



**THE 511 – DRAMATIC THEORY COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2018  
On Line-Ecollege**

**Instructor: Dr. Michael D. Coon, Adjunct Professor of Theatre**

**Office Location: On Line**

**Office Phone: 864 554-7927 (leave msg.)**

**University Email Address: Michael.Coon@tamuc.edu**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Required Textbook:**

***Theatre Theory Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel.*** Ed: Daniel Gerould. Available on Amazon for approximately \$20.00.

**Suggested Textbook:**

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

**Required Play Scripts:**

1. Aristophanes, ***The Frogs***
2. Sophocles, ***Oedipus the King***
3. Plautus, ***The Twin Menaechmi*** (also translated as *The Twins* or *Menaechmi*)
4. Kalidasa, ***Shakuntala*** & Zeami (*Kanze Motrokiyo*), ***Takasago***
5. Bishop Ethelwold, ***Quem Quertitus***, *Unknown: St Nicholas and the Virgins*
6. Machiavelli, ***La Mondragola (The Mandrake)***
7. Cornielle, ***The Cid*** (also known as *Le Cid*)
8. Johnson, ***Volpone***
9. Moliere, ***School for Wives***
10. Congreve, ***The Way of the World***

**(Strongly) Recommended Text:**

***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Required Viewing:**

You cannot successfully form a personal standard of aesthetic judgment in a vacuum. You are **required** to attend one post-secondary educational or professional theatre production at some time during the course of this semester (documentation of what, where, and when is required via a scanned playbill and ticket stub). Please share with your instructor and classmates any published listing of theatre in your area on the Discussion Board. Perhaps you can arrange to meet with fellow classmates in your region. That attendance will be the basis for forming your **Standards of Aesthetic Judgment Essay**.

***\*Note: Please understand that viewing a performance is an absolute requirement of the course and integral to completing assignments and gaining appropriate participation credit. Clear your schedule now! If you cannot attend one of these performances, for whatever reason, drop this class and re-enroll during a semester when your schedule will permit you to meet the course requirements.***

### **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 (with Valid Student ID) and Children under 18 - \$3.00; Senior Citizens (ages 60+) - \$8.00; Adults - \$10.00

### **Course Description:**

This course offers studies of the major documents in the evolution of dramatic theory, from classical foundations through the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>
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### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments (Tentative):**

**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION (250 points):** Course structure supports a “community of learners.” In order to contribute to the community, you must come to our electronic classroom (not under the influence of... anything!), prepared, and ready to engage in discussions of assigned readings or engagement in determined activities, etc. Be aware that the “participation” aspect of your grade requires more than simply responding with minimal effort in discussion. I remind you this is a Master’s Level Course and I have the expectation of Master’s Level thinking. I will not tolerate haphazard, meaningless comments on the work at hand.

As graduate students, you should realize the importance of acquiring skill in voicing your opinions during discussion in positive and respectful ways. Realize that sometimes you will have to agree to disagree with other members of the class. As I know that you all can do: avoid

“knee-jerk reactions” and frame your comments respectfully, with scholarly intelligence, and as a point of academic discourse. ***Disrespect, rudeness, or offensive language of any kind has no place in our classroom space.*** *If such behavior occurs (toward either another student or the instructor), I will regard the offending student as absent, with no credit for that day’s discussion.*

***\*Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1 and 2.***

**READINGS PRESENTATIONS (2 at 150 points each):** Over the course of the semester, I assign you to lead the class discussion in two separate weeks with via documented research, PowerPoint, Prezi or You Tube, and discussion points posted in the discussion section of the class. You will be responsible for moderating discussion for that week. Presentations will offer overviews of the theorists/readings/playwrights/plays in question and lead discussion on these days of class. Each of these presentations will require outside scholarly research. You should plan your presentations very carefully to cover all of the assigned theorist-reading-playwright-play overviews pertaining to the week in question. For your assigned weeks, you must post your mediated (PowerPoint-Prezi) presentation to the discussion board along with pertinent discussion questions to elicit meaningful, critical responses from classmates.

Your presentations must provide:

- *professionally relevant* biographical sketches of the theorists or playwrights in question;
- the theorists’/playwrights’ main contributions to dramatic theory and/or the dramatic cannon (if focusing a play, please also contextualize the play);
- outlines highlighting the major points/concepts in the assigned theoretical readings.

You will be graded on the content of your presentation/handout, the structure/construction of your presentation/handout, ability to moderate class discussion effectively, ability to field your peers’ questions, and the overall professionalism/preparedness exhibited.

***\*Measures Course Learning Outcome 1 and 3.***

**STANDARDS OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT ESSAY (100 points):** This is a five-page statement of your personal criteria for evaluating a work of art and use your observations from whatever extracurricular play you see (**required**) as illustrations to support your views. This is not merely a discussion of art, nor is it a description of what a critic should do. **Rather it is to be your personal statement of how you judge a work of art to be superior to another. My primary interest is in the depth and clarity of your thought.**

***\*Measures Course Learning Outcome 2 and 3.***

**LITERATURE REVIEW PAPER (250 points):** You are required to write a scholarly Literature Review of approximately ten pages in length based on a primary Research Question that you develop. The Research Question and resulting Literature Review are based on a topic of your own selection that is informed by theoretical and/or historical works in the fields of theatre and/or performance. Your paper should be comprised of original, focused research on a selected topic. As such, you are strongly encouraged to submit a Literature Review based on research that could inform your Master’s thesis or 595 paper. Your paper should use acceptable quality writing practices, and you should utilize at least ten scholarly sources. The paper should be written in a standard scholarly form using the style of MLA. You are also required to include an appropriate Works Cited in accordance with MLA. You will be required to submit two,

completed drafts of your Literature Review – one for peer evaluation and then a revised paper for final instructor evaluation. Your final Literature Review will be graded on both content and construction. Please use your best writing skills. We will have additional in-depth discussions about the requirements of this assignment in class at a later date.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1 and 3.*

**EXAMINATION (100 points):** There will be one essay-based examination in this course at the end of the semester based on the structure of TAMU-C's Masters Comprehensive Examinations. I will provide you with more parameters for this examination later in the class.

*\*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	900-1000 points	(Exceptional Quality Work)
B	800-899 points	(Above Average Quality Work)
C	700-799 points	(Average Quality Work)
D	600-699 points	(Below Average Quality Work)
F	0-599 points	(Fails to Meet Acceptable Expectations in Quality of Work)

<b>TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS</b>
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**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.

**SAVING OF ASSIGNMENTS:** Occasionally, rarely, a paper or presentation gets 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 may be deleted, altered, or worse yet, someone else submits the paper as his or her work! **Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your graded and originally developed assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.**

<b>COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT</b>
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**Contacting Dr. Kennedy:**

I check into the classroom daily except for Sundays, which I reserve for my family. That means that it is possible for a message from you to go over 24 hours without a response, depending on when you post it and when I sign in again. If something is occurring that is presenting you with difficulties with this class, let me know. Do not be intimidated. I am here to assist you in success and will do my best to help you achieve it. Talk to me! Again, the easiest and most reliable way to contact me is via the course shell messaging system.

**Student Resources:**

**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>

<b>COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES</b>
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**Course Specific Procedures:**

**ATTENDANCE:** Frankly, as graduate students, I do not expect to need to lecture you on attendance. However, I measure attendance in an online class by your participation in the discussion boards. I expect you to meet the minimum requirements of numbers and length of postings for discussion topics. I consider not meeting 50% of the minimum for number and length absent. If, for any reason, you have more than one absence during the semester, this will have a substantial impact on your overall course grade. I expect all reading material and/or assignments for a given date prior to class time to be in place as per due dates. The totality of your knowledge of reading materials is the basis for your grade received for any discussion assignment. I will permit one *emergency* absence in this course. Following a second absence,

the student will receive a deduction of five points from his/her final grade. With the third absence, the student will receive **another** five-point deduction from his/her final grade; *due to the discussion-based nature of this course, upon the fourth absence the student will either be administratively dropped from or receive an automatic F in the course (depending on the point in the semester).*

\*For more information on the University attendance policy please go to the following link:  
<http://www7.tamuc.edu/registrar/attendance.asp>

**LATE ARRIVALS:** This section is included as “boiler plate” material for all syllabi in the system. Once an assignment or discussion is closed, you will not be able to access the material for amendment or addition. Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class. 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 4:00 p.m.! If you arrive after 4:10 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. Arrival within the grace period constitutes a “late arrival.” 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.*

During each class period, you will receive a ten-minute break. You are expected to be back in the classroom within ten minutes (without having to be told to come back). We are all adults, and we can all remain aware of the time, arriving back into the classroom within ten minutes. Otherwise, you will be marked as a “late arrival,” and the same policies outlined above for late arrivals at the beginning of class apply.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** I will not accept drafts or assignments after the announced due date unless you have discussed the situation with me in advance and we have agreed on arrangements for submission. Presentations not given during the assigned class sessions will not count toward the final grade. Under normal circumstances, being absent on the date of an assigned presentation will result in a grade of zero for the assignment.

**ADAPTATION OF ASSIGNMENTS:** Due to the fluid nature of this class, some assignments may need to be adapted. I will announce all changes prior to implementation.

**INCOMPLETES:** Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will not be given as a final grade in this course.

**CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS:** This section is included as “boiler plate” material for all syllabi in the system. 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 computer. However, laptops should only be used for taking notes over the current discussions. If I suspect that laptops are being used for other purposes, I will ban them from the classroom.

**WRITTEN WORK:** I require all written work be submitted in Modern Language Association (MLA) format, including one-inch margins on all sides, in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced (please remember that you *must* go into “Page Layout” in Word and bring the spacing in the “After” field down to zero). Any modification to that requirement must be approved in

advance and only for a specifically justified reason. Please only write on the front of each page, include your name on each page that you submit.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** There is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

**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.

*Note: All of your work must be new and created for this class during this semester; otherwise, you can be accused of plagiarizing yourself – which falls under the category of academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to be sure 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, who will in turn decide the appropriate course of action. Remember: Citing=good; Not Citing=very bad! Make sure that you understand the intricacies of citations, formatting, etc., so that you avoid unintentional plagiarism at all costs. (Please be aware that an instance of academic dishonesty could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester or worse – suspension from the program.)*

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** 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  
James G. Gee Library  
Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

*\*Note: Please be aware that under no circumstances can I implement any disability accommodations without official documentation from the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services at Texas A&M University - Commerce.*

**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 *Student's Guide Handbook*, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.)

**Tentative Schedule:**

**Subject to change at the discretion of the instructor – many adjustments in content and/or scheduling may take place because of the final number of students enrolled in the course.**

**Week One (1) (Week beginning Aug 27)**

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? Requires a self-history of your time in theatre and what you value; how you see the art; and what makes for good theatre.

Read and Discuss Personal and Read Manifestos

Have Read Selected Examples of Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and 20<sup>th</sup> 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)

**Week Two (2) (Week beginning Sept 3)**

Introduction to Ancient Greece and Rome

- Aristophanes, *The Frogs*
- Plato, *The Republic*

**Week Three (3) (Week beginning Sept 10)**

- Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*
- Aristotle, *Poetics*

**Week Four (4) (Week beginning Sept 17)**

- Plautus, *The Twin Menaechmi*
- Horace, *The Art of Poetry*
- Longinus, *On the Sublime*

**Week Five (5) (Week beginning Sept 24)**

**Open discussion in private messages with professor regarding Individual Research Question Project.**

**Week Six (6) (Week beginning Oct 1)**

Introduction to Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages

- Bishop Ethelwold *Quem Queritus*
- Unknown **St. Nicholas and the Virgins**
- Tertullian, *On the Spectacles*
- St. Augustine, *The City of God*
- Anonymous, *A Sermon Against Miracle Plays*

**Week Seven (7) (Week beginning Oct 8)**

Introduction to Eastern Theatre

- Kalidasa **Shakuntala**
- Zeami. **Takasago**
- Bharata, *Natyasastra*
- Zeami, *On the Art of the No(h) Drama*



**Week Eight (8)** (Week beginning Oct 15)

Introduction to Renaissance Italy

- Nicolo Machiavelli ***La Mondragola*** (The Mandrake)
- Cinthio, Discourse on Comedies and Tragedies
- Scaliger, *Poetics*
- Castlevetro, On Aristotle's Poetics

**Week Nine (9)** (Week beginning Oct 22)

Introduction to Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and Spain

- Johnson, **Volpone**
- Johnson, *Dedication to Volpone* and *Timber, or Discoveries Mad upon Men and Matter*
- Lope de Vega *The New Art of Writing Plays*
- **RESEARCH QUESTION SUBJECT DUE October 22, 2016**

**Week Ten (10)** (Week beginning Oct 29)

Introduction to Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century France

- Corneille ***The Cid***
- Scudery, Observations on The Cid
- Corneille, Apologetic Letter on Le Cid
- The French Academy, The Opinions of the French Academy

**Week Eleven (11)** Week beginning Nov 5)

- 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*

**Week Twelve (12)** (Week beginning Nov 12)

**Update professor via course message system with regarding Individual Research Question Project**

**Week Thirteen (13)** Week beginning Nov 19)

Introduction to Restoration and Eighteenth Century England

- Congreve, ***The Way of the World***.
- Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and *A Defence 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.

**Week Fourteen (14)** (Week beginning Nov 26)

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

**Week Fifteen (15)** (Week beginning Dec 3)

FINAL EXAMINATION – Details TBA

**Week Sixteen (16)** (Week beginning Dec 10)

**LITERATURE REVIEW PAPER DUE** Final date TBA

**Links to the Playscripts by week due**

- Week 2: [https://archive.org/stream/frogsofaristopha00arisrich/frogsofaristopha00arisrich\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/frogsofaristopha00arisrich/frogsofaristopha00arisrich_djvu.txt) **The Frogs**, Aristophanes
- Week 3: [http://abs.kafkas.edu.tr/upload/225/Oedipus\\_the\\_King\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://abs.kafkas.edu.tr/upload/225/Oedipus_the_King_Full_Text.pdf) **Oedipus the King**, Sophocles
- Week 4: [http://www.chlt.org/sandbox/perseus/men\\_eng/page.2.a.php](http://www.chlt.org/sandbox/perseus/men_eng/page.2.a.php) **The Twin Menaechmi**, Plautus
- Week 6: <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/miracle-of-the-virgins/> **St. Nicholas and the Virgins**, Unknown -  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0458063X.1996.10392366?journalCode=ultq20>  
**Quem Queritus**, Bishop Ethelwold
- Week 7: [http://lf-oll.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/1261/0307\\_Bk.pdf](http://lf-oll.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/1261/0307_Bk.pdf) **Shakuntala**, Kalidasa -  
<http://jti.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/noh/TyITaka.html> Takasago
- Week 8: [http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century\\_Florence\\_files/Mandragola\\_Translation.pdf](http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century_Florence_files/Mandragola_Translation.pdf) **La Mandragola** (The Mandrake), Machiavelli
- Week 9: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4039/4039-h/4039-h.htm> **Volpone**, Johnson
- Week 10 : <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14954/14954-h/14954-h.htm> **Le Cid**, Corneille
- Week 11: <http://www.searchengine.org.uk/ebooks/85/18.pdf> **School for Wives**, Moliere
- Week 13: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1292/1292-h/1292-h.htm> **The Way of the World**, Congreve