

Sul Ross State University
THEA 1310-2W1 Introduction to the Theatre

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

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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 dramatic structure and playwriting
- 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. 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.**

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

Viewing & Analysis Papers: You get to see a live play this term – yay!!! Theatre of the Big Bend presents *Failure: A Love Story* by Philip Dawkins. You are required to attend a minimum of ONE performance.

Performance Schedule of *Failure: A Love Story* by Philip Dawkins

Friday, July 9 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, July 10 at 8:00 pm (Q&A with the playwright after the show).

EXTRA CREDIT FOR ATTENDING Q&A

Sunday July 11 at 8:00 pm

Location: Kokernot Outdoor Theatre in Alpine.

Admission is free for Sul Ross students (bring your ID). Plan to arrive at the theatre between 7:30 and 7:45 pm. Parking is free in the lot in front of the theatre.

Midterm

For your midterm paper (due by 10 pm on Pulitzer-prize winning play *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and in MLA format. Please see Blackboard for detailed instructions for all papers.

Playwriting & Final

You will write **three short plays** in this class – the third one will count as the final for the course. The goal of these assignments is to provide you the opportunity to express your voice as a playwright and learn the basics of dramatic structure. Assignment details for each script on Blackboard.

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

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, July 7	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, July 8		Reading #1: Chapter 1 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (on Blackboard)
Fri, July 9	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.	Go see a play! Attend one performance of Theatre of the Big Bend's production of <i>Failure: A Love Story</i> , at the Kokernot Outdoor Theatre. Performances July 9, 10, and 11 at 8 pm. Admission free with a valid Sul Ross ID. See Assignments tab for details on response paper assignment.
Mon, July 12	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.	
Tues, July 13		Reading #2: Chapter 2 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (on Blackboard). View: Clips of the Beijing Opera (on Blackboard).
Wed, July 14	Discussion Board Topic #4: Respond to all questions at the end of chapter 2 from <i>The Creative Spirit</i> . Due by 10 pm.	
Thurs, July 15	Short Play #1 due by 10 pm on the Discussion Board. Write a scene between two characters (only two!) where Character A wants something specific from Character B, but Character B doesn't want to give it to Character A. The thing Character A wants can be something physical or something intangible (like time	

	or commitment). Character B should have a specific reason for not wanting to give Character A what he/she wants. Scenes should have a beginning middle and end and a resolution of some kind. Does Character A get what he/she wants, or not? Length is flexible but try for 3-5 pages (see sample format on Blackboard under Assignments tab).	
Fri, July 16	Response Paper on <i>Failure: A Love Story</i> due to mscott3@sulross.edu by 10 pm.	
Mon, July 19		Reading #3: <i>Disgraced</i> by Ayad Akhtar. Read the entire play in one sitting. Set aside 2 hours, turn off your phone (and other electronic devices) and read.
Tues, July 20	Discussion Board Topic #5: Respond to questions about <i>Disgraced</i> .	Reading #4: Selected articles on Blackboard.
Wed, July 21	Work on midterm paper	
Thurs, July 22	Work on midterm paper	
Fri, July 23	Work on midterm paper	
Mon, July 26	Midterm Paper -- critical analysis on <i>Disgraced</i> DUE to mscott3@sulross.edu by 10 pm.	
Tues, July 27	Discussion Board Topic #6: What three issues matter to you the most? Think political, social, personal issues? What needs fixing in our society? What needs fixing in family or relationship structures and/or	

	<p>dynamics? What issues and/or co-cultures do you think the public should know more about? What stories need to be told? What voices need to be heard? List your top three of any of the above with a paragraph for each explaining why each issue or story matters to you. Due by 10 pm.</p>	
Wed, July 28	Work on short play #2	
Thurs, July 29	Work on short play #2	
Fri, July 30	Short Play #2 due by 10 pm on Discussion Board	
Mon, August 2	<p>Critiques of classmate's short play #2. Partners will be assigned by instructor.</p> <p>Feedback format:</p> <p>1) What's working? And why? Be specific.</p> <p>2) What is unclear or confusing? Be specific. Don't be shy about kindly letting the writer know what you are struggling to understand about the script.</p> <p>3) Suggestions for improvement. Avoid telling the writer what they "should" do. Suggest options that may improve clarity. Asking questions is a good way to offer suggestions.</p>	

Tues, August 3	Discussion Board Topic #7: <i>Who's Who in the Theatre. Due by 10 pm</i>	Reading #5: <i>Who's Who in the Theatre</i>
Wed, August 4	Work on final play	
Thurs, August 5	Work on final play	
Fri, August 6	Short play due. Send by 10 pm to mscott3@sulross.edu	
Mon, August 9	LAST CLASS – Feedback on partner's short play due by 10 pm. Partners assigned by instructor.	

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

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|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Discussion Board Topics | 30% |
| 2) Live play response paper | 15% |
| 3) Midterm paper (<i>Disgraced</i>) | 15% |
| 4) Short play #1 | 10% |
| 5) Short play #2 | 10% |
| 6) Short Play #3 (final) | 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).