

## **HISTORY OF THEATRE (Introductory Theatre/ GE Course-undergraduate)**

Vandy Scoates

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A study in theatre history looks at the interrelationship of theatre and society using historical context and dramatic literature as a guide. An exploration of theatre history seeks to establish a cultural context for periods of drama, using art, music, and social historical data to clarify the artistic modes of thought in various periods of time. A comparison of these modes of thought with those of the dramatic artists of the period results in an illumination of original theatre experiences throughout history.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Comprehend, demonstrate, or articulate the value inherent in an artistic, musical, or dramatic creation
- To read, analyze, discuss, and write about theatre history in the classical, medieval, renaissance, neoclassic, restoration, romantic, modern, contemporary, and post-modern periods
- To read, analyze, discuss, and write about how theatre mirrors its social and cultural environments and about what theatre contributes to individuals and society
- To present personal interpretations of dramatic literature in a historical context

### **TEXTS & MATERIALS:**

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*A Concise History of Theatre* 1st Edition  
by Jim A. Patterson & Tim Donohue  
Publisher: Pearson; 1 edition  
(January 14, 2013)  
ISBN-10: 0205209823  
ISBN-13: 978-0205209828

#### **Other texts/plays provided:**

*Hippolytus* by Euripides  
*School for Scandal* by Richard Sheridan  
*Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen  
*All my Son's* by Author Miller

### **PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **WRITTEN WORK:**

##### **Journal Entries (15% of Final Grade)-**

After each student presents a journal entry will be due discussing that presentation. These must be at least 200 words and speak to the following aspects of the presentation:

- What genre did the person present on?
- Who are some notable playwrights and plays from that genre?
- Was there anything you learned from the presentation that you did not know before? What was it?
- What did you think of the presentation? Was there anything that may have been or will be useful in your presentation?

Journal Entries are due one week after the presentation was made (at 11:59pm) and are submitted on Blackboard. Late journal entries will not be accepted. **If there was no presentation, no journal is due.** Though 20 journals are listed on the calendar, only 8 will be due this semester.

##### **Production Responses (15% of Final Grade)-**

You are required to see **two (2)** Limestone College Theatre productions this semester and write a response. Please keep your program as a guide for your response and to turn in with your written work as a record of your attendance.

The review should be three to five (3-5) pages double spaced in Garamond font.

You may see a second production at another college or theatre in the area and write a response for extra credit. The extra credit production must be a play or musical and must be approved by me. See below for details.

Review should include:

- A detailed description of plot and production elements using terms we learned in class.
- A production rationale: Why do you think it was designed, acted, & directed this way this way?

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- What historical period and/or genre might this play fall into? Give 2 reasons to back your argument
- Could this plays' message resonate in a period other than the one it was written in/set?
- What moment or visual aspect of the production affected you the greatest and why?

### **READINGS & TEST (25% of Final Grade):**

You must read four (4) plays for the class on which you will be tested. You will also have a play to read for your presentation to the class. These readings must be completed by the dates assigned as we will be having classroom discussion about these plays and it is important that you have an understanding of them previous to these classes. Links to free digital texts will be provided but if you would like to find a hard copy you are welcome. If you are reading a translation that differs from the one of a text provided, please clear with me first. You will not be given an opportunity to make up tests.

You will also have required reading from Patterson/Donahue's *A Concise History of Theatre* which will also be part of the 4 tests throughout the semester. This book will also be helpful for your presentations and for future classes if you decide to continue your education in theatre. **Each test will include questions from the chapters read previous to test date.** Please note for chapters/pages included in each test along with the play. The test will also include information given during presentations and lectures so careful notes should be taken during these.

Tests will be given for the following plays, chapters and presentations on the dates specified:

**TEST 1:** *Hippolytus*, Ch.1,2,3,10 Presentations 1-2 (4%)

**TEST 2:** *School for Scandal*, Ch.4 & 5, Pg. 117-154 Presentations 3-9 (6%)

**TEST 3:** *Ghosts*, pg. 154-211, Presentations 10-12 (5%)

**TEST 4:** *All My Sons*, Ch. 12,14,16, pg. 228-255, 278-318 Presentations 13-20 (10%)

### **PRESENTATION (20% of Final Grade):**

Every student will give a presentation on play/genre for the class. The presentation dates will be assigned the first day of class and you must present on your assigned day. You will read a play (provided) that is associated with the genre chosen and present research on the play, playwright and genre. There are two components to the presentation: Binder (worth 35% of project grade) and Presentation (worth 65% of project grade)

**You will turn in a Presentation folder (digital or hardcopy) containing:**

- A detailed outline of your presentation
- A printed or digital version of your presentation for the class
- A work cited page
  - In correct MLA format
  - Your work cited **MUST** include at least 10 sources, five (5) of which are NOT from the internet. (PDF links from library/journal will be accepted).
  - At least one (1) of your works cited must be from a peer reviewed-journal and at least one (1) must be from a review of a production of your play. Please see me in advance if you are having trouble finding reviews.

**Your presentation must be 15-20 min long and will include:**

- Synopsis of the tenants of the genre and/or manifesto
- History of genre including who started/created it
- Did the genre have any social, political or economic effect on the country in which it was started.
- Other influential playwrights and plays from that genre other than the one you read/talk about
- What were the design conventions of the time (costumes, lights, sets and/or theatre space)
- Brief synopsis of play
- Short bio of playwright
- What long reaching effects did the genre (and play) have on the history of theatre.
- Describe any famous productions of your play or another in the genre.

**You will be marked down 5% of the project grade for every one (1) minute your presentation is UNDER the 15-minute minimum.** If you are absent the day of your presentation you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment. You may switch with a classmate if you find you have to be absent on the day you signed up for but,

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you must meet with me and the person you are planning on switching with 2 weeks prior to the day you will be absent. Best thing to do: sign up for a day YOU KNOW YOU WILL BE THERE. Acceptations to missing a presentation will only be granted for verifiable medical emergencies.

### **Presentations will be made on the following genres/plays on the following class days (date):**

1. Roman: *Casina* by Titus Maccius Plautus {+10% Bonus}
2. Noh Theatre: *Sotoba Komachi* by Yukio Mishima {+8% Bonus}
3. Medieval Theatre: *Everyman* by Anonymous {+6% Bonus}
4. Comedia Del Arte: *La Fortunata Isabella* by Flamino Scala {+4% Bonus}
5. England's Golden Age: *Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare
6. Spanish Golden Age: *Fuenteovejuna* by Lope de Vega
7. French Neo-Classical: *Phe'dra* by Racine
8. English Restoration: *The Country Wife* by William Wycherley
9. 18<sup>th</sup> Cent. Theatre: *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith
10. Melodrama: *Black Eyed Susan* by Douglas Jerrold
11. Naturalism: *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg
12. Realism: *The Seagull* by Anton Chekov
13. Surrealism: *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry
14. Symbolism: *The Blind* by Maurice Meaterlink
15. Expressionism: *The Adding Machine* by Elmer Rice
16. Epic Theatre: *Mother Courage and Her Children* by Bertolt Brecht
17. Musical Theatre: *Show Boat* by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II
18. Absurdism: *The Bald Soprano* by Eugene Ionesco
19. American Realism: *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams
20. Post-Modern: *4.48 Psychosis* by Sarah Kane

### **FINAL PROJECT- MANIFESTO (5% of Final Grade)**

You will write and present a manifesto for your "theatre". This should be an original piece that describes what theatre is to you and should mimic the manifestos will study during the course of the semester. It can include anything that YOU think is important to know for YOUR theatre. It can be in any format but has to be presented on the final exam day. It should be a minimum of 1 page in length but there is no maximum length. That being said, you will have a maximum of 10 minutes to present your manifesto.

### **EXTRA CREDIT:**

Seeing a costumed production outside of the school and writing a production response will count for 2% extra credit. The extra credit production can be one at Limestone College, another college or theatre in the area. All productions must be approved by the instructor prior to due date of production response. You may do a total of two (2) extra credit responses.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION (20% of final grade):**

This class is based on discussions and learning from your classmates. You must actively participate in discussions and answer questions in order to succeed. If you are not in class you cannot participate so excessive absences will also contribute to your participation grade.

I consider good class participation to be:

- Active listening
- Asking and answering questions
- Participating in class discussions
- Making helpful comments on your classmates' and your own work
- Keeping up with assignments and readings in order to be informed for discussions

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**GRADING:**

**Grading Breakdown:**

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Class Participation           | 20% of Final Grade |
| Four (4) Play/Reading Quizzes | 25% of Final Grade |
| Two (2) Production Reviews    | 15% of Final Grade |
| Journal Entries (8 total)     | 15% of Final Grade |
| Presentation                  | 20% of Final Grade |
| Final Project-Manifesto       | 5% of Final Grade  |

**GRADE PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN:**

90%-100%---A    80%-89.9%----B    72%-79.9%----C    62%-69.9%----D    59.9%-0%--- F