



THE 440: US HISTORY OF THEATRE II
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2020
TTR 9:30-10:45 a.m.
PAC #112

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M 2-4 p.m., T/R 11 a.m.-noon, W 12-2 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)
Trifles, Susan Glaspell (**available for free at <http://www.one-act-plays.com/dramas/trifles.html>**)
Machinal, Sophie Treadwell
Somewhere in Between, Craig Pospisil
Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett
Funnyhouse of a Negro, Adrienne Kennedy(**pdf**)
For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf, NtozakeShange
Fires in the Mirror, Anna Deavere Smith
Constellations, Nick Payne
 Hand-outs distributed in class and/or posted online
***All PDF texts will be provided for you by your instructor**

Required Viewing:

Somewhere in Between

Directed by Christian Casper
 Produced in the Main Stage Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
 February 25-29 at 8 p.m. and March 1 at 3 p.m.

Constellations

Directed by Micah McBay
 Produced in the Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
 April 7-11 at 8 p.m. and April 12 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 the beginning of the Modern era to the Postmodern/Contemporary era. Includes study of theatre conventions, plays, and major dramatic movements.

Prerequisite:

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

Course Introduction:

The **Modern era** is marked as a time in which artists "questioned long-standing views of the universe and the economic, political, social, and moral values based on them" (Brockett and Findlay, *Century of Innovation*). This fundamental questioning resulted in a schism in the ways in which humanity viewed "truth" - some believed that truth is knowable and should be depicted **representationally** in art, while others believed that truth is relative and that we create the world in the act of perceiving it. The conceptual framework for this semester revolves around the ways in which **language and identity** manifest within the theatre of the Modern and Postmodern/Contemporary eras. 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 (*Somewhere in Between* and *Constellations*).

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 point each = 20 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.

Talking Points (Best 10 @ 2 pts = 20 pts.): Each student will complete lucid and cogent talking points for each reading (Brockett chapters and plays). 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. It is expected that you make connections between the readings (across chapters and plays), and in-class exercises and lecture/discussions. Though you may write in bullet points, students should approach these talking points through a scholarly lens; it is expected that students will write at a level appropriate for upper-level course and will exercise critical thinking skills. Talking Points are to be submitted **via email**; **however, students will need access to their work for all classes (hard or digital copies).**

Tests (Tests 1 & 2 @ 15 pts. each; Final Exam @ 10 pts. = 40 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, 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. (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	20 pts.	100-90 =	A
Talking Points	20 pts.	89-80=	B
Tests	40 pts.	79-70=	C
Papers	20 pts.	69-60=	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. (Talking Points, 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 D2L 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. Communicate, communicate, communicate! 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 myLeo Online/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., "Theatre History question," or "THE 440meeting request")
- Address me by name (ie: "Dear Professor Worley" or "Hi Becca" or just "Becca")
- 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>

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

You may accumulate two (2) 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 class absence beyond the first two absences.**

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 9:30 a.m.! If you arrive after 9:40 a.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. 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:**Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement**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

Gee Library- Room 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination 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.

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: Modernity

WEEK ONE

T Jan 14 Intro to Course; Pre-Test

Th Jan 16 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #1:** Historical Influences: Restoration → Modern Era; What is modernity? Major figures and influences (i.e. Marx, Freud)

WEEK TWO

- T Jan 21 **Reading:** Brockett & Hildy, "The Beginnings of Modern Realism" Beginnings of Modern Drama: 18th-19th century Trends
Talking Points #1 DUE
- Th Jan 23 Modern Drama; Preview *Trifles*
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #2: Realism as form and style

WEEK THREE

- T Jan 28 **Reading:** *Trifles*
Talking Points #2 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #3: *Trifles* and Realism
- Th Jan 30 **Reading:** Brockett & Hildy, "Modern Alternatives to Realism" (ONLY read: beginning of chapter to "NonRealistic Theatre and Drama in Germany," & "Russian Modernism") & "Continental European and Latin American Theatre in the Early Twentieth Century" (ONLY read to "Theatre and Drama in Spain, 1915-1940")
Talking Points #3 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #4: The ISMs and the revolt against Realism

WEEK FOUR

- T Feb 4 **Reading:** *Machinal* and "Theatre and Drama in the United States, 1915-1940"
Talking Points #4 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #5: *Machinal* and Expressionism
- Th Feb 6 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #6:** *Machinal* and the ISMs, cont.

WEEK FIVE

- T Feb 11 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #7:** Test 1 Review
- Th Feb 13 **Test # 1:** The Modernist Movement

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 Postmodern Turn**WEEK SIX**

T Feb 18 **Reading:** *Somewhere in Between*
Talking Points #5 DUE
 Distribute prompts for *Somewhere* paper- discuss expectations for papers
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #8: *Somewhere in Between*

Th Feb 20 **Reading:** Brockett & Hildy, "Continental European and Latin American Theatre in the Mid Twentieth Century" (ONLY read: beginning of chapter to "Soviet Theatre and Drama, 1940-1968," & "German Theatre and Drama, 1940-1968")
Talking Points #6 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #9: The Postmodern Turn

WEEK SEVEN**DoT Production *Somewhere in Between* Feb 25-March 1**

T Feb 25 **Reading:** *Waiting for Godot*
Talking Points #7 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #10: *Waiting for Godot* and Absurdism

Th Feb 27 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #11:** Language and *Waiting for Godot*

WEEK EIGHT

T Mar 3 Discuss production of *Somewhere in Between*
 Wrap up *Waiting for Godot*

Th Mar 5 **BECCA GONE - MATC**

*****SPRING BREAK*** (March 9-13)**

WEEK NINE

T Mar 17 *Somewhere in Between* papers **due via email!**
Reading: *Funnyhouse of a Negro* and Brockett & Hildy, "English-Language Theatre in the Late Twentieth Century" (ONLY read: "Theatre in the United States After 1968")

Talking Points #8 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #12: Surrealism and Absurdism

Th Mar 19 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #13:** Representation in theatre

UNIT THREE: Language and Identity**WEEK TEN**

- T Mar 24 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #14:** Review & prompt for TEST #2 distributed (Take-Home on Absurdism and Postmodernism, Beckett and *Waiting for Godot*, and Kennedy and *Funnyhouse of a Negro*)
- Th Mar 26 **Reading:** *For Colored Girls . . .* and reading on Ntozake Shange & other materials (pdf uploaded on myLeo Online)
Talking Points #9 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #15: *For Colored Girls . . .* genre and form

WEEK ELEVEN

- T Mar 31 **Test #2 DUE**
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #16: Language and Storytelling
- Th Apr 2 **Reading:** *Constellations*
Talking Points #10 DUE
 Distribute prompts for *Constellations* paper- discuss expectations for papers
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #17: *Constellations*

WEEK TWELVE**DoT Production *Constellations* April 7-12**

- T Apr 7 **Reading:** *Fires in the Mirror* and "Contemporary Theatre" (ONLY read "Theatre in the United States")
Talking Points #11 DUE
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #18: *Fires in the Mirror* and docu-drama
- Th Apr 9 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #19:** *Fires in the Mirror*, identity, and language

WEEK THIRTEEN

- T Apr 14 Discuss production of *Constellations*
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #20: Watch sections of *Fires in the Mirror*; discuss
- Th Apr 16 *Fires in the Mirror* cont.

*****UIL OAP REGION CONTEST*** (April 17)****WEEK FOURTEEN**

- T Apr 21 *Somewhere in Between* papers **due via email!**
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #21 - Wrap-Up & Review
- Th Apr 23 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #22** - Wrap-Up & Review

WEEK FIFTEEN

T Apr 28 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #23** - Wrap-Up & Review

Th Apr 30 **IN-CLASS ACTIVITY #24** - Wrap-Up & Review

WEEK SIXTEEN

Final: Tuesday, 5/7, 8-10 a.m.

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 440, Spring 2020

I have read the Course Syllabus for THE 440 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