



**Course** DRAM-1310-002  
"Understanding Theater"  
**Professor** Wesley Ferguson  
**Term** Fall 2012  
**Meetings** M/W/F 3-3:50pm

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### **Professor's Contact Information**

**Office Location** JO 5.109  
**Email Address** wesley.ferguson@utdallas.edu  
**Office Hours** By appointment  
**Other Information** Email is the best way to contact me

### **General Course Information**

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

None

**Course Description** This course provides students with the information and activities they need for an in-depth comprehensive understanding of the way theatre creates and reflects meaning in society. This course includes reading plays, seeing performances, and exploring a range of cultures and periods, contexts and performances, the voice of the theatre artists, and creative participation. You will learn and practice suggested approaches on how to perceive, consider, and interpret theatre through readings, questions, and lectures. In this course you will participate in a group performance project, and write about artistic events you attend.

**Learning Outcomes**

The student will be able to (1) demonstrate the ability to identify, discuss, and apply the nature of theatre, performance, style, and drama; (2) demonstrate the ability to give and identify examples of a range of cultures and periods of theatre in relationship to society; and (3) to use the vocabularies, approaches, and analytic tools covered during this course to create, appreciate, and write about theatre.

**Required Texts**

*The Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition by Stephanie Arnold

*Picasso at the Lapin Agile* by Steve Martin

## Assignments & Academic Calendar

Reading Assignments (RA) are due by the first class of the week, unless told otherwise.

<b>WEEK 01</b>	<b>Course Introduction</b> <b>RA Chapter 1:</b> The Impulse to Perform
<b>WEEK 02</b>	<b>The Nature of Theatre</b> <b>RA: Chapter 2:</b> Theatre and Society
<b>WEEK 03</b>	<b>The Play &amp; the Playwright</b> <b>RA: Chapter 3:</b> The Playwright's vision/ <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i>
<b>WEEK 04</b>	<b>The Actor</b> <b>RA: Chapter 4:</b> The Art of the Actor
<b>WEEK 05</b>	<b>The Director</b> <b>RA: Chapter 5:</b> The Director
<b>WEEK 06</b>	<b>The Designer</b> <b>RA: Chapter 6:</b> The Designers <b>ATTEND:</b> <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> by Tennessee Williams
<b>WEEK 07</b>	<b>Realism and Theatricalism</b> <b>RA: Chapter 7:</b> Understanding Style: Realism
<b>WEEK 08</b>	Mid-term Review <b>Midterm</b>
<b>WEEK 09</b>	<b>Realism Applied</b> <b>RA: Chapter 8:</b> Worldview through Realism/ <i>And the Soul Shall Dance</i> <b>ATTEND: Fall Dance Production</b>
<b>WEEK 10</b>	<b>Understanding Style: Theatricalism</b> <b>RA: Chapter 9:</b> Understanding Style
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>Expressing A Worldview Through Theatricalism</b> <b>RA: Chapter 10:</b> Theatricalism/ <i>Angels in America</i> <b>RA: Chapter 11:</b> Musical Theater/
<b>WEEK 12</b>	<b>Dramatic Structure</b> <b>RA: Chapter 12:</b> The Elements of Drama and Dramatic Structure
<b>WEEK 13:</b> <b>PICK GROUPS</b>	THANKSGIVING week Select 5 classmates for final project/theatrical aspect for production <b>Groups-1Page project summary and production role of each member</b>

- WEEK 14**                      **Choosing a Genre**  
**RA: Chapter 13:** Genre  
**RA: Chapter 14:** Choosing a Genre: Comedy/ *Dog Lady*
- WEEK 15**                      **The Project**  
**RA: Chapter: 15:** The Project/*Anna in the Tropics and Other Choices*
- WEEK 16**                      **Final Project Preparation**  
Working on the Project
- FINAL:**                      FINAL COLLABORATIVE PROJECT PRESENTATION

**Course Policies**

<b>Grading (credit) Criteria</b>	<p><b>Attendance, Punctuality, and Participation: (20%)</b> The student’s final grade will be lowered by 1/3 letter grade for each unexcused absence. To receive an excused absence, professor must be notified of absence no less than 12 hours prior, when possible. If you are late twice, that equals one unexcused absence and shall be reflected in your final grade. Students are graded on participation in class discussions, preparation, and in-class activities. The student’s ability to take direction, correction, preparedness, and willingness to readily participate and work as part of a team will be measured and graded by the instructor.</p> <p><b>Why is Theatre Important?: (5%each)</b> The student will write a 2 page paper on the significance of theatre. Why has it survived and its influence on society? This should be your own opinion and reflect your current knowledge of live theatre.</p> <p><b>Performance Reviews: (10%each)</b> The student will attend two artistic events (1 theatrical performance and 1 dance concert) and write a 2-3page review of each event. Follow guidelines provided in class. Each paper is due the first class after an event has closed. <b>Late papers will not be accepted.</b></p> <p><b>NOTE: All papers should be double spaced, 12pt Times font, and properly titled and stapled.</b></p> <p><b>Mid-term Assignment: (25%)</b> Students will be required to read <i>Picasso at the Lapin Agile</i> and write a 5-7 page analysis of it. Analyses should include a summary of the plot, the cultural significance of the play, as well as how it relates to elements of theatre covered in class.</p> <p><b>Final Collaborative Project: (25%)</b> A final collaborative group project will take the components of theatre and put them into practice. Every member of the group must participate in the performance and each member will be accountable for one aspect of the production.(e.g., playwright, director, costumer, set, sound, etc..) The final</p>
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	presentation must be between 8-10 minutes. If it is longer or shorter, and/or each member of the group does not participate, and/or does not fulfill her/his theatrical aspect of production, the final grade will be affected. Be prepared to meet with your group outside of class for rehearsals. If you miss the final, you may not make it up.
<b>Make-up Exams</b>	None
<b>Extra Credit</b>	None
<b>Late Work</b>	Not accepted
<b>Special Assignment</b>	I have included 3 theatre/dance performances offered at UTD this semester that you may write your two papers on. All performances are free with UTD ID. Please see the Art and Performance webpage for more details.
<b>Class Attendance</b>	Please be at all classes. 90% of success is showing up.
<b>Classroom Citizenship</b>	Please respect each other. We learn from each other.
<b>Field Trip Policies</b>	None
<b>Student Conduct and Discipline</b>	<p>The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations that govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, <i>A to Z Guide</i>, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.</p> <p>The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the <i>Rules and Regulations; Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3</i>, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's <i>Handbook of Operating Procedures</i>. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).</p> <p>A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.</p>
<b>Academic Integrity</b>	The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

	<p>Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.</p> <p>Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.</p>
<b>Email Use</b>	<p>The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.</p>
<b>Withdrawal from Class</b>	<p>The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.</p>
<b>Student Grievance Procedures</b>	<p>Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's <i>Handbook of Operating Procedures</i>.</p> <p>In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the</p>

	<p>student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.</p> <p>Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.</p>
<p><b>Incomplete Grades</b></p>	<p>As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of <b>F</b>.</p>
<p><b>Disability Services</b></p>	<p>The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:  The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22  PO Box 830688  Richardson, Texas 75083-0688  (972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)</p> <p>Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.</p> <p>It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.</p>

<p><b>Religious Holy Days</b></p>	<p>The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.</p> <p>The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.</p> <p>If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.</p>
<p><b>Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities</b></p>	<p>Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at <a href="http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm">http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm</a>. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.</p>

*These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*