

Sul Ross State University
THEA 1310-002 Introduction to the Theatre

FALL 2023

Mon/Wed 2:00 – 3:15 pm

BAB 304

Office hours Tues/Thurs 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

All other times by appointment

Office: FAB 106

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Course Description

This course is designed to ignite your interest in theatre. You may be someone with a lot of experience with theatre, or you may be someone with no experience. My hope is that through the readings, viewings, discussions, and writing exercises in this course, you will develop an appreciation and understanding of theatre including its origins, formal elements, and the development of its genres 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 satisfies the creative arts core requirement.

Required Texts

All readings provided by the instructor. It is your responsibility to keep track of copies of the plays and other readings required in this class. Bring your readings to class.

Materials Required:

- 1) A working Sul Ross e-mail account. You are required to check your Sul Ross email account daily.
- 2) A working Blackboard account.
- 3) Access to Digital Theatre + (use the SRSU Library Database)
- 4) A device used for viewing – preferably a computer or tablet. It's difficult to view recorded plays on a phone because the screen is so small. Do the best you can to access a computer or tablet.

Student 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.

Course 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.

Marketable Skills (B.F.A. in Theatre)

1. Students will acquire strong oral and written communication skills.
2. Students will acquire strong analytical skills.
3. Students will acquire strong teamwork and collaboration skills.

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 teamwork skills.

Core Assessments

Communication - Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

Critical Thinking - Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

Course Requirements

Written Responses: Throughout the term, you will view videos of staged productions and write critical analysis papers in response to these viewings. Your responses will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- 1) Clarity of response. Are responses clear and well-organized?
- 2) Thoroughness of response. Does the response answer the question completely?
- 3) Effective use of language. Did you use correct grammar, syntax, punctuation, and vocabulary?
- 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?

Readings and Viewings: Readings will be provided by the instructor. It is your responsibility to keep track of these readings and bring them to class. You will also view several productions (recordings of live plays) and short videos on theatre topics we'll be discussing throughout the term. You will need to access Digital Theatre+ which is part of the SRSU Library Database. Do your best to keep up with these readings and viewings. All readings and viewings will be available on Blackboard.

Final Project: For the final in this course, you will be partnered or grouped with classmates to present a scene provided by the instructor. Scenes must be rehearsed and blocked. You must be "off-book" for the final, which means your lines must be memorized. You will have supplemental written work due the day of final, which is a character analysis. Format and instructions on the written portion will be provided by the instructor.

NOTE: Several of the required readings and viewings in this course contain profanity, violence, nudity, and mature themes.

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Playwriting Assignment	20%
2) <i>Antigone</i> response paper	10%
3) <i>Oleanna</i> response paper	10%
4) <i>Dry Land</i> response paper	10%
5) Other Written Assignments	10%
6) Participation	20%
7) Final Scene	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.

ADA Statement

SRSU Disability Services. 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 each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email mschwartz@sulross.edu Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Library

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. Offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your Lobold and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Classroom Climate of Respect

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose, and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another based on race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Course Calendar

(Please note: this calendar is subject to change at instructor's discretion)

Date	Classroom Activity	Reading/Assignment DUE
WEEK 1		
Mon 8/28	Review syllabus and course expectations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share your experiences with live theatre. 2. What is theatre? How do you define it? 3. Does live theatre serve a function in modern society? Why or why not? Explain. <p>This is Blackboard writing assignment. Visit the Assignments tab to upload your responses.</p>
Wed 8/30	Start reading <i>Dry Land</i> by Ruby Rae Spiegel	
WEEK 2		
Mon 9/4	Continue reading <i>Dry Land</i> by Ruby Rae Spiegel	<p>Viewing due: Spotlight On: The Playwright</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-playwright</p>
Wed 9/6	Discuss <i>Dry Land</i> by Ruby Rae Spiegel	<p>Written response due: Questions regarding <i>Dry Land</i> due on Blackboard by 10:00 pm</p>
WEEK 3		
Mon 9/11	<p>In class writing assignment:</p> <p>Chapter 1 of <i>Creative Spirit</i>. Short answer & essay questions.</p>	<p>Reading due: Chapter 1 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> (Readings tab on Blackboard)</p>
Wed 9/13	Discuss Chapter 1 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i>	
WEEK 4		
Mon, 9/18	View <i>Antigone</i> (Actors of Dionysus) on Digital Theatre+ in class.	<p>Viewing due: Unlocking Greek Theatre</p>

		<p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/unlocking-greek-theatre</p> <p>Viewing due Spotlight On: The Actor and Spotlight On: The Director</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-actor</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-director</p>
Wed, 9/20	Continue viewing <i>Antigone</i> in class on Digital Theatre+	
WEEK 5		
Mon, 9/25	Discuss <i>Antigone</i>	<p>Reading due: Chapter 6 of <i>The Creative Spirit: The Designers</i> (under Readings tab on Blackboard)</p> <p>Viewing due Spotlight On: The Costume Designer</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-costume-designer</p> <p>Viewing due: Spotlight On: The Set Designer</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-set-designer</p>
Wed, 9/27	Discuss design elements in the theatre.	<p>Viewing due: Spotlight On: The Lighting Designer (cont'd on next page)</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-lighting-designer</p> <p>Viewing due: Spotlight On: The Sound Designer</p> <p>https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.wmlrsu.idm.oclc.org/content/workshops/spotlight-on-the-sound-designer</p>

		Assignment due by 10:00 pm on Blackboard: Submit response to <u>BOTH</u> questions # 1 and #2 at the end of chapter 6 of <i>The Creative Spirit</i> .
WEEK 6		
Mon 10/2	Continue discussing design elements	Written response due: <i>Antigone</i> response paper due on Blackboard by 10:00 pm. Assignment details under Assignments tab.
Wed 10/9	Read <i>Oleanna</i> in class	
WEEK 7		
Mon 10/16	Finish reading <i>Oleanna</i> in class	
Wed 10/18	Discuss <i>Oleanna</i>	
WEEK 8		
Mon 10/23	Playwriting Exercises	
Wed 10/25	Playwriting Exercises	
WEEK 9		
Mon 10/30	Playwriting	
Wed 11/1	Playwriting	Written response due: <i>Oleanna</i> response paper due on Blackboard by 10:00 pm. The questions in this assignment will largely focus on the production of <i>Oleanna</i> at SRSU. You are required to attend at least one performance of this production.
WEEK 10		
Mon 11/6	Acting Exercises	
Wed 11/8	Acting Exercises	Assignment given: Final scenes and partners assigned in class and posted on Blackboard.
WEEK 11		
Mon 11/13	Acting Exercises	Due in class: First draft of short play.
Wed 11/15	Acting Scene Work	
WEEK 12		

Mon 11/20	Acting Scene Work	
Wed 11/22	Thanksgiving Break	
WEEK 13		
Mon 11/27	Acting Scene Work	
Wed 11/29	Acting Scene Work	Due in class: Second draft of short play.
WEEK 14		
Mon 12/4	Reading plays in class	
Wed 12/6	Reading plays in class	
WEEK 15		
FINAL 12/12	Scene presentations from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	The final will be a presentation of scenes. You will be paired or grouped with classmates and provided a scene by the instructor. Scenes will be provided in class on 11/8.