



**THE 340: US HISTORY OF THEATRE I
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2015
MWF 12:00-12:50 p.m.
PERFORMING ARTS #112**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M/W 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., T/R 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. or by appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

History of the Theatre, Oscar G. Brockett with Franklin Hildy (9th ed, preferable)
Trojan Women, Euripides
Tragedies (V1), Seneca
*Putnam County Spelling Bee (PDF)**
Everyman, Anonymous **(PDF)**
Second Shepherd's Play and/or *Noah and His Sons (PDF)*
 Shakespeare Play of your choice.
Eurydice, Sarah Ruhl
Calling All, Melanie Marnich **(PDF)**
 Hand-Outs Distributed in Class and/or posted online
***All PDF texts will be provided for you by your instructor**

Required Viewing:

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
 Directed by Kelsey Cooper
 Produced in the Main Stage Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
 October 20-24 at 8 p.m. and October 25 at 3 p.m.

Calling All

Directed by Lauren Simpson
 Produced in the Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
 November 17-21 at 8 p.m. and November 22 at 3 p.m.
 Tickets are available for a nominal fee from the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900 or by email at playhouseboxoffice@tamuc.edu.

Course Description:

Detailed study of the development of all phases of theatre art and drama from its origins to Elizabethan Theatre. Includes study of theatre conventions, plays, and major dramatic movements.

Prerequisite:

THE 1310–Introduction to the Theatre or permission of the instructor.

Course Introduction:

It is widely understood that theatre has its origins in myth and ritual. It is also widely argued that all Western theatrical conventions were adapted and/or appropriated by each succeeding society to the point that “there is nothing new under the sun.” The conceptual framework for this semester revolves around this notion coupled with ideas about ritual, the chorus (as witness), conventions, and culture. Of course, socio-political conditions must be studied and related to the theatres of their times. In addition, we [re]view plays and productions from the past through contemporary lenses. We will apply principles from the past to plays in the present (*Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Calling All*).

Course Ethics and Attendance: *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.* Promptness, attendance, and “attentiveness” are valued in this class. Please behave accordingly and do not disrupt the class with excessive talk or the use of cell phones or other devices. **A willingness to “give theatre history a chance” is most appreciated.** It is assumed that students will work cooperatively with one another and all work that is not “original” will be properly credited. See the TAMUC *Student’s Guide Handbook* for more information on plagiarism. This is a serious offense that can result in separation from the university. **EVEN if not specifically noted on instructions or prompts for each assignment, plagiarism policies will be strictly enforced.**

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

1. Demonstrate understanding of theatrical forms and styles of production across cultures and centuries.
2. Apply theories and terminology to discussions on theatre
3. Develop skills necessary to think and write critically and clearly about theatre history and theatre practices.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

In-Class Exercises (Best 20 @ 1.5 points each = 30 pts. total): As stated above, attendance does not constitute participation. We will conduct in-class exercises almost every day. These exercises are used to focus your attention on the material offered in the course and are hands-on, interactive methods to explore the material. You **MUST** be present and you **MUST** participate to receive credit.

Précise Assignments (4 @ 5 pts. Each = 20 pts. total): Greek, Roman, Medieval, Elizabethan. For the purposes of this class, a **precise** is a **chapter summary** and covers the major points made in the chapter as they *relate to what we have covered in class* and to theatre across time and culture as a whole. These should be around 3-4 pages in length. If these are done well, they can be your study guide for tests and for further exploration of the material. You may use bullet points, write in prose, make an outline, or a combination. We will go over more specific guidelines for writing a precise in class.

Tests (3 including the Final @ 10 pts. Each = 30 pts. total)

Application Papers (2 @ 10 pts. = 20 pts. total): Students are required to attend performances of both Playhouse productions (clear your schedules NOW!). Students will submit papers that apply concepts explored in class to contemporary productions. Papers should be approx. 3-4 pages, typed, 12 pt. font (or whatever your default font/size is), well-organized (complete sentences, full paragraphs). I *will* consider spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in the grading. (See grading rubric in your syllabus). Papers are to be submitted **via email**. **I will not accept hard copies of your papers.**

Grading Breakdown:

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

In-Class Exercises	30 pts.	90-100 =	A
Precise	20 pts.	80-89=	B
Tests	30 pts.	70-79=	C
Papers	20 pts.	60-69=	D
		59 and below=	F
Total	100 pts.		

A grade of "A" will not be assigned to any individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments. (Précises, Final, Attendance at Departmental Productions) regardless of average.

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 WILL be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so. Additionally, I will provide electronic copies of the plays and any supplemental reading through eCollege and/or email.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a thumb drive, etc. Do not depend on your paper staying on the hard drive of any university computer, as it will be deleted, altered, or worse – turned in by someone else as their work! Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. It is not an imposition. Communicate, communicate, communicate! If something is occurring that is presenting you with difficulties in this class, let me know. I cannot help you if I don't know what is going on. The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**. I check it almost constantly. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Student Resources:

Department of Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/mmct/default.asp>

Communication Skills Center

Hall of Languages #103

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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Course Specific Procedures:**Attendance Policy:**

You may accumulate three (3) absences before any penalty occurs. **There are no additional absences allowed without penalty. Plan accordingly. There is no such thing as an “excused” absence.** Of course, if you have a prolonged illness or injury, or if a family emergency arises, speak with your instructor ASAP.

Grades will be dropped in ½ letter grade increments for every two class absences beyond three. (Example: Someone with an “A” average who misses class five times will be in the “A-” range; a seventh absence moves that student down into the “B+” range and so on...)

Late Arrivals:

To further foster a high level of commitment—and because the work we will be doing this semester will involve intensive focus—the class will adopt the following late entry policy. Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class and indicative of a less than disciplined/committed student. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. The class will begin promptly at 12 p.m.! If you arrive after 12:10 p.m., please do not enter the classroom (you will be marked absent regardless). If you arrive within the ten minute grace period, please do so discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. *It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain.* Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. **Two late arrivals (within the ten-minute grace period) or early departures (or any combination of the two) may be counted as one absence in the class.**

Cell Phones and Laptops:

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom. Please do not check messages or engage in text messaging during class. This is disruptive to the flow of the course. Further, you are welcome to take class notes on a laptop or other electronic device. However, these devices should only be used for taking notes over the current discussions/activities – and you must type very quietly and turn off all sound so as not to disturb other class members. If I suspect that laptops are being used for other purposes, I will ban them from the classroom.

Late Work:

I do not accept late work.

Extra Credit:

The instructor reserves the right to offer extra-credit to all students, and to gauge its application appropriately and uniformly for all.

Incompletes:

Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will NOT be given for a final grade in this course. Per University policy, students who **because of circumstances beyond their control** are unable to attend classes will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of X (incomplete) in all courses in which they were **maintaining passing grades at the time of the request** for an incomplete.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:**Academic Dishonesty:**

This course adheres strictly to the college's guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the *Student's Guide Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the Head of the Department. (*You should be aware that this could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester.*)

Students with a Disability:

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 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

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

Please note: Students use different editions of the Brockett text—and that’s fine—but it is **your responsibility to check that the pages you are reading correspond with the subjects covered** on the dates due. (It is not possible to list the specific page numbers on the syllabus with so many versions of the books in use.)

Readings and assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below. There are no “make-ups” for IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES.

UNIT ONE: Greek & Roman Theatre

M Aug 31 Intro to Course

W Sept 2 What is Theatre? and Storytelling, Myth, Ritual

Thursday, Sept. 3rd- Last day to ADD a class without instructor permission

F Sept. 4 Ritual, etc., cont.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #1- Ritual

M Sept. 7 **LABOR DAY – NO CLASSES**

Monday, September 7- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 80% REFUND

W Sept. 9 Background on Greek Staging Conventions: Parts of the Stage (and Evidence), Anonymity of the skéne

IN-CLASS ACTIVITY # 2- Anonymity of the skéne

F Sept. 11 Background on Greek Staging Conventions: Parts of the Play; 5th C Acting, 3-Actor Rule

M Sept. 14 **Reading:** Brockett & Hildy, GREEK

(Chapter 2 most recent edition)

Greek Staging, cont.

Monday, September 14- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 70% REFUND

- W Sept. 16 Greek Staging, cont.
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY # 3-Discerning what’s important in the Chapter;
 Preparing to write the précise
 Wednesday, September 16- CENSUS DAY
 LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH REFUND
- F Sept. 18 Aristotle: The Tragic Hero
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #4- Contemporary Examples of the Tragic Hero
- M. Sept. 21 **Reading:** Euripides’ *Trojan Women*
 Review Sheet for TEST #1 distributed.
 Functions of the Chorus
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #5- Apply definition of Tragic Hero and Functions of
 the Chorus to *Trojan Women*
Monday, September 21- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 50% REFUND
- W. Sept. 23 **Précise # 1 Greek Theatre DUE!**
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #6- Staging *Trojan Women*; Applying the conventions
 (internal stage directions in the play, 3-Actor, Rule, etc.)
- F. Sept. 25 **Reading:** Brockett & Hildy, HELLENISTIC, ROMAN (note: only read
 through “The Decline of the Theatre in Rome”)
 Roman – Culture, Politics, and the Theatre
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #7 – Appropriation through the Ages
- M. Sept. 28 **Reading:** Seneca’s *Trojan Women*
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #8 – Comparing the cultures through *Trojan*
Women
Monday, September 28- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 25% REFUND
- W. Sept. 30 *Trojan Women*, cont.
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #9 – Chorus as Witness

F Oct. 2 **Précise # 2 Hellenistic & Roman Theatre DUE IN CLASS!**
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #10 - Review

M Oct. 5 TEST #1- In-Class

TEST #1 will be a traditional in-class test, ½ objective and ½ essay. You will be tested on concepts and vocabulary included on the Review Sheet.

UNIT TWO: The Medieval and Elizabethan Stages

W Oct. 7 **Reading:** EUROPEAN THEATRE IN THE MIDDLE AGES
 Medieval Stage Conventions
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #11- Ritual or Theatre: *Quem Quaeritis*

F Oct. 9 **Reading:** *The Second Shepherd's Play* and/or *Noah and His Sons*
 Medieval Stage Conventions, cont.
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #12 –Recognizing Adaptation and Appropriation in Medieval Theatre

M. Oct. 12 **Précise # 3 Medieval Theatre DUE!**
Reading: *Everyman*
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #13 - *Everyman*, Social Good, and Conventions

W. Oct. 14 Preview ...*Spelling Bee*; Discuss the American Musical
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #14- The Musical and clips

F. Oct. 16 **Reading:**...*Spelling Bee* and information on ...*Spelling Bee*
 Discuss ...*Spelling Bee*; Distribute Prompts for papers
 The Musical, cont.

M. Oct. 19 Wrap up ...*Spelling Bee*
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #15 - Functions of the Chorus/Ensemble as Chorus

DoT Production ...*Spelling Bee* October 20-25

- W. Oct. 21 **Reading:** Brockett & Hildy, "English Theatre to 1642"
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #16 - Internal Stage Directions, Exits and Entrances, etc.
- F. Oct. 23 Unrehearsed Shakespeare
- M. Oct. 26 **Précise # 4 English Theatre to 1642 DUE!**
 Discuss ...*Spelling Bee* (production)
- W. Oct. 28 **Reading:** Shakespeare Play of your choice; Bring script to class!
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #17 - Scene Breakdown and Application of Conventions; Episodic Play Structure
- F. Oct. 30 ...*Spelling Bee* Papers DUE **via email!**
 Scene Breakdown and Application of Conventions; Episodic Play Structure, cont.
- M. Nov. 2 Elizabethan Staging Conventions, cont.
 Similarities to Greek? Differences?
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #18 - Elizabethan Staging; Internal Stage Directions: How do we know where we are?
- W. Nov. 4 Theatre Architecture
- Thursday, Nov. 5 - LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH Q GRADE**
- F. Nov. 6 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #19** – Review Elizabethan; Organizing for Take-Home Prompt for TEST #2 (Take-Home on Elizabethan Staging) distributed.

TEST #2 will be a take-home essay. Follow the prompt! Test #2 will be cumulative in that you will write about staging conventions we have studied thus far as they apply to the plays read: (Greek, Roman and *Trojan Women*; *Putnam County*; Medieval and *Everyman*, *Second Shepherd's Play/Noah and His Sons*; Elizabethan and the Shakespeare play of your choice.)

M. Nov. 9 **Test 2 DUE!**
 Discuss test

UNIT THREE: Classic Conventions in Modern Plays

W. Nov. 11 **Reading:** *Calling All* and material posted
 Discuss *Calling All*

F. Nov. 13 Distribute Prompt for *Calling All* paper
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #20 – Recognizing Adapted and Appropriated Conventions in *Calling All*

M. Nov. 16 Wrap up *Calling All*

DoT Production *Calling All* November 17-22

W Nov. 18 **Reading:** *Eurydice*
 Discuss *Eurydice*
 Review Chorus, Staging Conventions, Ritual, and Change

F Nov. 20 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #21** – Ritual, Functions of the Chorus, and Structure

M Nov. 23 Discuss *Calling All* production

W & F Nov. 25 – 27 **NO CLASS-HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!**

M Nov. 30 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #22** – Recognizing Adapted and Appropriated Conventions in *Eurydice*

W Dec. 1 *Calling All* Papers DUE **via email!**
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #23 – Chorus as Witness in *Eurydice*

F Dec. 3 Wrap-up *Eurydice*

Sunday, Dec. 6- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW

M Dec. 7 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #24** - Wrap-Up & Review

W Dec. 9 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #25** - Wrap-Up & Review

F Dec. 11 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #26**- Wrap-Up & Review

The Final Exam Period for this class is scheduled for Friday, December 18th from 8-10 a.m.

The Final Exam for this class is experiential. It will be an activity in which you apply the concepts we have explored through this semester, including ritual, functions of the chorus, adaptation/appropriation, and other concepts. It should be fun!

OFFICIAL RUBRIC -
Grading of Performance Response Essays

Format and Details 3 pts.

- Does the author have a clear introductory paragraph that expresses the goal(s) of the overall paper (See prompt.)?
- Does the opening sentence draw the reader in?
- Does the author clearly state a thesis and go on to support it?
- Does the author identify specific examples from the script or production?
- Does the author stay clearly in the past tense?
- Did the author proofread carefully for proper grammar and misspelled words?
- Is paragraphing appropriate (parallel to changing ideas)?
- Is there a concluding paragraph?

Content 3 pts.

- Does the author clearly discuss topic(s) outlined in the prompt?
- Are there specific examples from the text/performance to support the argument?
- Is there unnecessary information (such as recounting the plot versus using plot points to support argument)?
- Is the information in the performance response essay accurate?
- Does the author balance their opinion/interpretation with concrete examples from the text/performance?
- Is the author concentrating on what was written or presented as opposed to what was missing or what they preferred to see?

Style and Flow 3 pts.

- Does the paper flow smoothly?
- Is there a clear and logical organization to the paper?
- Does the author make clean, logical transitions from idea to idea?
- Does the author use theatrical terms appropriately?
- Does the author clearly write for an appropriate audience (instructor and peers)?

1 “free floating point” to be used as + or – at the instructor’s discretion.

10= A 9=A- 8= B+ 7= B 6= B- 5= C+ 4= C 3= C- 2= D+ 1= D

Student Contract for THE 340, Fall 2015

I have read the Course Syllabus for THE 340 and understand its content including the attendance policy, productions required, academic honesty section, and classroom behavior requirements (including use of cell phones).

NAME (Signature)

Date