



**THE 1310.04E - Introduction to Theatre
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2019**

CRN: 83668

Instructor: Christine Van Pay

Office Hours: by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook(s):

History of Theatre by Neil Grant (ISBN: 978-0600596325)

Dead Man's Cellphone by Sarah Ruhl (ISBN: 978-1559363259)

Course Description:

The purpose of Introduction to Theatre is to familiarize students with the basic elements of plays and productions and to help students develop the analytical skills to think, speak and write critically about the theatre.

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 and its many forms 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) Become a more informed, critical audience member 2) Gain a basic understanding of the elements of dramatic structure and of theatrical production 3) Learn to evaluate the artistic quality of a script and a performance 4) Gain appreciation of how plays reflect the people and cultures that produce them 5) Gain understanding of the relationship of theatre to the other arts and humanities

I. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

First Assignment Paper: Brownie points

Reading/Lecture Quizzes: 300 points (6 quizzes @ 50 points each)

Dead Man's Cellphone Project: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

Performance Reviews: 500 points (2 papers @ 250 points each)

1000-900 = A; 899-800 = B; 799-700 = C; 699-600 = D; below 600 = F

Assignments Explained:

First Assignment Paper: This is your introduction to the course. Write a ½ page, MLA formatted (1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced) paper telling me about yourself. Have you done theatre before? If so, what have you done? Have you seen any shows? If so, what have you seen? Why are you taking this course? What are your college plans? Major, etc.? While this paper is not for a “grade,” it gives me a chance to tailor discussions in a way that will benefit you. It will also help when it comes to writing your performance reviews as I will grade/edit this paper for grammar, content, etc. **It may end up counting for extra credit later in the semester.** On the second half of the page, upload a picture of yourself.

Reading/Lecture Quizzes: Throughout the semester, students will take a series of quizzes designed to assess retention of lecture materials. These will consist of definitions, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, etc. Each quiz is worth 50 points for a semester total of 300 points. These will fall at the end of each unit as specified in the calendar, but may not coincide with the dates as the lecture is fluid.

Tests: There is one test in this course. The final exam will be comprehensive (covering material from the entire course). It will consist of short answer, fill-in-the-blank, definitions, etc. This test is worth 100 points.

Dead Man's Cellphone Project: This project will engage the student's artistic and creative abilities. Each student will design the set, costumes, props, and sounds for an imaginary production of the play. Students will also create a cast list for the show, defending their selections as the director. By doing so, students will apply the technical theatre lesson, as well as the chapter on different styles of theatre, and see the real-world applications. This project is worth 100 points.

Performance Reviews: Students are required to attend and watch **TWO** live performances over the course of the semester and respond in written reviews (2 typed, double-spaced pages (minimum) with 1-inch margins, and 12-point Times New Roman font). All students must take a selfie with an actor when appropriate. With some theatre, you will not be able to get a picture with the actor, so you will need to get a picture of yourself inside the auditorium with the stage behind you, and insert the picture into the last page of the paper. **These must be submitted as Word documents. I will not accept PDF or Google Docs.** These papers are worth 250 points apiece. Papers without a picture will not receive higher than a C average.

II. 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. There **WILL** be times that I need to contact you with important information, and email is often the quickest way to do so.

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.**

TIMELINESS OF ASSIGNMENTS:

All work will be completed and uploaded on time. Late work will be accepted at the instructor's discretion. Excuses for late work will **only** be accepted with verifiable documented proof from a reputable source. (Example: In an emergency room for multiple days.) **Problems with Internet service providers, computers, or not backing up one's work will not be considered acceptable.** Become familiar with alternatives such as the public library, Internet cafés, or friends.

III. COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT:

Contacting Me:

I am here to help! 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. If you will be communicating with me via email, always write in clear and complete sentences, using proper grammar and punctuation. Also, **SIGN YOUR NAME**, otherwise, sometimes, I don't know who it is from. If you plan on having a job someday that may utilize email, just think of it as practice. That said, I rarely answer emails on the weekends. Give yourself enough time to get an answer!

***Student Resources: Department of Theatre:**

Performing Arts Center (PAC 101)

Phone: (903) 886-5346 (Main Office) <http://www.tamuc.edu/mmct/default.asp>

***Communications Skills Center:**

Hall of Languages (103)

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

***TAMUC Counseling Center:**

Student Services Building (204)

Phone: 903-886-5145

IV. COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES:

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 letter grade increments for every class absence beyond three.** That said, school absences will be excused on a case-by-case basis but you **MUST** email me and let me know. Do **NOT** rely on your classmates to tell me you are at a track meet, college visit, etc. I **MUST** hear from YOU.

Late Arrivals:

To further foster a high level of commitment – and because the work we will be doing this semester will involve intense 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. If you arrive within the five minute grace period, please do so discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. Habitually showing up late to class will result in a grade reduction, as well. Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from 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 and just plain rude. You **CAN** live without your phone for an hour. 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. Also, please remove headphones or AirPods before class begins. If I see them in your ears, I will assume you are not listening and mark you absent.

Extra Credit:

I have extra credit opportunities built into this class. Take advantage of extra questions on quizzes, etc. and you will be fine. I do not offer extra credit opportunities outside of the curriculum—do the work.

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.

V. 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).

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

****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 Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).

NON DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement 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 the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document 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.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Tentative Schedule: (subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

Week 1: August 26/28/30: Intro to Class and Syllabus/What is Theatre?

Week 2: September 2/4/6: What is Theatre?/The Business of Theatre

Week 3: September 9/11/13: Greek/Roman Theatre

Week 4: September 16/18/20: Roman/Early European Theatre/Liturgical Dramas/Quiz #1

Week 5: September 23/25/27: Renaissance Theatre/Early Tech/University Wits/Shakespeare

Week 6: September 30/October 2/4: American 19th Century Theatre/Quiz #2 **(Performance Review #1 due by October 4 by 11:59pm)**

Week 7: October 7/9/11: Isms and Genres and Styles

Week 8: October 14/16/18: Isms and Genres and Styles

Week 9: October 21/23/25: Isms and Genres and Styles/Acting and Directing/Quiz #3

Week 10: October 28/30/November 1: Technical Theatre

Week 11: November 4/6/8: Technical Theatre/Quiz #4

Week 12: November 11/13/15: Musical Theatre (World Theatre/Quiz #5)

Week 13: November 18/20/22: Musical Theatre

Week 14: November 25/27/29: Thanksgiving Break!

Week 15: December 2/4/6: Musical Theatre/Quiz #6/***Dead Man's Cellphone* Project due Monday, December 2 in class (Performance Review #2 due by December 6 by 11:59pm)**

Week 16: December 9: **Final Exam! 10:30am-12:30am**

***** Your instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the content, schedule, and policies as necessary in order to promote the best education possible within prevailing conditions of the course/semester. *****