

Core Course Syllabus



Course THEA 1310.hn1
Course Title Understanding Theatre - Honors
Professor Dr. Maiza Hixson, MA, MFA, PhD
Term Spring 2025
Meetings TR 2:30-3:45, CB 1.218

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location 5.203 Erik Jonsson Academic Center (JO)
Email Address Maiza.Hixson@utdallas.edu (I will reply within 24 hours, M-F)
Office Hours In-person or Teams on Mondays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm

General Core Area 050 Creative Arts

Description: Lectures, discussions, and performances designed to explore artistic, philosophical, social, historical, and psychological dimensions of the theatrical experience. Topics include analysis of scripts, the nature of the theater compared to the other performing arts, and the nature of popular entertainments.

Objectives:

- Critical Thinking (CT)**—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Communication (COM)**—to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Teamwork (TW)**—to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- Social Responsibility (SR)**—to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Specific Objectives:

Analyze theater and dramatic literature through discussion, written text such as essays or posts, performance, observation, and other mediums (**CT, TW**)
Identify and utilize appropriate performance-related theoretical and practical terminology (**COM**)
Engage with larger questions of genre, form, technique, intercultural and historical context, and inclusivity in relation to text and performance practice (**CT, SR**)
Develop individualized, critical commentary associated with the course materials and convey those ideas with textual and/or performance-based evidence (**CT, COM**)

Expectations

Be Present and on time to class
Participate in the course discussion, whether verbally or through other modes of active participation (nodding, thumbs up/down, taking notes, etc.)
Come Prepared with all copies and knowledge of relevant readings, including information discussed in the main course lectures
Maintain Respectful and Appropriate Behavior (which includes language, gestures, mannerisms, etc.) towards all other members of the course, including the professor
Bring Questions and An Open Mind about the course and the materials
Follow all UTD, Department, and course guidelines

Course Breakdown:

- Class Participation:** Attendance, punctuality, active listening, thoughtful vocal engagement, weekly readings and viewings posted on Blackboard unless otherwise specified
- Group Project Performances:** Groups of 4-5 people will write and perform an Acto (short play) (10 pages, double-spaced); Debate Performance Assignment:
- Writing Assignments:** Write responses to the instructor's prompt for that week's lecture/play/performance. Includes production analysis of *Karen Springs*.
- Basic Object Exercise Assignment:**
- Two Person Scene Assignment:**
- Readings & Lectures**
- Attend Two Live Performances:** *Karen Springs*, UTD Theatre, Feb 20-March 1 and *Resurrection of Freddy Chicken*
- Final Exam**

Required Materials:

Bring printed copies of all course readings; bring pens, lined notebook/paper to take notes and to write weekly in-class writing assignments

Course Schedule is Tentative and Subject to Change

Course Runs January 21-May 9, 2025

University Closings Martin Luther King DayMonday, January 20

No Classes: Spring breakMonday, March 17 – Sunday, March 23

Week 1: Jan 21-24

1. Intro to the Syllabus; Lecture: Theatre Origins & Sources
2. Lecture & Discussion: Words, Words, Words: Elements & Vocabulary of Theater and Performance
3. Assigned Readings: Aristotle, *Poetics*
4. Write/Respond: In-class writing prompt

Week 2: Jan 27-31

1. Introductory Lecture & Discussion: Modern Realist Theatre
2. Read Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, 1882
3. Watch a contemporary adaptation of *An Enemy of the People*

Week 3: Feb 3-7

1. Continued Reading & Discussion: *An Enemy of the People*
2. Discussion: *Karen Springs*: A Contemporary Feminist Adaptation of *An Enemy of the People*
3. Intro to *Karen Springs* Debate Performance Assignment and Production Analysis Assignment

Week 4: Feb 10-14

1. Lecture & Discussion: *Karen Springs*
2. Reading: *Karen Springs*
3. Attend *Karen Springs* Rehearsal 7-8 p.m., UTD Theatre

Week 5: Feb 17-21

1. Debate Performance Assignment DUE: *Karen Springs*
2. Attend *Karen Springs*, UT Dallas Theatre, Feb. 20, Feb. 21

Week 6: Feb 24-28

1. Intro to Chicano Political Theatre
2. Intro to Writing an Acto (assignment)
3. Read: Luis Valdez Actos, *The Two Faces of The Boss*
4. Watch Acto: *Los Vendidos*

Week 7: March 3-7

1. Introductory Lecture & Discussion: Acting & Directing: Objectives, Methods, Histories: Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, The Group Theatre
2. Acting Exercises
3. Read: Uta Hagen, *Respect For Acting* (assigned Object Exercises)
4. Introduction to Neutral Scene Performance Assignment

Week 8: March 10-14

5. Acting: Lecture & Discussion
6. Neutral Scene Performances Due
7. Neutral Scene Critiques
8. *Karen Springs* Production Review Assignment Due: on eLearning

Week 9: March 17-21 NO CLASS

Week 10: March 24-28

1. Acto Rehearsals-Full Dress Rehearsals w/ Lines Memorized, Costumes, and Props

Week 11: March 31-April 4

1. Final Acto Performances Due w/ Lines Memorized, Costumes, and Props

Week 12: April 7-11

1. Attend Freddy Chickan, UTD Theatre

Week 13: April 14-18

1. Basic Object Exercises

Week 14: April 21-25

1. Basic Object Exercises, continued.
2. Intro to Final Multi-part Performances – Two Person Scenes

Week 15: April 28-May 2

1. Two Person Scenes Due May 6 & 8

- **FINAL EXAMS: Date:** May 13, 2025 **Time:** 1:00pm-2:45pm **Location:** CB 1.218