



Core Course Syllabus – Spring 2025

Course	THEA 1310.001
Course Title	Understanding Theatre
Professor	Damian Enyaosah
Term	Spring 2025
Meetings	Mondays & Wednesdays 10:00 am to 11:15 am FO 1.202
Instructional Mode	Face-to-Face

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location	JO 5.608C
Email Address	damian.enyaosah@utdallas.edu
Office Hours	By Appointment Only
Other Information	I do not read e-Learning emails
Course Platforms	e-Learning and MS Teams

Course Description:

The course provides lectures, discussions, and performances designed to explore artistic, philosophical, social, historical, and psychological dimensions of the theatrical experience. Topics may include analysis of scripts, the nature of the theater compared to the other performing arts, and the nature of popular entertainment. This course provides students with the information and activities needed to understand how theatre creates and reflects meaning in society from its earliest emergence stages. Students will explore theatre through the lenses of culture, performance, the voice of the artist, and creative participation. In this course, students will participate in a group performance project and write about any artistic events they attend. Class format will sometimes consist of viewing videos of historically significant plays and theatre-makers.

This course is introductory and open to all students.

Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

Critical Thinking Skill – Students will engage in creative thinking and inquiry as they analyze and discuss the major elements of theatre, including acting, playwriting, and design (assessed via performance review papers and play analysis). These activities are included to improve students' creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

Communication Skill– Students will implement effective written and oral communication by responding to works of theatre with thoughtful

critiques, collaborating on projects, and performing an original play (assessed via Group Oral Presentation). These exercises aid students' effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

Teamwork - Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to produce a shared artistic product and actively consider different points of view (assessed via the Group Oral Presentation). These exercises are explored to enhance students' ability to consider various points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

Social Responsibility - Students will illustrate knowledge of significant theatre artists and how their culture influences their artistic expression by tracing the history of modern entertainment back to its historical roots in the theatre from the classical to the contemporary period. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of historically significant plays (assessed via play analysis and group oral presentation). These activities boost students' intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

General Course Information

**Pre-requisites,
Co-requisites, &
other restrictions**

No prior knowledge is required.

**Required Texts &
Materials**

Wilson, Edwin, Alvin Goldfarb. *The Theater Experience*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2023. 15th Edition

Digital copies of some plays will be provided on eLearning.

**Suggested Texts,
Readings, &
Materials**

Arnold, Stephanie. *The Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre*, 6th Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2015.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

E-Learning Assignments — Students are required to check the assignment's section on eLearning or the CONNECT access of *The Theatre Experience (TTE)* to complete Chapters 1 to 13 assignments by the assigned due dates, which are typically on Sundays at 11:59 pm each week.

Play Readings — Students are expected to complete the reading of the assigned play texts by Wednesday of the successive weeks. We shall discuss each play text in class every Wednesday until Spring Break and might have a few pop quizzes based on the professor's discretion. Midterm exam essay question(s) is/are based on the assigned play texts for the class.

In-Class Group Presentations—Students will sign up for group presentations starting on the first day of class. This is a small group mini-performance project in which up to six (6) students create, research, and design a 10-15-minute

presentation on socio-economic themes. The in-class presentation will be held every Wednesday starting in Week 10 of the Semester.

Week 1

Introduction to Understanding Theatre and Performance

Classmate Interviews (Getting to know ourselves)

Discussing Class Requirements

The Audience: Its Role and Imagination

Further Discussion: "With the knowledge from your first theatre experience, how can you best define theatre?" Get acquainted with a theatre close to you.

Reading: *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes (to be discussed next week, Wednesday)

Week 2

Background and Expectations of the Audience

Discussion Section

Further Discussion: *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes

Reading: Joe Turner's Come and Gone by August Wilson (to be discussed next week, Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 1 Due on Sunday, Feb 2, by 11:59 pm

Week 3

Theatre Spaces

Group Discussion

Intro to Group Presentation

Further Discussion: *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* by August Wilson

Reading: *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (to be discussed next week, Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 2 Due on Sunday, Feb 9, by 11:59 pm

Week 4

Acting for the Stage

Discussion Section

Further Discussion: *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

Reading: *The Exception and the Rule* by Bertolt Brecht (to be discussed next week, Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 3 Due on Sunday, Feb 16, by 11:59 pm

Week 5

The Director and the Producer

Further Discussion: *The Exception and the Rule* by Bertolt Brecht

Reading: *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill (to be discussed next week, Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 4 Due on Sunday, Feb 23, by 11:59 pm

Week 6

Scenery

Discussion Section

Further Discussion: *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill

Reading: *Medea* by Euripides (to be discussed next week, Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 5 Due on Sunday, March 2, by 11:59 pm

Week 7

Stage Costumes

Discussion Section

Further Discussion: *Medea* by Euripides

Midterm Exam on E-Learning – Play Analysis Due on Wednesday, March 5 by 11:59 pm

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 6 Due on Sunday, March 9, by 11:59 pm

Week 8

Lighting and Sound

Discussion Section

In-Class Group Presentation Q&A (Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 7 Due on Sunday, March 16, by 11:59 pm

Week 9

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES

Week 10

Creating the World of the Play

Discussion Section

In-Class Group Presentation (Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 8 Due on Sunday, March 30, by 11:59 pm

Week 11

Dramatic Structure and Dramatic Characters

Discussion Section

In-Class Group Presentation (Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 9 Due on Sunday, April 6, by 11:59 pm

Week 12

Theatrical Genres

Discussion Section

In-Class Group Presentation (Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 10 Due on Sunday, April 13, by 11:59 pm

Week 13

Alternative and Experimental Dramatic and Theatrical Forms

Discussion Section

Essay- Performance Review Submission (Wednesday, April 16, by 11:59 pm)

In-Class Group Presentation (Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 11 Due on Sunday, April 20, by 11:59 pm

Week 14

Diverse and Inclusive Plays, Playwrights, and Theatrical Forms

Discussion Section

In-Class Group Presentation (Wednesday)

E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 12 Due on Sunday, April 27, by 11:59 pm

Week 15**Revision Week****E-Learning Assignment – Chapter 13 Due on Sunday, May 4, by 11:59 pm****In-Class Group Presentation (Wednesday)****Week 16 & 17****Final Exam Week****Final Exam Available via eLearning Monday, May 5, and due by Wednesday, May 14 at 11:59 pm****No Classes****Course Policies**

Class Attendance	<p>Every student has one excused absence, no questions asked. Beyond that, absences will be unexcused unless official documentation explaining the reason for the absence is presented. Each unexcused absence will lower the student's overall semester grade by one point. Three unexcused absences will equate to a drop of one-half of a letter grade.</p> <p>3rd Unexcused Absences = A to A-, A- to B+; etc.</p>
Class Participation	<p>Regular class participation is expected. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in a group or other activities during class that solicits your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to university requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Each student is expected to attend class, participate in discussions, and actively participate in creative projects required in class. Students who are observed browsing the internet or playing on their phones will immediately lose all participation points for that day. Since class sessions are longer than the meetings in a long semester, at least one quiz will be given each week. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</p>
Grading (credit) Criteria	<p>Final Exam – 20 pts Use TTE: Chapters 1 to 13 as guide.</p> <p>Mid-term Play Analysis– 20 pts. Plays will be picked from selections discussed in class for the first half of the semester. Due by March 5 Use TTE: Chapters 9, 10, 11 as a guide.</p> <p>In-Class Group Presentations – 20 pts.</p>

	<p>It can be of any theatrical modality in front of the class e.g stage reading, dance drama, pantomime, Improvisation, playlet, mini-performance, Agitprops, musical etc.</p> <p>e-Learning Assignments & Class Quizzes – 15 pts</p> <p>Online Assignments on “Connect” are taken every week from the second week of class through the semester. (Exceptions to the First Class, Spring Break and Final Exam week)</p> <p>1/2 Page(s) Performance Review Paper (400 - 500 words) – 15 pts</p> <p>Seeing and Analysing a Theatre Performance due May 1</p> <p>Use TTE as a guide.</p> <p>Attendance – 10 pts.</p> <p>A+ 100-97 B- 83-80 D 66-64 A 96-94 C+ 79-77 D- 63-60 A- 93-90 C 76-74 F 59-0 B+ 89-87 C- 73-70 B 86-84. D+ 69-67</p>
Make-up Exams	<p>N/A</p> <p>Assignments and Exams will not be accepted after their due date for any reason (With exception to late enrollers)</p>
Extra Credit	<p>Extra credit assignments may be made available at the Professor’s discretion. They could include an extra play analysis or quizzes.</p>
Performance Review – Short Paper	<p>Each student is required to see a professional produced performance live (on/off-campus) during the semester and write a review about the experience. This review should be between 400 to 500 words and discuss the play/musical production’s structure, production value, director, and actors’ work. This project is worth up to 15 points.</p>
Midterm Exam Play Analysis	<p>For the midterm, students will write a critical essay in response to the question administered via e-Learning. Midterm exam question shall be set based on the plays discussed in class. In contrast to personal writing, this work should be more formal in writing style and follow MLA formatting guidelines. The paper should be no less than 500 words max. This test will be posted before/by Week 6 of the semester, and due by March 5. This project is worth up to 20 points.</p>

Final Exam	Students will complete final exam online and on time with no excuses after the due date and time have elapsed. Late submissions are not allowed. Final Exam is worth 20 points.
Late Work	- 1pt each Late Day
Classroom Citizenship	<p>Follow Standard Theatre Etiquette:</p> <p>Respect when others are speaking; give them your silence and attention.</p> <p>Do not use your cell phone in class; You receive one warning before it is “ushered” away; If you must use your phone, kindly step outside after 1st warning.</p>
Comet Creed	<p><i>This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:</i></p> <p><i>“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”</i></p>
Academic Support Resources	<p><i>The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students.</i></p> <p>Please go to http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources.</p>
Class Materials	<p><i>The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</i></p>
Classroom Conduct Requirements Related to Public Health Measures	<p><i>UT Dallas will follow the public health and safety guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and local public health agencies that are in effect at that time during the Spring 2022 semester to the extent allowed by state governance. Texas Governor Greg Abbott’s Executive Order GA-38 prohibits us from mandating vaccines and face coverings for UT Dallas employees, students, and members of the public on campus. However, we strongly encourage all Comets to get vaccinated and wear face coverings as recommended by the CDC. Check the Comets United: Latest Updates webpage for the latest guidance on the University’s public health measures. Comets are expected to carry out Student Safety protocols in adherence to the Comet Commitment. Unvaccinated Comets will be expected to complete the Required</i></p>

	<p><u>Daily Health Screening</u>. Those students who do not comply will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct for disciplinary action under the <u>Student Code of Conduct – UTSP5003</u>.</p>
<p>Class Recordings</p>	<p>Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those, not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the <u>Student Code of Conduct</u>.</p> <p>NOTE: if the instructor records any part of the course, then the instructor will need to add the following syllabus statement:</p> <p>The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.</p>

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.