



**THE 1310.04E - Introduction to Theatre
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2022**

CRN: 24618

Instructor: Christine Van Pay

Office Hours: by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook(s):

Experiencing Theatre (ISBN: 9781585104086)

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.

“A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students’ Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct. “

“Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.”

I. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

First Assignment: Brownie Points

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

Partner Scene Presentation: 100 points

Performance Review: 100 points

Children’s Play Group Performance: 100 points

Monologue Performance: 100 points

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. 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. **MLA Word or PDF only!**

***Reading/Lecture Quizzes:** Throughout the semester, students will take a series of quizzes designed to assess retention of lecture materials and chapters from the textbook. 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 due dates are in the syllabus. (Chapter 1-6)

***Final Exam:** 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 attend and watch **ONE** live performance over the course of the semester and respond in a 2-3-page written review analyzing different elements of the production. A more detailed list of instructions is included in the syllabus. **These must be submitted as Word or PDF documents.** This paper is worth **100 points**. Papers must 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.) (Chapter 5)

***Children's Play Group Performance:** In groups, 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, LGBTQIA+ 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 script-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 music 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! These will be performed in class on an assigned day. (Chapter 6)

***Partner Scene Presentation:** In pairs (groups of three if needed), students will select a play from the library collection (5th floor) and choose an 8-10-minute scene. Students should be prepared to answer questions about the play, playwright, and history/summary of the play. These scenes must be memorized, staged, and performed on a given due date.

***Monologue Performance:** Students will choose one 2-minute monologue from a contemporary theatre piece and perform it in class on an assigned day. These must be from **plays** post-1940 (not monologue books!) and may not be the same plays used for partner scenes. Scripts are available in the campus library on the 5th floor. Monologues must be memorized. Students must turn in a copy of the page from the script

containing the monologue. You may NOT write your own. Students will also turn in a one-page, double-spaced, MLA formatted explanation of their process. Why did you choose that play? Why that monologue? What is the character's story? Using the Stanislavski technique, describe the objectives and obstacles for this monologue. What is the character's super objective?

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:**

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, football game, etc. I **MUST** hear from YOU.

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 or beyond what is in this syllabus—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 12/14: Intro to Class and Syllabus/What is Theatre?

(Brownie Points Assignment due by midnight, Friday, January 14)

Week 2: January 17/19/21: What is Theatre?/The Business of Theatre

(Quiz #1: What is Theatre?/Business of Theatre/Greek/Roman Theatre/Early European Theatre/Liturgical Dramas due by midnight, Friday, January 21 by midnight)

Week 3: January 24/26/28: Acting and Directing Activities

Week 4: January 31/February 2/4: Acting and Directing Activities

**** (Partners and Plays selections due in class February 4) ****

(Quiz #2: D2L Renaissance Theatre/University Wits/Shakespeare due by midnight, Friday, February 4)

Week 5: February 7/9/11: Isms and Genres and Styles

Week 6: February 14/16/18: Isms and Genres and Styles

(Quiz #3 D2L American 19th Century Theatre due by midnight, Friday, February 18)

Week 7: February 21/23/25: Isms and Genres and Styles

(Quiz #4: Isms and Genres and Styles due by midnight, Friday, February 25)

Week 8: February 28/March 2/4: Technical Theatre

Week 9: March 7/9/11: Technical Theatre

(Quiz #5 Technical Theatre due by midnight, Friday, March 11)

Week 10: March 14/16/18: Spring Break!

Week 11: March 21/23/25: Rehearsal Workshops

(Quiz #6 World Theatre due by midnight, Friday, March 25)

Week 12: March 28/30/April 1: Rehearsal Workshops

(Quiz #7 D2L Musical Theatre due by midnight, Friday, April 1)

Week 13: April 4/6/8: Rehearsal Workshops

(Quiz #8 World Theatre due by midnight, Friday, April 8)

Week 14: April 11/13/15: Monologue Performances!

(Quiz #9 World Theatre due by midnight, Friday, April 15)

Week 15: April 18/20/22: Partner Scene Performances!

(Quiz #10 World Theatre due by midnight, Friday, April 22)

Week 16: April 25/27/29: Children's Play Performances!

(Performance Review due by midnight, Friday, April 29)

Week 17: May 2/4/6 Study Week! No Class!

Week 18: Final Exams! Wednesday, May 11 @ 10:30am-12:30pm

****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.****

Department Performances: Extra Credit if you attend *all three* and bring me signed programs the Monday after each one!

A Doll's House: Part 2 February 22-27

Stop Kiss April 5-10

A Texas Romance April 18-24

*Performance Review Content Guidelines

- DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE SHOW
 - ❖ What theatre did you visit?
 - ❖ 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.)
 - ❖ Who is the intended audience? Why?
 - ❖ Look around: what type of space are you in (proscenium, arena, black box, alley, thrust)? Is it effective? Explain why.
 - ❖ What is the play's theme/meaning?
 - ❖ What was your experience? Did you enjoy the production? Why or why not?
 - ❖ What is the plot structure? Linear? Cinematic? Contextual? Explain why.
- How does the show use Aristotle's Six Elements?
- 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? Is it representative? Effective?
- What style of show is it? Why? (Realism, Antirealism, Existentialism, Expressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, Epic/Cruelty/Absurd, Romanticism, Theatricalism?) A combination?
- What genre is it? Why? (Comedy (High, Domestic, Low), Drama, Tragedy, Melodrama, Tragicomedy?) Does it combine these?