

THEA 3311: PLAYWRITING

Course Syllabus Spring, 2020

Office Hours: M & W 2:00-3:00, TR 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

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TEXT:

Jeffrey Hatcher. THE ART & CRAFT OF PLAYWRITING. (REQUIRED).

ISBN-13: 978-1-88491-046-3

DESCRIPTION:

A study of the art and craft of writing plays for the theatre. Specific strategies will focus on play structure, turning a great idea into a play, and developing a strong beginning, middle and end, and writing believable dialogue. Course will also introduce a basic understanding of writing professionally.

GOALS:

Gain knowledge and understanding of the playwriting process.

Learn strategies for strong script analysis.

Analyze and write a variety of texts and genres.

Participate in weekly in-class play readings.

Understand the basics of writing plays for a living.

CLASS MEETINGS:

Attendance is required. Course is primarily graded on performance. Two (2) absences of any session will lower overall grade 9 pts., and each subsequent absence of session will lower grade an additional 5 pts. Nine (9) absences, of any kind, may result in a WF.

Assignments, not completed or turned in on time, will receive one half credit of grade up to two (2) days after the due date. Papers and assignments will not be accepted after two days. All written assignments must be typed. Students are responsible for unattended classes.

Students with disabilities needing academic assistance or other accommodations should contact Counseling and Prevention Services, Ferguson Hall 112, (432-837-8203).

UNIVERSITY RULES/REGULATIONS:

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

EVALUATION:

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

20% of overall grade will be based on participation in classroom assignments and discussions.

40% will be based on completion of starts (Four in total).

20% will be based on Mid-term project: 10-minute play

20% will be based on Final Project: 20-minute play

GRADES: A=100%-90% B=89%-80% C=79%-70% D=69%-60% F=below 60%

Assignments and Course Outline

WK 1 Drama vs. Theatre and Suspense: Start questions due 1/21 (pp. 14-15)

WK 2 Six Elements of Aristotle: Character Driven Start due 1/28

WK 3 Ideas: Thought Driven Start due 2/4

WK 4 Language & Dialogue (Chapter 9) Rework Start: due 2/11

WK 5 Plot: Rework Start: due 2/18

WK 6 Music & Spectacle. Time and Space (Chapter 5)

WK 7 Write 10 minute play. Due 3/3

WK 8 Read plays and provide feedback

SPRING BREAK

WK 9 Writing a strong beginning: Chapter 6. New start due 3/24

WK 10 Writing a strong middle: Chapter 7. Continue development of new start.

WK 11 Writing a powerful ending: Chapter 8. Finish play.

WK 12 Dialogue: Chapter 9. Refine dialogue in new play.

WK 13 Learning from working playwrights: Chapter 10

WK 14 Work final play

WK 15 Select plays for "Dark Night Readings": May 1.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The graduating student will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of eras and contributions made throughout Theatre History and Musical
2. Theatre History. Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in Acting/Directing will demonstrate:
3. The ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance;
4. The ability to analyze scripts;

5. The ability work creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a laboratory theatrical production; and
6. The ability to apply standard requirements to all aspects of technical production.
7. Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in technical/design will demonstrate:
8. The ability to apply all approaches to theatrical design and rendering of the design; and
9. The ability to address all technical aspects of a theatrical production. Additionally, the student will be able to:
10. Describe the theatre process and compose a functional definition for the theatre event;
11. Describe the close link between theatre and religion;
12. Name the basic responsibilities and roles of the playwright, director, actor and designer in the theatre production;
13. Have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic and absurdist theatre;
14. Describe the uniqueness of the theatre art;
15. Understand and describe the elements necessary to bring about a unified production;
16. Identify a variety of theatre spaces;
17. Know the names and works associated with key figures in the theatre; and
18. Demonstrate their understanding of acting, directing, playwriting or design in the areas of set, sound, or make-up.

MARKETABLE SKILLS: BFA IN THEATRE

Strong oral and written communication skills.

Strong analytical skills.

Strong team work and collaboration skills.

Marketable Skills Dissemination Strategy :

Through a combination of coursework and laboratory work, i.e., theatrical productions, our students will gain the opportunity to explore and develop all three program marketable skills. Specifically, students will learn how to analyze scripts, and communicate their findings via written assignments. They will also be encouraged to support their analysis orally through classroom discussion and their Comprehensive Oral Exam at the end of the senior year. Theatrical productions will provide the opportunity for actors and technicians to problem solve and work collaboratively developing strong team work skills.