

Sul Ross State University
THEA 1310-1W1 Introduction to the Theatre

Summer I 2021
Web-delivered course
Office hours by appointment only

Marjorie Scott, MFA
Associate Prof. of Comm. and Theatre
Chair, Dept. of Fine Arts and Comm
Office: FAB 106
p. 432-837-8039
m. 432-294-1191
mjscott3@sulross.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to aid you in the appreciation and understanding of theatre including the origins of theatre, the formal elements of theatre, theatre personnel, and facilities, and the development of genres in theatre throughout history.

The readings and viewings for this course will introduce you to dramatic texts, provide you with fundamental knowledge of dramatic principles and theatrical styles, and address a range of contemporary social issues.

This course is intended as an introduction to theatre and does not require prior theatrical experience.

Required Texts

No textbook is required for this class. All readings will be posted to Blackboard by the instructor.

Materials Required:

- 1) A working e-mail account. You are required to check your Sul Ross email account daily.
- 2) A working Blackboard account.

Program Learning Outcomes *The graduating student will:*

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of the various theatrical genres, styles, and works made throughout theatre history;
- 2) demonstrate the ability to analyze scripts;
- 3) demonstrate the ability to analyze all technical aspects of a theatrical production;
- 4) describe the theatre process and compose a functional definition for the theatre event;
- 5) name the basic responsibilities and roles of the playwright, director, actor and designer in the theatre production;

- 6) have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic and absurdist theatre and be able to apply them to productions;
- 7) describe the uniqueness of the theatre art;
- 8) demonstrate an understanding of the elements necessary to bring about a unified production;
- 9) identify a variety of theatre spaces; and
- 10) list and describe of the names and works associated with key figures (playwrights, directors, designers, performers) in the theatre.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Among other topics, students will:

- Articulate a working vocabulary of theatre terminology
- Evaluate a theatre performance for its formal qualities
- Demonstrate beginner knowledge of script analysis, including given circumstances, idea, character, plot, rhythm, language, and spectacle.
- 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

Discussion Board Assignments: Throughout the term, you will be asked to respond to questions on the Discussion Board pertaining to topics in the readings, lectures, and viewings. **Each assignment is worth 50 points for a total of 350 points for all topics.** You will be graded as follows:

- 1) Clarity of response. Are responses clear and well-organized? **10 points.**
- 2) Thoroughness of response. Does the response answer the question completely? **15 points.**
- 3) Effective use of language. Did you use correct grammar, syntax, punctuation, and vocabulary? **10 points**
- 4) Quality and relevance of supporting materials (i.e. examples or citations, if appropriate). Are the examples cited relevant to the question? If used, are citations credible and relevant to the question? **15 points.**

Quizzes: Throughout the term you will have three quizzes. Quizzes will cover readings, lectures, and viewings. Quizzes may include true/false, multiple-choice, matching, diagrams, short answer, and essay questions. **Each quiz is worth 50 points.**

Reading: The instructor will provide selected readings on theatre history and play analysis. Do your best to keep up with these readings. One of the readings is a

Viewing & Analysis Papers: Throughout the term, you will be reading one play (see above) and viewing two plays, for which you will write analysis papers. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and in MLA format. Please cite all sources of research. The first paper will be your midterm paper analyzing August Wilson’s *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*. The second paper will be a response paper to the Sul Ross Theatre Program’s live production of *Failure A Love Story* at the Kokernot Outdoor Theatre (opening June 25). Your third and final paper will count as your final for this class and will be an analysis of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company’s production of *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Please see Blackboard for detailed instructions for all papers. **The midterm and Failure response papers are worth 150 points each. The final paper is worth 200 points.**

NOTE: SOME OF THE REQUIRED READINGS, VIDEOS, AND PLAYS CONTAIN MATURE THEMES, EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, AND/OR NUDITY.

Late Papers: Assignments and papers are due no later than 10 pm CST on the due date listed on the course calendar (see below).

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.

Course Calendar

(subject to change at instructor’s discretion)

Date	Assignment Due	Reading Due
Wed, June 2	Review Syllabus. Discussion Board Topic #1: What experiences with theatre have you had? Discuss any experiences, including plays you’ve seen or plays for which you served as a theatre practitioner (actor, crew, designer, etc.). Also, what role does theatre play in modern society, if any? Explain. Due by 10 pm CST.	
Thurs, June 3		Reading #1: Chapter 1 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (on Blackboard)
Fri, June 4		

Mon, June 7	Discussion Board Topic #2: Respond to the three questions at the end of chapter 1 in <i>The Creative Spirit</i> . Due by 10 pm CST.	
Tues, June 8	Discussion Board Topic #3: What was a story you read or were told as a child that made an impression on you? What about this story made an emotional impact on you? Explain in a paragraph or two. Due by 10 pm CST.	
Wed, June 9	QUIZ #1: Chapter 1 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> . Administered on Blackboard.	
Thurs, June 10		Reading #2: Chapter 2 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (on Blackboard). View: Clips of the Beijing Opera (on Blackboard).
Fri, June 11	Discussion Board Topic #4: Respond to all questions at the end of chapter 2 from <i>The Creative Spirit</i> . Due by 10 pm.	
Mon, June 14	QUIZ #2: Chapter 2 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> .	
Tues, June 15		Reading #3: Chapter 3 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (pages 46-57 only).
Wed, June 16	Discussion Board Topic #5: Discussion questions on chapter 3 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (pages 46-57) due by 10 pm.	

Thurs, June 17		Reading #4: Chapter 3 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (pages 58-80 only) Act One of <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> by August Wilson.
Fri, June 18	Discussion Board Topic #6: Discussion questions for act one of <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> due by 10 pm.	
Mon, June 21		Reading #5: Chapter 3 (pages 80 – 109) Act Two of <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> and <i>Producing Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> at Oregon Shakespeare Festival.
Tues, June 22		
Wed, June 23		
Thurs, June 24	Midterm Paper on <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> due by 10 pm. See Blackboard for assignment details.	
Fri, June 25		Attend a live show!! The Sul Ross Theatre Program presents <i>Failure A Love Story</i> at the Kokernot Outdoor Theatre. 8 pm. Free with valid student ID. Assignment details on Blackboard. If you do not live in Alpine, you will be given an alternative assignment.
Mon, June 28		Reading #6: Chapter 7 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (Understanding Style: Realism).
Tues, June 29	Response paper for <i>Failure A Love Story</i> due by 10 pm.	View: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> presented by the Steppenwolf Theatre Company (link on Blackboard).
Wed, June 30	QUIZ #3: Chapter 7 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> . Administered via Blackboard.	

Thurs, July 1		Reading # 7: Chapter 9 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (Understanding Style: Theatricalism). View selected clips on Blackboard.
Fri, July 2	Discussion Board Topic #7: Responses to questions on Theatricalism/Expressionistic Theatre due by 10 pm.	
Mon, July 5	Independence Day Holiday – Work on final papers.	
Tues, Jul 6	FINAL – Critical Analysis Paper on <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> due by 10 pm via email to mccott3@sulross.edu .	

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1) Discussion Board Topics | 35% |
| 2) <i>Failure A Love Story</i> response paper | 15% |
| 3) Quizzes | 15% |
| 4) Midterm paper | 15% |
| 5) Final analysis paper | 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. 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. All requests for special accommodations must be related in writing to the professor prior to the second week of classes. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Rebecca Wren 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).