DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS & PERFORMING ARTS

SPEECH COMMUNICATION
MEDIA ARTS
THEATRE ARTS

SYLLABUS

Course Title: Introduction to Theatre Arts

Number: THA 5000

Credits/Hours: 3 credits/3 hours

Description: This survey course is designed to provide students with a thorough understanding and greater appreciation of the theatrical form. Readings and lectures will focus on the relationship between theatrical theory and practice, the various creative/production roles essential to theatre, as well as major artists and movements throughout theatrical history. Students will analyze major works of dramatic literature to offer context for course content, as well as attend a live theatrical performance on campus.

Textbooks: *Theatrical Worlds* (Beta Version)
Edited by Charlie Mitchell
Publisher: University Press of Florida, © 2014
https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00021870/00001

Prerequisite(s):   None

Majors: Required for majors in the Theatre Arts Program; Flexible Core Group C

Selected Students: Open to all students

Rationale: Theatre is considered a fundamental cultural force. It is art, architecture, business and an institution. In the theatre the humanities, behavioral sciences, sciences and the arts are employed and experienced through production of dramatic literature. This world viewed through live performances of the classics and the moderns allows human thought and concerned to be revealed. The theatre is a microcosm of the world and all aspects of life and living can be studied. Nation wide this introductory course exposes students to the unique world of the performing arts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

CUNY Common Core Learning Objectives:

1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

CUNY Common Core Group C: Creative Expression Learning Objectives
A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. A student will:

1. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, arts, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.
2. Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present, and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.
3. Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.
5. Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.

Course Specific Learning Outcomes

1. **Theatrical Theories & Terminology:** Identify and apply the fundamental concepts, theories and roles associated with modern theatrical practice and professional theatrical production (i.e. suspension of disbelief, empathy, actor, designer, Broadway, Off-Broadway, etc.).

2. **Theatre & Creativity:** Examine and define the skills, considerations and tasks associated with the creation of theatre, both individually and as a collective whole.

3. **Theatre & Society:** Evaluate and articulate how theatre is a socially-responsive artform that creates meaning and fosters discussion, debate and community.

4. **Theatre, History & Cultures:** Analyze and define the central characteristics of the theatrical artform, both generally and in relation to the history of the United States and Global Cultures.

5. **Oral Communication & Writing Skills for the Theatre:** Analyze and evaluate the experience and the various components of live theatrical production, and articulate its value both verbally and in writing.

    Methods of Teaching: Lecture; demonstration; discussion

    Assignments for Students:
          Reading from texts and other sources
          Research paper
          Projects both theoretical and practical
          Attendance at & Analysis of a live Theatrical Performance

    Method of Evaluation:
          Written evaluation on papers
          Examinations
          Oral critique of presented material

Determination of Final Course Grade:

Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Critique of play	5%
Class participation/attendance	15%
Final examination	40%

Topical Course Outline:
UNITS #1 - 3: Plays in Context
- Units on 3 to 4 plays taught as both examples of play analysis but also to illuminate one of more of the units below.
- See appendix for approved list of possible plays for this course.

UNIT #4: Theatre History
- Origins of theatre, rituals, various cultures and their forms of presentation.
- Introduction to Greek theatre and corresponding playwrights *(Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus, Aristophanes)*
- Aristotle's POETICS *(6 components of drama)*
- Roman Theatre
- Medieval Theatre
- Elizabethan Era & Shakespeare

UNIT #5: Dramatic Literature/Play Analysis/Playwriting
- Introduction to Genre & Style. Trends of distinct historical periods.
- Play Structures (episodic, climactic, circular, etc.)
- Basic play analysis *(protagonist, antagonist, rising action, climax, dénouement)*
- The PLAYRIGHT and process
- The CRITIC and process

UNIT#6: Genre
- Introduce and provide examples of different genres of playwriting and theatre-making: tragedy, comedy, farce, melodrama, tragicomedy, etc.
- How does genre connect and develop out of moments or events in world/theatre history? Theatrical Movements/"Isms" – realism, absurdism, surrealism, post-modernism, etc.
- What genre encapsulates the majority of playwriting? i.e. Psychological Realism? What sub-categories are born out of realism and why?

UNIT #7: Current Theatre
- "What is happening in NYC now?!" – current trends and productions
- Theatrical venues and vehicles – Broadway, Off-Broadway, Off-Off-Broadway, Community Theatre, Repertory/Regional theatre & Educational Theatre *(mention the role of KCACTF)*
- Commercial vs. non-profit theatre model.

UNIT #8: Actor
- The profession of an actor today.
- Actor training (Stanislavsky & Realistic Acting Techniques)
- Theatre vs. film acting
- Introduction to development of character, playing actions and given circumstances.
- Actor toolbox: headshots, resumes, agents.

UNIT#9: Director
- The profession of a stage director today.
- Director training
- Theater vs. film directing
- Introduction to the role of the director (casting, working with the producer and designers, blocking rehearsals).
- Related tasks: choreography, fight choreography, dramaturgy.

UNIT#10: Theatrical Design & Technical Theatre
- Introduction to the various roles within technical theatre. Designers: Scenic, Lighting, Costume, Sound.
- Additional roles: Stage Manager & ASM's, House Manager/Ushers, Choreographer and Musical Director.
- Stage Configurations *(Black Box, Proscenium, Thrust, Arena)*
- Parts of the theatre (House, stage, wings, fly system, booths, shop, dressing rooms)
- Areas of the stage *(Up, Down, Center, Left, Right)*

UNIT #11: Specialty Discipline/Topic of Instructor
- Example units have included Musical Theatre, Asian Theatre Traditions, Devised Theatre, Contemporary European Theatre, London & the West End, Shakespeare, Theatre of Latin America, Applied Theatre, Theatre of the Global South, etc.

Bibliography:

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Lee, R. L. (1996). *Everything about theatre: the guidebook of theatre fundamentals.* Denver, CO: Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Lounsbury, W. C., & N. C. Boulanger (2000). *Theatre backstage from A to Z.* Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press*.*

Nicoll, A. (1958). *The development of the theatre.* London: Harper and Company.

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