



THE 544-Advanced Playwriting

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

Office Location: On Line

Office Phone: 864 554-7927 (Emergency only, please.

University Email Address: Michael.coon@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks:

Playwright's Guidebook, Stuart Spencer, ISBN-10 : 0571199917 ISBN-13 : 978-0571199914

Playwrights at Work, ed. George Plimpton ISBN-10 : 0679640215 ISBN-13 : 978-0679640219

Course Description:

This course offers studies of the major documents in the evolution of dramatic theory, from classical foundations through the 19th 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. The student will be able to understand both the basic and the more advanced tenets of playwriting within the parameters of a dramatic work.
2. The student will be able to identify a variety of playwrights and styles.
3. The student will be able to complete a fully realized dramatic work. synthesize academic research into cohesive scholarly writing and mediated presentation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments (Tentative):

- **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION (400 points):** Course structure supports a “community of learners.” To contribute to the community, you must come to our electronic classroom prepared, and ready to engage in discussions of assigned readings or engagement in determined activities, etc. The “participation” aspect of your grade requires more than responding with minimal effort. 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. I am planning monthly regular remote classroom meetings for opportunities for questions, clarification and and friendly classroom rapport.
- As graduate students, you should realize the importance of voicing your opinions during discussion in positive and respectful ways. Sometimes you will have to agree to disagree with other members of the class. 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***

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

PLAY MANUSCRIPTS (7 @ varying point values -450 TOTAL): Over the course of the semester, working as individuals, you will each create new examples of theatre play scripts draw from various prompts and exercises. Write them in proper format, the final two will be cold read by classmates of your choosing in ZOOM class meetings.

Point values of each version of your work vary. Be creative and unreserved.

Course Learning Outcomes 1 and 3.

ACADEMIC PAPER (150 points): You will be required to write a scholarly research paper of approximately 2,500 words in length based on research regarding a playwright of your choice and covers not only biographical information, but your commentary on the playwright’s style of writing noting exceptional passages of her/his important works. Your paper should be comprised of original, focused research on your selected playwright. Your paper should use acceptable quality writing practices, and you should utilize at least ten scholarly sources. The research paper must be in MLA format. Example provided on Course Website.

- You will be required to submit one (1) **rough draft** for my review by 11:59 pm April 16, 2021. *The rough draft will be worth one hundred (100) points.*
- The **final draft** is due May 5, 2021 and *will be worth one hundred (100) points.*

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

FINAL PROJECT (100 points): The final project will consist of posting a portfolio of your collected writings for this class onto the Discussion Topic set aside for Portfolio Review. You are expected to review and comment upon your peer's presentations using the discussion rubric as all other discussion topics.

***Measures Course Learning Outcome 1**

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)

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 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.**

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Dr. Coon:

Please feel free to visit me on line during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you cannot make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. It is not an imposition. I am usually in my office a great deal; however, it is possible for a message from you to go over 24-36 hours without a response, depending on when you post it and when I sign in again.

I reserve Sundays for my family, so do not expect an immediate response.

Communicate, communicate, and communicate! 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! The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is via the course shell messaging system and email. I check it frequently.

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>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

ATTENDANCE: * For 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: An Incomplete (I or X) will not be given as a final grade in this course.

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, Arial, or Courier New 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.

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 or otherwise representing another’s work or ideas as your own without proper attribution is not 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 Course Schedule

<p>Week #1 Jan 11-17 PLEASE NOTE!! The text <i>The Playwrights Guidebook</i> is an assigned reading over the course of the semester. There will be three separate discussion sessions over the course of the class reviewing his first four units.</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are playwrights alike and different from other writing professionals? Discuss at length with your peers. Review your peer's comments! <p style="text-align: center;">10 PTS</p>	<p>Create a 5 (+or-) page, opening scene, in play-script format; using this prompt: <i>Two people try to decide whether to save a cat.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">50 PTS Due 1/17/2021</p>
<p>Week #2 Jan 18-24</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the assigned material then compare & contrast Thornton Wilder and Lillian Hellman. Review your peer's comments! <p style="text-align: center;">20 PTS</p>	<p>Create a 5 (+or-) page, closing scene in play-script format; using this prompt: <i>Two people try to decide whether to save a cat.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">50 PTS Due 1/24/2021</p>
<p>Week #3 Jan 25-Feb 1</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the assigned material then discuss Samuel Beckett and Tennessee Williams. Review your peer's comments! <p style="text-align: center;">20 PTS</p>	<p>Find a photo here https://www.pinterest.com/seaged/10-minute-play-seeds/?autologin=true Create a 10 minute play based on what you see taking place according to image.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">50 PTS Due 1/31/2021</p>
<p>Week #4 Feb 1-8</p>	<p>Discussion: Chapters 1-7 of Stuart Spencer's text <i>The Playwright's Guidebook</i>. Please discuss these seven chapters on the structure of the play. Cover how you might put them into practice in writing a successful one-act play.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">50 PTS</p>	<p>Revise and combining your opening and closing scenes of the Cat Story into a 15-minute play. Cast the play from your peers and present in reader's theatre in a ZOOM Session Tuesday night, 2/16/ or 2/23 2021.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">50 PTS Due 2/15/2021</p>
<p>Week #5 Feb 8-15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No Class Activities Writing-Rewriting Week</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No Class Activities Writing-Rewriting Week</p>
<p>Week #6 Feb 15-22</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the assigned material then discuss Neil Simon and Edward Albee. Review your peer's comments! <p style="text-align: center;">20 PTS</p>	<p>ZOOM Session Tuesday night, 2/16/ and 2/23 2021.</p>

<p>Week #7 2/22-3/1-8</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the assigned material then discuss Eugene Ionesco and Arthur Miller. • Review your peer's comments! <p>20 PTS</p>	<p>ZOOM Session Tuesday night, 2/16/ and 2/23 2021.</p>
<p>Week #8 3/1-8</p>	<p>Discussion: Read Chapters 8-11 of Stuart Spencer's text <i>The Playwright's Guidebook</i>. Please discuss these four chapters on the whole creative process. Cover how you might put them into practice in writing a successful one-act play.</p> <p>50 PTS</p>	<p>If you were given one extra hour today and you weren't allowed to use it for anything you'd normally do (e.g.; eat, sleep, etc.), what would you do with that hour? Discuss that with your significant other and create a five minute play.</p> <p>50 Pts</p>
<p>Week #9 3/8-14</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the assigned material then discuss Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard. • Review your peer's comments! <p>20 PTS</p>	<p>REWRITES</p>
<p>Week #10 3/15-21</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the assigned material then discuss John Guare and Sam Shephard. • Review your peer's comments! <p>20 PTS</p>	<p>Take your rewrite of your photo inspired 10 minute play, add a character and expand the play into a twenty-minute short play. Cast the play from among your peers and perform a staged reading on 4/19 and or 4/26</p> <p>50 PTS</p>
<p>Week #11 3/22-28</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the assigned material then discuss August Wilson and David Mamet. • Review your peer's comments! <p>20 PTS</p>	<p>REWRITES</p>
<p>Week #12 3/29-4/5 UIL 3/29-4/3 EasterSun.4/4</p>	<p>TAMU-C does not offer a spring break this semester. Please use this week to handle your responsibilities in UIL Competition.</p> <p>GOOD LUCK!!</p>	<p>REWRITES</p>
	<p>Discussion: Chapters 12-16 of Stuart Spencer's text <i>The Playwright's Guidebook</i>. Please discuss these five chapters on advice and problem solving. Cover how you might put them into practice in writing a successful one-act play.</p> <p>50 PTS</p>	<p>Rough Draft of Final Paper 50 PTS Due 4/13/2021 Short Play Due 4/13/2021 100 PTS</p>
<p>Week #14 4/12-19 Reg. UIL 4/14-18</p>	<p>No Class Activities Writing-Rewriting Week</p>	<p>Short-Play First Draft ZOOM Meeting #. 4/19/2021 7:00 PM CST</p>

Week #15 4/19-26	<i>No Class Activities</i> <i>Writing-Rewriting Week</i>	Short-Play First Draft ZOOM Meeting . 4/26/2021 7:00 PM CST
Week #16 4/26-5/2 State UIL 4/29-5/1	Discussion of Projects: Please post your final Portfolio by 8:00 am 4/26/2021. All discussion reserved for constructive criticism of your peer's work. 100 PTS	Revised Short Play ZOOM Meeting 5/5/2021 7:00 PM
Week #17 5/3-5/5	Final Papers Due 11:59 pm May 5, 2021 100 PTS	Revised Short Play ZOOM Meeting 5/4/2021 7:00 PM