



THE 597: 001- Visual Subculture in Dramatic Literature
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2016
Wednesday 4:30 p.m. - 7:10 p.m.
PAC #112

Instructor: Casey Watkins, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #104
Office Hours: M/W 10-11am T/Th 10-12 or by appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks:

Subcultural Theory: Traditions and Concepts by J. Patrick Williams

Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical by James Rado, Gerome Ragni and Galt MacDermot

Zoot Suit by Luis Valdez

La Cage Aux Folles by Harvey Fierstein and Jerry Herman

Geek! by Crystal Skillman

Recommended Texts:

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th ed.

Course Description:

A course that focuses on how subcultures are presented on the theatrical stage, the costuming and culture of those subcultures, and the impact they have had on society, culture, identity and the arts.

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

1. Recognize, identify, and differentiate dramatic critical/theoretical ideas.
2. Demonstrate appropriate interpretation of standard critical/theoretical literature utilizing a vocabulary specific to material covered in the course.
3. Apply critical theory with assurance and to write persuasive, theoretically grounded analyses that add to critical conversation.
4. Synthesize academic research into cohesive scholarly writing and oral presentation.

Course Objectives:

To introduce students to various subcultures and how those subcultures have been presented on stage. To gain a more complete understanding of past subcultural critical theory and to grasp the ramifications of its interpretation and application to theatre and theatrical design.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Talking Points (10 @ 3pts = 30 pts.): Each student will complete ten lucid and cogent talking points for each class meeting. These can be in whatever format you choose (bullet points usually work best) but should be questions and/or comments (anything that can assist with a class discussion) that struck you while reading.

Application Papers (4@ 6 pts. = 24 pts. total): Students will submit 5 *short* papers that apply the theoretical underpinnings of our readings to the plays *Hair*, *Zoot Suit*, *La Cage Aux Folles and Geek!*. You will need to focus on how the ideas set forth in the critical/theoretical texts work (or do not work) as applied to the play. Papers should "cut to the chase," focus on/explore a single aspect of the texts/plays, and should cite both actions and lines from the plays and theoretical/critical texts. Papers should be approx. **2-3 pages**, typed, double spaced, 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. Papers are to be submitted **via email**. I will not accept hard copies of your papers. However, students will need to have access to their papers for in-class discussions.

Abstract (10 pts): Students will submit a short (250-300 word) abstract that summarizes their paper topic and the critical lens(es) they will use. We will discuss how to write an abstract in class.

Rough Draft (15 pts): Students must turn in a rough draft of their paper. Rough drafts need not have formal "scholarly apparatus" as in proper formatting of Endnotes and Works Cited, **but be forewarned**. These are not to be slap-dash efforts. These must be coherent, fully formed papers, 12-15 pages in length. They must be well-organized and draw a conclusion. You have to give me a paper that is ready for editorial comments, not stream-of-consciousness. **PLAN AHEAD.**

Polished Paper (21 pts): Each student will turn in a conference length paper (10-15 pages) analyzing a particular performance (**note:** performance does not necessarily denote "traditional" theater) or play, applying a theoretical lens(es)/concepts covered in class. Papers must "cut to the chase" and demonstrate what, using the material we have studied, you can add to critical conversation. **DO NOT** spend a lot of time introducing or explaining your critical lens. In fact, **TRY** not to even name it. Best papers will incorporate contemporary critical theory, give the critical history of the performance/play, and provide an original argument on this topic. This project is to familiarize students with the research process and to prepare them for future, more extensive research.

During the final exam period, students will present part (**12-15 minutes**) of the final draft of their research papers. This means you will need to cut your paper down to c. 7-8 pages/talk us through your paper in a "scholarly" fashion. We will approach this final presentation in the manner of an academic scholarly panel.

Grading:

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

90-100 =	A
80-89=	B
70-79=	C
60-69=	D
59 and below=	F

Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, 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 supplemental reading through email.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a disc or 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. If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. 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**. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Email Policy:

Before sending me an email with a general course-specific question, **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check eCollege/ask a classmate first**. If your question has already been addressed in one of those places, then you will have the answer you need. If your question does not exist, please feel free to email me.

When emailing me: Please make your emails clear and concise, written with proper grammar in order to assure my earliest attention. In addition, please follow some common “email etiquette” procedures in order to keep our electronic communication effective and efficient. Specifically:

- Write a relevant subject line (e.g., “Dramatic Theory question,” or “THE 511 meeting request”)
- Address me by name or some salutation (ie: "Dear Professor Watkins" or "Hi Casey" or just "Casey")
- Bonus: "meaningless niceties" are never a bad idea!
- Concisely state what it is you need. If it can't be communicated in a concise manner, perhaps request an appointment. If requesting an appointment, give me times that you are available **in the initial email!!!** My office hours are posted above.
- Use a "sign-off" ("Thank you" is always good) and **sign your name**.

Not following these guidelines potentially puts you at the bottom of my list for response time.

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>

TAMUC Counseling Center

Student Services Building Room 204

Phone: 903-886-5145

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory and grades will be lowered ½ letter grade per absence. That being said, I do understand that there are unavoidable, *emergency* situations in life. You are allowed one *emergency* absence in this course with no attendance grading penalty (although you are still responsible for all work during said absences).

THIS IS A GRADUATE LEVEL CLASS. Which means that participation is mandatory. It will be expected of you to show up prepared for class and participate in the discussions, as this is a discussion based class. Bring something to the table!

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 artist. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. If you are late for class, your participation grade will reflect this. The class will begin promptly at 4:30 p.m.! If you arrive after 4:40 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. An early departure will significantly reduce your participation grade as well. **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:

As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

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 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.*)

Campus Concealed Carry:

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to

((<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer).

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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@tamuc.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

Reading and Assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below.

INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SCHEDULE AS NECESSARY

WEEK ONE

Jan 18 Introduction to course & assignments
 Tips for reading the *Poetics* & preparing "Talking Points"
Reading: Williams, chapters 1,2 & 5, *Hair*

WEEK TWO

Jan 25 **TETA-NO CLASS**
Reading: Cobley and Jansz, *Semiotics, A Graphic Guide*. Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*. Davis, *Do Clothes Speak? What Makes Them Fashion? & Anti-Fashion, The Vissitudes of Negation*

WEEK THREE

JAN 30- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 70% REFUND

Feb 1 **Reading:** See above
Talking Points #1 due
Discuss

WEEK FOUR

FEB 6- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 50% REFUND

Feb 8 **Application Paper #1** (*Hair, Semiotics etc*); discuss
Reading: *Zoot Suit*, Williams chapters 3, 4 and 6.
Talking Points #2 due
Discuss

WEEK FIVE

Monday, September 26- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH 25% REFUND

Feb 15 **Reading:** Cummings, *Pachucas and Pachucos in Tuscon*. *Zoot Suit Riots: Sailors vs. pachucos a turning point for Latino culture in California*. Daniels, *Los Angeles Zoot: Race "Riot," The Pachuco, and Black Music Culture*

Talking Points #3 due
Discuss

WEEK SIX

Feb 22 **Reading:** Haenfler, *Hip-Hop- "Doing" Gender and Race in Subcultures*, Holloman, *Clothing Symbolism in African American Greek Letter Organizations*. Questlove, *When the People Cheer: How Hip-hop Failed Black America*.
Talking Points #4 due
Discuss

WEEK SEVEN

DoT Production *One Flea Spare*

Mar 1 **NO CLASS- SETC**

WEEK EIGHT

Mar 8 **TBD**

WEEK NINE

Mar 15 **NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**

WEEK TEN

Thursday, Nov. 3 - LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH Q GRADE

Mar 22 **Abstracts for papers due!** Bring copies to class to distribute and share aloud.
Application Paper #2 (*Zoot Suit* etc); discuss
Reading: *La Cage Aux Folles*, Dallimore, *Post/modern: On the Gay Sensibility, or the Pervert's Revenge on Authenticity*. Senelick, *Putting on the Drag & Imp(ersonator) of the Perverse*.
Talking Points #5 due; discuss

WEEK ELEVEN

Mar 29 **Reading:** Butler, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution* Senelick, *Queens of Clubs, Alternatives & Sex, Drags and Rock 'n' Roll*
Talking Points #6 due, *La Cage* etc
Discuss

WEEK TWELVE

DoT Production *The Dispute* November 15-20

- Apr 5 **Application Paper # 3 Due** (La Cage and Sexuality and Gender etc)
Reading: *Geek!*, Brownie and Graydon, *Performance in Combat*, *The Costume as Biography*, *Performing Ordinarity*, *Superheroes and the Fashion of Being Unfashionable*, Naverson, *The (Super) Hero's Masquerade*.
Talking Points #7 due Gender etc
Discuss

WEEK THIRTEEN

- Apr 12 **Rough Drafts of papers due via email!**
Reading: Kawamura, *Akihabara and Ikebukuro: Playing with Costume as Entertainment*. Brownie and Graydon, *Superhero Cosplay*. Lamerichs, *Stranger than Fiction: Fan Identity in Cosplay*
Talking Points #8 due
Discuss

WEEK FOURTEEN

Sunday, Nov 27 - LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW

- Apr 19 **Reading:** Hebdidge, *From Culture to Hegemony and Subculture: The Unnatural Break*, *Style as Intentional Communication*
Talking Points #9 due
Discuss

WEEK FIFTEEN

- Apr 26 **Reading:** TBD
Talking Points #10 due
Discuss

WEEK SIXTEEN

May 3

Discuss Final

Discuss papers (bring copies of rough drafts to class!)

Wrap-up & Review

Final: Wednesday May 10th @ 1:15-3:15