Understanding Theatre
DRAM 1310
Fall 2013

Thomas Riccio, Professor
Office #972.883.2016 (voice mail)
thomas.riccio@utdallas.edu
www.thomasriccio.com

Office hours: Tue-Thurs 11:30-1:30 and by appointment
Office location: JO 4.124
Class location: ATEC 1.305

DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES
Understanding Theatre is an introduction to Theatre and performance practice. It is
designed to increase students’ understanding, appreciation, and critical
perceptions of the theatrical event. Readings and lectures will focus on the
elements of theatrical practice; artists and innovators of theatre and performance
using a variety of historical and cultural examples. The student will have a
working knowledge of the terms, concepts, and conventions of theatre and
performance as an art form and a social phenomenon.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
A variety of play texts and articles will be available for download or viewing via
eLearning.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION
This course will be based on lecture and in-class discussion. Because of the wide range
of material covered by this survey, student attendance and participation will be essential.
A mid-term exam and final exam will be given covering the reading and concepts
presented in class—essay, T-F, multiple choice, identification. A final project will be
required—playwriting, directing, presentation of a scene or monologue, puppet show,
etc. Final project will be discussed in class and must be approved by the instructor. An
unannounced quiz will be given (up to 4x) if the instructor deems it required.

GRADING 1000 PTS SCALE
Reading Quiz x4 (if necessary)  20%
Mid-Term Exam  20%
Final Exam  20%
Final Project  20%
Participation  10%
Attendance  10%
Late or incomplete work will not be accepted
Incompletes will not be given in this class
Plagiarism and cheating is unacceptable and will result in a “F”

All dates and assignments are subject to change
Assignments will be made with ample time for completion given please
be alert to alterations or corrections in the schedule

Attendance Policy: Two (2) unexcused absences permitted); however
each subsequent unexcused absence will result in the lowering of one
full letter grade per absence (50 pts per absence). Two late arrivals (20
minutes + after the hour unless lateness is pre-arranged) will count as
one absence. Note: No Gum Chewing or Eating in Class. Soft Drinks,
Coffee, and water permitted.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS
27 August Introductions
What and Why Performance & Theatre?
Read: A Message from the Eagle Mother

3 September RITUAL Origins, Functions & Conventions
Read: Traditional Alaska Native Theatre

10 September Native American Performance: Origins
Read: Tanzanian Theatre From Marx to the Market Place
Read: Kenya’s Health Awareness Puppets

17 September African Performance: Origins, Conventions & Influences

24 September *****NO CLASS****
Read: A New World, Asian Theatre in the West Today

1 October Asian Theatre and Performance
India: Origins and Conventions

Read: Chinese Theatre Today
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 October</td>
<td>China and Japan: Origins &amp; Conventions</td>
<td>Trojan Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 October</td>
<td>Western Theatre Conventions &amp; Contexts</td>
<td>Romeo and Juliet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 October</td>
<td>Playwriting</td>
<td>Our Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 October</td>
<td>Directing</td>
<td>Shadows in the Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 November</td>
<td>Acting and Performing</td>
<td>Wooster Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 November</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Vomit Talk of Ghosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 November</td>
<td>Experimental Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 November</td>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong><strong>WINTER BREAK NO CLASSES</strong></strong></em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 December</td>
<td>Experimental Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 December</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINAL EXAM DATE TBA**