



**THE 1310.01W-Introduction to Theatre (online)
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2021**

CRN: 23626

Instructor: Christine Van Pay

Office Hours: by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook(s):

Experiencing Theatre (ISBN: 9781585104086)

Netflix subscription required

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: Brownie Points

Reading/Lecture/Video Quizzes: 500 points (10 quizzes @ 50 points each)

Performance Review: 100 points

Monologue Performance: 100 points

Children's Play Script: 100 points

Discussions: 100 points (4 discussions @ 25 points each)

Final Exam: 100 points

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

Assignments Explained:

***First Assignment:** This is your introduction to the course and to me. 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.? On the second half of the page, insert a picture of yourself. Any possible points for this assignment will not be added until the end of the semester. **I will not accept Pages or Google Docs—Word or PDF documents only!**

***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 500 points. These will fall at the end of each unit as specified in the calendar. (Chapters 1-6)

***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.

***Performance Review:** Students are required to watch **ONE** live performance over the course of the semester and respond in a written review analyzing different elements of the production. A more detailed list of instructions is included at the end of the syllabus. This paper is worth **100 points**. Essays must be at least **two full** pages in length and use **MLA** formatting. This includes italicizing the show titles throughout the entirety of the paper. (You may use first person, but do not use 2nd person. Students will receive an automatic 10-point deduction for using 2nd person.) (Chapter 5) **I will not accept Pages or Google Docs—Word or PDF documents only!**

****As COVID continues to keep theaters closed, I will provide a list of alternative online options under Discussions.**

***Children's Play Script:** Students will create a 10-minute children's play focusing on a current event. The issue must be controversial, current, and relevant (i.e. coronavirus, bullying, immigration, LGBTQ community members, etc.). The play should include movement, age-appropriate dialogue, and be equal in its division of parts/lines. (A good rule of thumb is a minute per page.) There is a formatting example in D2L.

How would we as theatre artists use theatre to help children deal with this issue? You must use all six elements of Aristotle's Hierarchy, including sound and spectacle. Use the Plot Structure Diagram to help you as you create your story. You may use any type of character, from people to animals to concepts. You have creative control, but keep in mind that this should appeal to elementary-school-aged children! (Chapter 6)

***Monologue Performance:** Students will choose one 2-minute monologue from a contemporary theatre piece and upload a video performance on YouTube. Scripts are available online or in the campus library. Monologues must be memorized. Students must turn in a copy of the page from the script containing the monologue to the appropriate D2L drop box. Students may scan or take a photo of the script page, but I must be able to see the full page, including the title. Students must post the link for Discussion #4. At the beginning of the video, students will introduce themselves: "Hi, my name is _____, and this is (character's name)'s monologue from (name of the play)" and then perform. At the end, say "Thank you" and then end the video.

***Discussion Posts:** Throughout the semester, students will participate in online discussions. These discussions should include college-level writing and analysis. **Each student must respond to at least four classmates per discussion.** Each post and reply must be at least 100 words and contribute to the overall discussion.

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. 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 or after 5pm. 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:

As this is an online course, I will not take attendance. However, it is the student's responsibility to turn assignments in by the posted due dates. Again, I will only accept late work on a case-by-case basis, with explicit permission from me. As COVID-19 continues, I will allow a certain amount of leeway, but students must contact me and stay in contact as best as is possible.

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.

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

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1: January 11-15: Intro to Class and Syllabus: Read the Syllabus and Explore D2L (**First Assignment due by midnight, Friday, January 15**)

Week 2: January 18-22: What is Theatre? (Chapters 1 and 5) /The Business of Theatre/Greek/Roman Theatre/Early European Theatre/Liturgical Dramas

Week 3: January 25-29: **Quiz #1 and Discussion #1 due by Friday, January 29**

Week 4: February 1-5: Renaissance Theatre/University Wits/Shakespeare

Week 5: February 8-12: **Quiz #2 and Discussion #2 due by Friday, February 12**

Week 6: February 15-19: American 19th Century Theatre

Week 7: February 22-26: **Quiz #3 and Discussion #3 due by Friday, February 26**

Week 8: March 1-5: Isms and Genres and Styles/Acting/Directing (Chapters 2 and 4)

Week 9: March 8-12: **Quiz #4 due by Friday, March 12**

Week 10: March 15-19: Technical Theatre (Chapter 3)

Week 11: March 22-26: Quiz #5 due by Friday, March 26

Week 12: March 29-April 2: Musical Theatre

Week 13: April 5-9: **Quiz #6 and #7 due by Friday, April 9**

Week 14: April 12-16: Quiz #8, #9, and #10 due by Friday, April 16

Week 15: April 19-23: **Children's Play Script, Performance Review, and Monologue Performance/Discussion #4 due by Sunday, April 25**

Week 16: April 26-30: Final Exams! (Online final exam will be available Monday, April 26 and close Wednesday, April 28 at 12noon)

*****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.*****

*Performance Review Content Guidelines

MAKE SURE THE SHOW'S TITLE IS ITALICIZED *THROUGHOUT*

Do NOT summarize the show in more than ONE paragraph!

- ❖ What theater produced/performed the show?
- ❖ What is the name of the show? Who wrote it? When was the show written? (You may need an outside source for this—please include an MLA works cited page.)
- ❖ How does the show handle The Other? Women? Race?
- ❖ Who is the intended audience? Why?
- ❖ Look around: what **type** of space is the show in (proscenium, arena, black box, alley, thrust)? A combination? (Look at the audience!)
- ❖ What is the play's theme/meaning/message?
- ❖ What was your experience? Did you enjoy the production? Why or why not? How was the acting, etc.?
- ❖ What is the plot **structure**? Linear? Cinematic? Contextual?
- How does the show utilize Aristotle's Elements?
- Does the play fit the French Academy's rules? Why or why not?
- Look at the set: what **type** is it? Box? Realistic Exterior? Two-dimensional? Unit? Projections? More than one of these? How does it move? Wagons? Rotating? Elevator? Fly system?

- What **style** of show is it? (Realism, Antirealism, Existentialism, Expressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, Epic/Cruelty/Absurd, Romanticism, Theatricalism, Dadaism?) A combination?
- What **genre** is it? Why? (Comedy (High, Domestic, Low, Farce), Drama, Tragedy, Melodrama, Tragicomedy?) Does it combine these?
- If your selection is online, how does seeing the show on a screen affect your interpretation of the show? Is it still as effective as seeing it live?