

Course Syllabus

DRAM 1310.003 Understanding Theatre

Course Information

Professor : Wes Ferguson

Term: Fall 2016

Meetings: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 9:00-9:50 AM

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location: JO 5.109

Email Address: wesley.ferguson@utdallas.edu

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 10:00-10:50 AM or by appointment

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, students will participate in a group performance project, and write about artistic events that they attend.

Student Learning Objectives/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 Textbook

The Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre. 5th Edition by Stephanie Arnold

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Students will be expected to have completed each reading assignment (**RA**) and to be ready to discuss on the indicated day.

WEEK 01 - Course Introduction

RA (Friday) - Chapter 1: The Impulse to Perform

Due on Friday - Why is Theatre Important? Paper

WEEK 02 - The Nature of Theatre

RA (Monday) - Chapter 2: Theatre as a Mirror of Society

WEEK 03 - The Play & The Playwright

RA (Wednesday) - Chapter 3: The Playwright's Vision

RA (Friday) - *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

WEEK 04 - The Actor

RA (Monday) - Chapter 4: The Art of the Actor

WEEK 05 - The Director

RA (Monday) - Chapter 5: The Director

WEEK 06 - The Designer

RA (Monday) - Chapter 6: The Designers

WEEK 07 - Realism

RA (Monday) - Chapter 7: Understanding Style: Realism

Due on Friday - Midterm Play Analysis

WEEK 08 - Realism Applied

RA (Monday) - Chapter 8: Expressing a Worldview through Realism

RA (Wednesday) - *And the Soul Shall Dance*

WEEK 09 - Theatricalism

RA (Monday) - Chapter 9: Understanding Style: Theatricalism

WEEK 10 - Theatricalism Applied

RA (Monday) - Chapter 10: Expressing a Worldview through

Theatricalism & *Angels in America*

RA (Wednesday) - Chapter 11: The Musical Theatre

WEEK 11 - Dramatic Structure

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

WEEK 12 - Genre Choices
RA (Monday) - Chapter 13: Genre
RA (Wednesday) - Chapter 14: Choosing a Genre: Comedy & *Dog Lady*

WEEK 13 - The Culmination
RA (Monday) - Chapter 15: The Project
RA (Wednesday) - *Anna in the Tropics*
Choose groups for Final Project

WEEK 14 - Thanksgiving week! NO CLASS!

WEEK 15 - In-Class Project Preparation

WEEK 16 - In-Class Project Preparation

FINAL - Final Collaborative Project Presentation
Due on Final Day - Why is Theatre Important? Reprise

Grading Criteria

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 a single reading assignment, 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% Each) Students will write a 1 page paper on the significance of theatre. Why has it survived and what has been its influence on society? This should be your own opinion and reflect your current knowledge of live theatre.

Performance Reviews: (10% Each) Each student will attend two professionally produced artistic events and write a 2-3 page review of each, following guidelines provided in class.

Midterm Play Analysis: (25%) Students will be required to read a full-length play of their choosing and write a 5-7 page analysis of it. Analyses should include a summary of the plot, the cultural significance of the play either at the time of its writing or today, as well as how it relates to elements of theatre covered in class.

Final Collaborative Project: (25%) 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 presentation must be between 7-10 minutes long. If it is longer or shorter, and/or each member of the group does not participate, and/or does not fulfill his/her theatrical aspect of production, final grades will be affected. Be

prepared to meet with your group outside of class for rehearsals, and be warned: If you miss the final, you may not make it up.

Instructor Policies

Class Attendance: If for any reason you must miss a class, please alert the instructor beforehand (ideally no later than 12 hours before class time). Each student has two excused absences, no questions asked. Beyond that, absences will be considered 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.

Make-up Work: Make-up work will only be accepted in the event that a student is absent 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 will not be offered in this course.

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 url 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.