

## History of Theatre I

Spring 2018  
THEA 3360.01 (#22961)  
MWF 12:00-12:50 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

This course covers over two thousand years of theatre history extending from Classical Greece (500s BC) through the 1700s. Although this is a knowledge-based course, the focus is not memorizing data (who, what, when) but rather understanding the philosophy and practice of theatre (why and how) both then and now as it defines and affects our lives as theatre audiences, practitioners, and educators.

Our Mondays will be content-based lectures using my own PowerPoints that are available on Blackboard. This is my version of show-and-tell: lots of pictures, which I will explain; however, very little text is included, so you'll need to take good notes. (I suggest you print these slides before we begin each unit and use them to take notes.)

On every Wednesday, you will have something due for a grade: an analytic, a project, or an exam. Except for the two days of in-class exams, these Wednesdays basically will be discussions of your analytics and presentations of your projects. (Details about these come later in this syllabus.)

All Fridays are "wild cards": special topics, guests, video/film, computer lab, team project time, etc. On several Fridays, we will not meet collectively as a class; instead, you will engage in an assigned activity during that time.

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 this semester, you should be able to:

- understand why theatre was created by exploring its historical and cultural contexts;
- understand how theatre was produced by exploring theatrical conventions, writing, financing, performance, design, technology, architecture, etc.; and,
- understand how these "hows" and "whys" have and might affect modern theatre practice, particularly when it comes to 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 practical understanding of historical terms, major genres, and key concepts through two, in-class, open notes exams;
- identify major eras, theatres, artists, companies, and locations and be able to articulate their importance, influence, and contribution to the historical development of the theatre and their value to us today;
- communicate your ideas effectively through individual writing, primarily through "analytics";
- conduct and apply research in creating and presenting individual and team-based projects; and,
- conduct independent research to create a production history of value to future, hypothetical productions.

## 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. Due dates are listed on the Tentative Itinerary.

- 8 analytics (each one counts 5% or 50 points) = 400 points = 40% of final course grade
- 4 projects (each one counts 7.5% or 75 points) = 300 points = 30% of final course grade
- 2 in-class exams (each one counts 10% or 100 points) = 200 points = 20% of final course grade
- 1 production history (10% or 100 points) = 100 points = 15% of final course grade

## Bonus Points

The following receive bonus points (70 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 each UTC (or approved) production = 30 points max

## 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 some 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.

Our exploration will include, but not be restricted to, the following: *Antigone*, *Lysistrata*, *The Second Shepherd's Play*, *Doctor Faustus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *The Country Wife*, and *Tartuffe*.

## 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).

Our UTC productions this semester are: *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (remounted for KCACTF), *Clybourne Park*, *Speech and Debate*, *The Shape of Things*, and *Pippin*.

## Analytics (40%)

An "analytic" is a small assignment for which you have to read or watch something and then respond in writing. The purpose of the analytic is to insure that you have done some preparation in advance of class, so that you can contribute to the class discussion on that due day (always a Wednesday). There are eight (8) total analytics: each is worth 50 points. Guidelines for each analytic will be posted on Blackboard at least one week before it is due. Most analytics will need to be uploaded via TurnItIn on Blackboard.

### Projects (30%)

You will undertake four different projects (individual and team) that connect content with your own personal interests as a theatre consumer, practitioner, or educator. You will choose from a “menu” of possibilities posted on Blackboard at least two weeks before the due date. These projects will be shared informally in class on the Wednesday they are due. A typical project is to read, watch, design, or research something and then write a 500-word essay that summarizes what you did and explains what you’ve learned. Each project is worth 75 points, but your grade comes solely from your writing, not from the activity nor the in-class sharing.

### In-Class Exams (20%)

There will be two, in-class exams: one at mid-term and the other during the last week of classes. You may use your notes and handouts; you may not use the internet or each other. Each exam is worth 100 points and will take approx. 50 minutes to complete. The first half of each exam will be objective with right and wrong answers (such as vocabulary); the second half will be short essay format based primarily on the PowerPoint slides.

### Production History (10%)

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/template for your production history will be posted later in the semester.

### Final Exam Week

There is no final exam during finals week; however, your production history is due during the final exam week, no later than Wednesday, May 9, 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 an assignment or makeup an exam 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.

Theatre Chair Kris Hanssen will provide notification for all theatre-related and approved absences, e.g., USITT, U/RTA, and KCACTF.

Any assignment submitted after the deadline *without* approved reason will receive a one-letter grade penalty (minus 10%) for each week late. (Note: this “each week” penalty is a change from last semester’s policy.)

### 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.

I personally do not excuse any absences, so you do not need to email, call, or contact me about being absent or arriving late. The Dean’s Office “excuses” your absence by emailing me as well as your other professors. (Removing myself from this “excused or not” process hopefully prevents any form of real or perceived favoritism from me.)

## **Tasty Treats**

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. Just sign yourself in each day as you arrive. (Please don’t sign in for anyone else, though.)

## **Classroom Conduct**

Food and candy are not permitted in the classroom. Beverages are permitted as long as they are in spill-proof containers. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from texting during class; if you must make or take a phone call, then quietly leave the class. The same applies to bathrooming. Please note that cell phones are not an effective means of taking notes; research shows that handwritten notes prove most effective, but you may use your laptops or notebooks as well.

Think of our classroom the way you would think of a theatre audience. When you are onstage or watching a play, how do you feel about people in the audience arriving late, coming and going during the show, chatting, texting, unwrapping candy, blowing bubbles, distracting others, etc.? That’s how I feel about each class with you.

## **Blackboard**

All of your course materials and grades are posted on Blackboard. Your cellphone is not an effective means for accessing and using Blackboard. If you do not have a personal computer, then please make use of our many computer labs on campus. (There’s a big computer lab in the NGL library.)

While Blackboard provides an excellent tool for our class use, it is not perfect: sometimes the system goes down, and sometimes your TurnItIn uploads may not go through. You strongly are advised to back up or retain a copy of all materials intended for upload.

## **Final Course Grade**

Your final course grade is based on a 1000-point scale:

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.

## **Success**

Your success in this class is directly linked to my success as your teacher. I want you to succeed. I want you to make the very best grade possible...but, you have to earn it by coming to class and doing the work.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

All of these policies as well as links to additional policies and details can be found at:  
<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain 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.

### **Student Absences On Religious Holy Days Policy:**

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. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." 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.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

### **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 email [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.

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

			Theatre History I		
			Due Dates		
JAN	19	FRI			
	22	MON			
	24	WED	Analytic #1 (50 pts)	<i>Antigone</i>	
	26	FRI			
	29	MON			
	31	WED	Analytic #2 (50 pts)	<i>Lysistrata</i>	
FEB	2	FRI			
	5	MON			
	7	WED	Project #1 (75 pts)	Greek & Roman	
	9	FRI			
	12	MON			
	14	WED	Analytic #3 (50 pts)	<i>Second Shepherd's Play</i>	
	16	FRI			
	19	MON			
	21	WED	Analytic #4 (50 pts)	<i>Doctor Faustus</i>	<i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i>
	23	FRI			
	26	MON			
	28	WED	Project #2 (75 pts)	Medieval & Commedia	KCACTF Region 6 Festival
MAR	2	FRI			
	5	MON			
	7	WED	Exam #1 (100 pts)		
	9	FRI			
			SPRING BREAK		
	19	MON			
	21	WED	Analytic #5 (50 pts)	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Clybourne Park</i>
	23	FRI			
	26	MON			
	28	WED	Analytic #6 (50 pts)	<i>Hamlet</i>	
	30	FRI	GOOD FRIDAY		
APR	2	MON			
	4	WED	Project #3 (75 pts)	Elizabethan/Shakespeare	
	6	FRI			
	9	MON			
	11	WED	Analytic #7 (50 pts)	<i>The Country Wife (?)</i>	<i>Director Debut</i>
	13	FRI			
	16	MON			
	18	WED	Analytic #8 (50 pts)	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Pippin</i>
	20	FRI			
	23	MON			
	25	WED	Project #4 (75 pts)	Restoration & Neoclassicism	
	27	FRI			
	30	MON			
MAY	2	WED	Exam #2 (100 pts)		
	4	FRI			
	9	WED	Production History (100 pts) due by 4:30 p.m.		