

Course Syllabus
DRAM 1310.002 Understanding Theatre

Course Information

Professor : Brad Hennigan

Term: Fall 2014

Meetings: Tuesday & Thursday 11:30am - 12:45pm, AH2 1.204

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location: TBD

Email Address: bhennigan@utdallas.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 2 – 3:45 pm, by appointment only

Course Description

This course provides students with the information and activities needed for a comprehensive understanding of the way theatre creates and reflects meaning in society. Students will explore theatre through the lenses of culture, performance, the voice of the theatre artist, and creative participation, including reading and analyzing plays, attending and responding to performances, group discussions of lecture topics, and a group performance project.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The student will be able to (1) demonstrate the ability to identify, discuss, and apply theatrical elements of performance, style, and drama; (2) demonstrate the ability to identify and discuss examples of theatre in relationship to culture and society; and (3) use the lexicon, approaches, and analytic tools covered during this course to create, appreciate, and critique theatre.

Required Materials

Arnold, Stephanie. *The Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre, 5th Edition*. McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Students are expected to have completed each reading assignment (**RA**) and to be ready to discuss during the following class session.

WEEK 01

Tue Aug 26 - Class Discussion: Course Introduction

RA - Chapter 1: The Impulse to Perform

Due Thu Aug 28 - Why is Theatre Important? Paper

Thu Aug 28 - Class Discussion: The Impulse to Perform

RA - Chapter 2: Theatre as a Mirror of Society

DUE TODAY: Paper, Why is Theatre Important?

WEEK 02

Tue Sep 2 - Class Discussion: Theatre as a Mirror of Society

RA - Chapter 7: Understanding Style: Realism

Thu Sep 4 - Class Discussion: Understanding Style: Realism

RA - Chapter 8: Expressing a Worldview through Realism; *And the Soul Shall Dance*

WEEK 03

Tue Sep 9 - Class Discussion: Expressing a Worldview through Realism; *And the Soul Shall Dance*

No RA

Thu Sep 11 - Class Discussion: Expressing a Worldview through Realism

RA - Chapter 9: Understanding Style: Theatricalism

WEEK 04

Tue Sep 16 - Class Discussion: Understanding Style: Theatricalism

No RA

Thu Sep 18 - Class Discussion: Understanding Style: Theatricalism

RA - Chapter 10: Expressing a Worldview through Theatricalism; *Angels in America*

WEEK 05

Tue Sep 23 - Class Discussion: Expressing a Worldview through Theatricalism; *Angels in America*

RA - Chapter 11: The Musical Theatre

Thu Sep 25 - Class Discussion : The Musical Theatre

RA - Chapter 3: The Playwright's Vision; *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

WEEK 06

Tue Sep 30 - Class Discussion: The Playwright's Vision; *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

No RA

Thu Oct 2 - Class Discussion: The Playwright's Vision; *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

RA - Chapter 4: The Art of the Actor

WEEK 07

Tue Oct 7 - Class Discussion: The Art of the Actor

RA - Chapter 5: The Director

Thu Oct 9 - Class Discussion: The Director

RA - Chapter 6: The Designers

DUE TUE Oct 14 - Play Attendance 1; OPTIONAL DUE - Play Response

WEEK 08

Tue Oct 14 – Class Discussion: The Designers

No RA

DUE TODAY: Play Attendance 1; OPTIONAL DUE: Play Response Paper

Thu Oct 16 – Midterm Exam

RA - Chapter 12: The Elements of Drama and Dramatic Structure

WEEK 09

Tue Oct 21 - Class Discussion: A Visit to the UTD Theatre

RA – Revisit Chapter 12: The Elements of Drama and Dramatic Structure

Thu Oct 23 – Class Discussion: The Elements of Drama and Dramatic Structure

No RA

WEEK 10

Tue Oct 28 - Class Discussion: Panel of Local Theatre Artists

RA - Chapter 13: Genre

Thu Oct 30 – Class Discussion: Genre

RA - Chapter 14: Choosing a Genre

WEEK 11

Tue Nov 4 – Class Discussion: Choosing a Genre

RA - Chapter 15: The Project

Thu Nov 6 – Class Discussion: The Project

DUE TUE Nov 11 - Play Attendance 2; FINAL DUE – Play Response Paper

No RA

WEEK 12

Tue Nov 11 – Class Discussion: Final Project

DUE TODAY: Play Attendance 2; FINAL DUE: Play Response Paper

No RA

Thu Nov 13 - In-Class Final Project Preparation

No RA

DUE Tue Nov 18: Final Project Character Analysis

WEEK 13

Tue Nov 18 – In-Class Final Project Preparation

No RA

DUE TODAY: Final Project Character Analysis

Thu Nov 20 - In-Class Final Project Preparation

No RA

WEEK 14

THANKSGIVING BREAK!

WEEK 15

Tue Dec 2 - In-Class Final Project Preparation

No RA

Thu Dec 4 - Final Presentations Round 1

No RA

Week 16

Tue Dec 9 - Final Presentations Round 2

No RA

FINALS DAY

We will not meet in person, students will take a final exam via E-Learning. (see description in Grading Criteria)

Grading Criteria

All assignments will be graded on a 100 point scale, and will be weighted according to the following percentages:

Active Participation: (5%) Each student is expected to attend classes, participate in discussions, and participate in creative projects required in the class.

Reading Assignment Quizzes: (5% Each) There will be four quizzes administered throughout the semester based on the concepts, vocabulary, and techniques found in reading assignments. Each of the quizzes will cover one or more reading assignments, and will be administered at the instructor's discretion. Be sure to keep up with the readings, as a quiz could "pop" for any one of them!

Why is Theatre Important?: (5%) Students will write a 1 page paper on the significance of theatre in the student's life, and should reflect his/her own opinion and current knowledge of live theatre. While writing in 1st person is acceptable, all other academic writing guidelines must be followed.

Play Attendance and Response: (10% Each) Each student will attend two live theatrical productions and write a 2-3 page response to ONE of the productions, following guidelines provided in class. Ticket stubs and/or playbills must be submitted.

Midterm Exam: (15%) Students are required to take a midterm exam covering the material studied to date.

Final Project Character Analysis: (5%) Each team member will submit a 1 page character analysis for their final performance project.

Final Performance Project: (10%) A final 2-person scene will take the components of theatre and put them into practice. Each team member must participate in the performance. Each team will choose a scene from one of the plays read in class and perform it. The final presentation must be between 3-4 minutes long. If each member of the team does not fully participate, the final grade will be affected. Be prepared to meet with your team outside of class for rehearsals, and be warned: if you miss the final, you may not make it up.

Final Exam: (20%) The Final exam will be administered via E-Learning. The exam will be available for 5 days, Friday Dec 12 – Tuesday Dec 16, and the student may take the exam any time during that period. Once the student begins the exam, he/she will have 3 hours to complete it.

Instructor Policies

Grade Scale:

The following grade scale will be applied:

97+	A+
93 – 96.9	A
90 – 92.9	A-
87 – 89.9	B+
83 – 86.9	B
80 – 82.9	B-
77 – 79.9	C+
73 – 76.9	C
70 – 72.9	C-
67 – 69.9	D+
63 – 66.9	D
60 – 62.9	D-
59.9 – below	F

Class Attendance:

Each student has three excused absences, 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 average by one third of a letter grade. 3 tardies (5 or more minutes late) is equal to 1 unexcused absence.

Make-up Work:

Make-up work will only be accepted in the event that a student has an excused absence on the day of a reading assignment quiz. It will be the student's responsibility to schedule a time with the instructor to take a make-up quiz.

Extra Credit:

Extra credit assignments may be made available at the professor's discretion.

Late Work:

Barring extreme circumstances, assignments will not be accepted after the due date.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

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