

## History of Theatre I

Spring 2016  
THEA 3360.01 (#21820)  
MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m.  
PAC 240

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### Catalogue Description

A survey of the origins of the theatre, with major concentration centered upon the development of the western theatre from the Greeks to the Neoclassic. Writing enhanced. Credit 3. Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302.

### Course Description

The content of the course covers nearly 2400 years of theatre history and will be divided into three primary units: one, Classical Greece, Rome, and Commedia dell'Arte; two, Medieval, Renaissance, and Elizabethan Theatre; and three, Restoration, Neoclassical Theatre, and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Theatre.

Because the course is writing enhanced, at least 50% of more of your final course grade will result from your own, original writing.

### Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

For each period and/or genre we explore within a given unit, you should be able to:

- understand why theatre was created: understand and appreciate the historical and cultural context;
- understand how theatre was produced: theatrical conventions, writing, financing, performance, design, technology, architecture, etc.; and,
- understand and appreciate how other contemporary theatre artists and companies are applying their knowledge in producing the "classics."

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- articulate major similarities and differences in theatrical production approaches, theatre architecture, and dramatic forms of major historical periods ranging from Classical Greece to 1800;
- demonstrate a working vocabulary of basic theatrical terms and concepts from diverse historical periods, and apply those terms effectively in oral and written communication;
- identify major theatre artists, companies, and locations and articulate their importance, influence, or contribution to the historical development of the theatre;
- communicate your ideas effectively through individual writing, primarily individual projects; and,
- conduct independent research to create a production history.

### Requirements/Graded Components

All grades will be recorded in Blackboard as points; here I also share them as percentages, so you can see the relative values of the components. Details for each component as well as the points/grades awarded will be posted online via Blackboard. Dates are listed on the Tentative Itinerary.

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| • 3 online unit tests (each counts 10% or 100 points) | = 300 points = 30% of final course grade |
| • 3 unit projects (each counts 15% or 450 points)     | = 450 points = 45% of final course grade |
| • 1 production history (15% or 150 points)            | = 150 points = 15% of final course grade |
| • participation (10% or 100 points)                   | = 100 points = 10% of final course grade |

## Bonus Points

The following receive bonus points (65 points maximum), which will be added to your final course grade:

- 1 point for each on-time arrival for class (“tasty treat”) = 40 points (appr.)
- 5 points for attending a UTC or Dave-approved production = 25 points max

## Extra Bonus Points?

No, that wouldn’t be fair to the others in the class nor to me. Just do your work and do it on time. Remember, you can turn in a project late, but you will lose points.

## Recommended Texts

Recommended but not required: Oscar Brockett and Franklin Hildy, *History of the Theatre, Foundation Edition*. You may substitute the “big” Brockett (*History of the Theatre*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition or later), if you already have a copy.

You are encouraged to buy a play anthology that you can use throughout your (college) career. On most Wednesdays, I will provide my own copies of the *Bedford Introduction to Drama* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) for in-class use.

## Play Readings

We will explore excerpts from many plays in class using the Bedford anthology. If you have not read these plays in their entirety, you are encouraged to do so. If you plan to study and/or produce theatre in the future, you need to read plays...and more plays. Play titles are listed on the Tentative Itinerary.

## Attending UTC Productions

You are encouraged to attend our UTC productions this fall. Your theatre course fee provides you one comp ticket to each UTC production this semester. For each production you attend, you will receive +5 bonus points. The plays and their opening nights are on the Tentative Itinerary. Please note that the Showcase Theatre often sells out; you will need to secure your ticket(s) well in advance. It also may be possible to attend a preview (final dress).

## Unit Tests

For each unit, there will be an online test that should take no more than two hours to complete. Each test should demonstrate your understanding of the “facts” (particularly vocabulary) and your ability to apply these facts in short essay questions. You will be given one week to complete each test, but once you open the test online, you must complete and submit it during one sitting. You will be allowed to use your class notes and handouts, so take effective notes during class. (Past students have found it helpful to print out the PowerPoints as “Handouts 6 Slides per Page” and then use those to take notes. Please be aware that all of your writing must be in your own words; you may not copy and paste anything nor paraphrase anything. Specific details will be provided as we near the first test date. Each test is worth 10% of your final course grade (100 points).

## Projects

For each unit, you will undertake a project that connects that unit’s content with your own personal interests as a theatre consumer, theatre practitioner, future theatre teacher, and/or future graduate student. You will choose from a “menu” of possibilities, all posted on Blackboard at least 10 days before the due date. These projects will be shared informally in class on the Fridays they are due. A typical project is to read, watch, design, or research something and then write a 500-word summary/explanation of what you did and what you learned.

## Participation

Your participation in class is worth 10% of your final course grade (up to 100 points). Positives: being on time, alert, engaged, responsive, tactful, thoughtful, relevant, appropriate, etc. Negatives: being late, disengaged, dominating discussion, being distracted by your cell phone or other media, not taking notes, chatting with each other, etc.

## Production History

Your production history will cover five (5) noteworthy productions of an assigned play title. For each of the five productions, you will provide two captioned production stills and two highlighted reviews. For each production, you also will provide two 75-100-word paragraphs: the first is a description of the production and what makes it noteworthy (not a plot summary), and the second is your personal response to the production choices. An example of a “successful” production will be posted on Blackboard.

## Final Exam Week

There is no final exam during finals week; however, your production history is due at the end of the final exam period, which, for your class is Wednesday, December 6, at 4:30 p.m. (You are welcome to submit earlier than this date and time, if you choose.) Please submit your hard copy production history to Dr. McTier in his office or to Paula Turner, our Administrative Assistant in the UTC office.

## Late & Makeup Work

You may submit and/or makeup a test or project after the deadline without penalty only if you have legitimate and documented reason approved by the Dean of Students, e.g., university obligation, hospitalization, court appearance, jury duty, funeral. The Office of the Dean of Students is located in the Lohman Student Center; just take your document(s) to that office, which, in turn, will notify all of your professors by e-mail. Please note that the Dean’s Office allows you only one week after the event to contact them and submit your documentation.

Any assignment submitted after the deadline *without* approved reason will receive a one-letter grade penalty (minus 10 points).

## Attendance

By university policy for classes that meet three times each week (MWF classes), you may not be penalized for up to three (3) absences, nor may you be penalized for any absence due to pre-approved religious observance; anything beyond that depends on the instructor’s discretion.

After three (3) absences, you will be penalized **-30 points from your final course grade** for each additional skip, unless there is written intervention (with specific dates, times, and reason) from the Dean of Students.

For each day of class that you arrive on time, you will be rewarded a +1 bonus point to add to your total number of accrued points. As many past students have discovered, these “tasty treats” can raise your final course grade.

## Classroom Conduct

Food and candy are not permitted in the classroom. Beverages are permitted as long as they are in spill-proof containers. Unless otherwise noted, laptops and tablets are not permitted. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from texting during class. Students who cannot refrain from using their cell phones during class should expect a participation grade of zero (0). Cell phones are not an effective or approved means of taking notes.

## Final Course Grade

In percentages: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F.

In points: 900-1000 = A, 800-899 = B, 700-799 = C, 600-699 = D, 0-599 = F.

## Office

I will have a sign-up sheet on my office door for appointments (for class and/or advising). If you have questions or concerns, please come talk with me; that’s what office hours are for. If you want to talk about projects or need advising, just sign-up for an office appointment.

Please note: when I arrive in the classroom, I need that time to set up for class; that is not the time to have discussions with you. A simple, quick question, though, is fine.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Any students found cheating on exams, or plagiarizing papers will FAIL the course.

### **Classroom Environment**

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and peers with respect and dignity. Section 5.2.22 in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines classroom disturbances as any activity which proves distracting to the learning environment including but not limited to the use of cell phones or text messaging; the reading of materials (newspapers, magazines, texts) not assigned to the class; the use of profanity or abusive behavior toward the instructor or other students; having off-topic conversations which disturb or disrupt the learning environment; the use of computers and/or other electronic devices (iPods, MP3 players, etc.) during classroom instruction, therefore, as a result, under no circumstances are cell phones or any other electronic devices to be used or seen during classroom instruction or examination. Even the visible presence of such a device during an examination will result in a zero on that examination. All such devices should be turned off or put in a silent mode and not be taken out during class. Violations of the code of conduct will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with this policy will result in expulsion from the classroom and may at the instructor's discretion result in the student(s) being referred for disciplinary action to the Dean of Students. Any assignments missed because of disciplinary action cannot be submitted for a grade.

### **Students with Disabilities Policy**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

### **Religious Holy Days**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.