skills:

Strong oral and written communication skills.

Strong analytical skills and strong teamwork and collaboration skills.

Other requirements:

1. A working SRSU e-mail account. Check daily especially before class.
2. Check blackboard for announcements before class meeting.
3. Paper and pencil/pen for every class meeting.
4. A notebook binder with pockets to keep all handouts/scripts and notebook paper to take notes at every class.
5. Other supplies as needed for final exam project – TBA; outside research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

*Critically understand the origins, progression, genres, and the development of theatre;

*Discern the basic responsibilities and roles of theatre professionals;

*Effectively analyze the basic elements of theatrical design;

*Communicate successfully written critical assessments of theatrical performances and printed works;

*Use your creative skills to work on design projects;

*Analyze the role that theatre plays in contemporary culture, particularly the ways in which theatre addresses issues of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class.

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

FORMAT OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: All assignments must be typewritten in 12-point type. Times New Roman or Ariel font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins, and free of errors. PLEASE PROOF YOUR WORK. You will be graded on both the content and your ideas and the clarity and accuracy of your writing. If needed, I suggest you visit the Writing Center before turning in your papers.

All assignments must be submitted as soon as class begins on the due date. I will not accept late work. If you have an excused absence, you need to talk to me before assignments are due to arrange submission date.

GRADING: Assignments are valued as follows:

Quizzes or other assignments 25%

2 Sul Ross Theatre Performance papers 25%

Class participation/Class attendance 25%

FINAL EXAM CLASS PROJECT 25%

Grading Criteria:

A= 100-90%

B= 89-80%

C= 79-70%

D= 69-60%

F= below 60%

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the Student's responsibility to initiate a request. Please contact me, Ms. Rebecca Greathouse Wren, M.Ed., LPC-S, Director/Counselor, Accessibility Services Coordinator, Ferguson Hall (Suite 112) at 432.837.8203; mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Students should then contact the instructor as soon as possible to initiate the recommended accommodations.

University Rules/Regulations regarding plagiarism, dishonesty, and other issues concerning classroom participation can be found in the University Rules and Regulations and Student Handbook.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and participation: Regular attendance is expected and you should come to class prepared to contribute to class discussion and ask questions of the material. Your participation grade is 25% of your overall grade so keep this in mind and speak up during class and attend daily.

After two unexcused absences, your overall grade will be lowered by 9 points; each subsequent absence will lower grade an additional 5 points. If you miss more than 8 classes, you must withdraw from the course or I will drop you with the grade of "F."

Cell phones, texting and engaging in activities unrelated to this 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.

Sul Ross Theatre Performance Attendance & Analysis: You are required to attend two SRSU plays: *Nat Turner in Jerusalem* and *Avenue Q*. You will be required to write a 2-3 page critical analysis of this production. I will not accept late papers; check schedule of performance dates and papers due. You must also staple your signed program to your paper with the Director's signature.

Final Group project: You will work in groups for your final project. Each group must select a scene from one of the plays we read this semester. Scenes must be 5-7 minutes in length and presented to the class on the day of the final exam. Each group will have two – three 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 each group rehearse a minimum of 6 times. All directors must provide the instructor with a detailed rehearsal schedule signed by the actors. Actors must be off book (lines memorized) and work collaboratively with the director to develop the scene as fully as possible. The designer's job is to research, discuss images, language, ideas of the play with the director and actors, create sketches or collages of the costumes for each character, and design a set for the scene. Use your creativity and found objects, etc. Designers are strongly encouraged to attend at least 2 rehearsals. All members of the group are required to read the full play from which their scene is selected. THIS GROUP PROJECT WILL SERVE AS THE FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE. ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

(Dates/details are subject to change at instructor's discretion)

- Jan 13 Review syllabus; ice breaker exercise
- Jan 15 Theatre and its Audience: Cultural Collaboration: Theatre and Society
- Jan 17 Theatre and Society; discuss how theatre is a social responsibility
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- Jan 20 MLK Holiday – SRSU Closed
- Jan 22 Theatre as a social responsibility; questions to discuss
- Jan 24 Experiencing Theatre: Collaboration of Actor, Audience, and Space
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- Jan 27 Dramatic Structure: Aristotle's six elements
- Jan 29 Dramatic Structure - Assignment
- Jan 31 Assign Critique Paper #1 for *Nat Turner in Jerusalem*
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- Feb 3 Analyzing Theatre: Thinking and Writing about Live Performances
- Feb 5 Discuss SRSU Theatre Performance papers; how to write a critique paper...handout
- Feb 7 Bring *Zoot Suit* script to class; Intro to Luis Valdez and *Zoot Suit*
- Opening night of *Nat Turner in Jerusalem* at Studio Theatre, Fine Arts Bldg.**
- Fri and Sat. Show Dates/Times: February 7th, 8th, 14th, & 15th at 7:30 P.M.**
- Sunday Dates/Times: February 9th & 16th at 2:00 P.M**
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- Feb 10 *Zoot Suit* in class
- Feb 12 *Zoot Suit* in class
- Feb 14 *Zoot Suit* to watch

- Feb 17 Discuss *Zoot Suit*; prepare for quiz
- Feb 19 QUIZ #1 *Zoot Suit***
- Feb 21 Bring script to class: Begin reading *Man of La Mancha*
- Feb 24 Critique Paper #1 DUE before class; *Man of La Mancha* continued in class**
- Feb 26 *Man of La Mancha* continued in class
- Feb 28 *Man of La Mancha* to watch
- Mar 2 Discuss *Man of La Mancha*; prepare for quiz
- Mar 4 QUIZ #2 *Man of La Mancha***
- Mar 6 Theatre exercises in class
- Mar 9-13 Spring Break Week – SRSU Closed**
- Mar 16 Bring script to class; Begin reading *Blood Wedding* in class
- Mar 18 Continue reading *Blood Wedding* in class
- Mar 20 Continue *Blood Wedding* in class
- Mar 23 *Blood Wedding* to watch
- Mar 25 Discuss *Blood Wedding*; prepare for quiz
- Mar 27 QUIZ #3 *Blood Wedding*; Attend Opening night of Avenue Q
Performance Dates March 27-April 11 at Kokernot Sound Stage**

- Mar 30 Assign Critique Paper #2 for *Avenue Q*; What all students need to know about final project and how to prepare. What is collaboration?
- Apr 1 Review final group project work – what do Director’s do?
- Apr 3 Review final group project work – what do Designer’s do?
- Apr 6 Review final group project work – what do Actor’s do?
- Apr 8 Assign roles; final group project role playing
- Apr 10 Good Friday Holiday – SRSU Closed**
- Apr 13 Critique Paper #2 DUE before class; Theatre as Social Responsibility – questions revisited**
- Apr 15 Rehearsals continue; group work in class
- Apr 17 Rehearsals continue; group work in class
- Apr 20 check points in class review; costume shop visit
- Apr 22 check points in class review; costume shop visit
- Apr 24 Questions about final group project
- Apr 27 Work on your own outside of class with your groups
- Apr 29 Last class day before final exam; final check points covered
- May 1 FINAL EXAM PRESENTATIONS ON FRIDAY, MAY 1 AT 10:15-12:15. ALL STUDENTS MUST BE ON TIME AND ALL GROUPS MUST BE READY TO PRESENT THEIR FINAL PROJECT.**