



**THE 511.001 – Dramatic Theory
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2014**

Instructor: Michael G. Knight, Jr., Assoc. Professor of Theatre Design & Technology

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Office Hours: by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

***Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski* by Bernard F. Dukore.**

New, this text is quite expensive and will not be carried by our bookstore this semester. However, you should be able to find it used for about \$65.00 (plus shipping) online. You should purchase this text for your work/reading in the current course as well as for your future studies/career in theatre; the book “makes available the chief documents in dramatic theory” and is incredibly valuable to have in your library as a theatre scholar.

The plays that we will be reading in this class should be readily available on the internet as they are all in public domain, from your personal library, the Alpha Psi Library, and/or the Gee Library. If the student desires to purchase them online in order to build his/her personal library with canonical works, the plays are as follows:

Aristophanes, *The Frogs*

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

Plautus, *The Twin Menaechmi* (also translated as *The Twins* or *Menaechmi*)

Auburn, *Proof*

Johnson, *Volpone*

Cornielle, *The Cid* (also known as *Le Cid*)

Moliere, *School for Wives*

Congreve, *The Way of the World*

(Strongly) Recommended Text:

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th Edition.

You are highly encouraged to acquire this text as soon as possible for your work in this course and throughout your graduate studies. While the bookstore will probably have copies of this text in stock for your purchase, you can also find it used online for as low as \$13.48 (plus shipping). Please *do not* purchase an earlier edition of this text; significant differences in information exist.

Recommended Viewing:

The BFG (Big Friendly Giant)

by Roald Dahl, adapted by David Wood

directed by Jim Tyler Anderson

produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce

Public Performances: Oct. 11 at 7:00 p.m., and Oct. 12 at 3 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 6 (free preview performance for majors/minors)

Cthulu: A Puppet Play

by Kelly Switzer

directed by Kelly Switzer

produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce

Public Performances: Nov. 18-22 at 7:00 p.m., and Nov. 23 at 3 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 17 (free preview performance for majors/minors)

University Playhouse Reservations/Tickets:

Tickets are available for a nominal fee from the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900.

Ticket Prices: TAMU-C Students/Faculty/Staff (with Valid Student/Faculty/Staff ID) and Children under 18 - \$5.00; Senior Citizens (ages 60+) - \$10.00; Adults - \$15.00.

Course Description:

This course offers studies of the major documents in the evolution of dramatic theory, from classical foundations through the 18th Century (where other courses in this program, such as Development of Modern Theatre and Directing Theory, generally “pick-up”).

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. display a learned knowledge of major theoretical works of drama.
2. articulate critically informed personal standards of aesthetic judgment.
3. synthesize academic research into cohesive scholarly writing and oral presentation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments (Tentative):

PARTICIPATION (15%):

Participation in topical discussions, plays, presentations, and course work is required. Students will be expected to actively, and intelligently, participate in all discussions. Participation and attendance in this

course is defined as both physical and mental. If I find you sleeping, texting, reading material not directly related to class, or unwilling to participate in class activities, you will be asked to leave the class. The attendance and participation portion of your grades will be calculated after each class.

**Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1 and 2.*

READINGS PRESENTATIONS (20%): Specific dates have been set aside for students (working in pairs) to make in-class presentations on a pre-determined topic. The presentations will include: handouts, visual aides, a general/developed outline on the presentation, and any other materials required by the instructor.

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 1 and 3.*

STANDARDS OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT ESSAY (15%): This is to be a five page (full pages) essay in which you clearly state your own criteria for evaluating a work of art and use your observations from either *The BFG* or *Cthulu: A Puppet Play* as illustrations to support your views. This is not an open letter on the quality of the productions, not is it a comparison of the two productions. This paper is intended to be an introspective look at how you, the artist/critic, view art. A more detailed look at this project will be discussed in class.

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 2 and 3.*

RESEARCH PAPER (30%): You will be required to write a scholarly research paper on a topic of your choosing (within the given parameters). You will have to meet with Mr. Knight (at a predetermined appointment time) to discuss what topic you would like to research. This paper is to be written in MLA format. It must be cited. A more detailed look at this project will be discussed in class.

**Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1 and 3.*

EXAMINATION (20%): There will be one essay-based examination in this course at the end of the semester, during the final exam week (notated on the calendar).

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 1.*

Grading:

GRADING SCALE: The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

A	90%-100%	(Exceptional Quality Work)
B	80%-89%	(Above Average Quality Work)
C	70%-79%	(Average Quality Work)
D	60%-69%	(Below Average Quality Work)
F	0%-59%	(Fails to Meet Acceptable Expectations in Quality of Work)

****Please review this grading scale carefully. Should you have any questions regarding the grading scale or structure, please feel free to ask for clarification.****

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

WORKING EMAIL REQUIREMENT: It is a course expectation that you have a working email address that you check daily. If you have not already acquired an email address through the university or otherwise, please make arrangements to do so before the next class meeting. There may be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

N/A

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

If at any time during this course you are in need of further explanation or should need to speak with me about the course or its outcomes, please see me after class and set up an appointment time.

Department of Mass Media, Communication and Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/mmct/default.asp>

Communication Skills Center

Hall of Languages #103

<http://www.tamuc.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Students enrolled in this will follow all safety procedures and policies set in place by the local, federal, and university governments.

Attendance Policy: (yes, I said it once already, so let's review)

Regular attendance is required. Attendance in one of my classes means physical as well as mental attendance to the course. If I find you sleeping, texting, reading material not directly related to class, or unwilling to participate in class activities, you will be asked to leave the class.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the undocumented use of other people's intellectual property. Students caught plagiarizing will receive an "F" for the course and will also be directed to the Dean of Students to discuss the event. There are no exceptions to this rule.

UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

ADA Statement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Class Schedule: *schedule is subject to change*

- WEEK 1: (08.25) Introduction to Course/Introduction to Dramatic Theory:
What is a good play? What defines theatre? What should it be? How does/should this relate to audience, actors, design, directing?
- WEEK 2: (09.02) Read and Discuss Personal and Read Manifestos
Have Read Selected Examples of Late 19th Century and 20th Century Manifestos:
Wilde, *The Decay of Living* (1889) and *Preface to the Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)
Yeats, *The Reform of Theatre* (1903)
Lenin, *On Education and the Arts* (1920)
OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENTS
DRAW FOR PRESENTATION TOPICS ON THIS DAY!
- WEEK 3: (09.09) Introduction to Ancient Greece and Rome
Aristophanes, *The Frogs*
Plato, *The Republic*
Distributed Readings: Literature Review Project
SIGN UP FOR RESEARCH PAPER ADVISEMENT APPOINTMENTS!

- WEEK 4: (09.16) Sophocles, **Oedipus the King**
 Aristotle, *Poetics*
 Distributed Readings: Literature Review Project
 Overview of Literature Review Project (Part II)
 MEET AT YOUR APPOINTMENT TIME TO DISCUSS RESEARCH TOPICS THIS WEEK!
- WEEK 5: (09.23) Horace, *The Art of Poetry*
 Longinus, *On the Sublime*
 Plautus, **The Twin Menaechmi**
 MEET AT YOUR APPOINTMENT TIME TO DISCUSS RESEARCH TOPICS THIS WEEK!
- WEEK 6: (09.30) Introduction to Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages
 Tertullian, *On the Spectacles*
 St. Augustine, *The City of God*
 Anonymous, *A Sermon Against Miracle Plays*
- WEEK 7: (10.07) Introduction to Renaissance Italy
 Cinthio, *Discourse on Comedies and Tragedies*
 Scaliger, **Poetics**
 Castelevetro, *On Aristotle's Poetics*
 PRESENTATION #1 _____ / _____
- WEEK 8: (10.14) Introduction to Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and Spain
 Johnson, *Dedication to Volpone*, **Volpone**, and *Timber, or Discoveries Mad upon Men and Matter*
 Lope de Vega, *The New Art of Writing Plays*
 PRESENTATION #2 _____ / _____
 RESEARCH TOPICS ARE DUE ON THIS DAY!
- WEEK 9: (10.21) Introduction to Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century France
 Scudery, *Observations on The Cid*
 Cornielle, *Apologetic Letter* and **The Cid**
 The French Academy, *The Opinions of the French Academy*
 PRESENTATION #3 _____ / _____
- WEEK 10: (10.28) Moliere, **School for Wives** and *Critique of School for Wives*
 Voltaire, *Preface to Oedipus*, *A Discourse on Tragedy*, and *Letter to Horace*
 Walpole
 Diderot, *Encyclopedia* and *On Dramatic Poetry*
- WEEK 11: (11.04) NO FORMAL CLASS
 CLASS TIME SHOULD SPENT RESEARCHING FINAL PAPERS
- WEEK 12: (11.11) Introduction to Restoration and Eighteenth Century England
 Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and *A Defense of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*
 Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*
 Congreve, *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations, etc.* and
The Way of the World

PRESENTATION #4 _____/_____

WEEK 13: (11.18) Introduction to Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Germany
Lessing, *Hamburg Dramaturgy*
Schiller, *The Stage as a Moral Institution*
Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *On Truth and Probability in Works of Art*

PRESENTATION #5 _____/_____

WEEK 14: (11.25) NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)

WEEK 15: (12.02) DUE BY 5 P.M.: RESEARCH PAPER

WEEK 16: (12.09) 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM