



THE 542: DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN THEATRE
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2023
MONDAY 4:30 p.m. - 7:10 p.m.
PAC 112

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Associate Professor of Theatre

Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105

Office Hours: M 2-4 p.m., T/R 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; W 2-3 p.m. or by appointment

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University Email Address: Rebecca.worley@tamuc.edu

Communication Response Time: M-F within 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks:

The Empty Space, Peter Brook

Theater of the Avant-Garde 1890-1950, Robert Knopf

The Theatre and Its Double, Artaud

Towards a Poor Theatre, Jerzy Grotowski

Playing Underground: A Critical History of the 1960s Off-Off Broadway Movement, Stephen J. Bottoms

Assorted Hand-outs (distributed in class and/or posted online)

PDFs of plays

Recommended Texts:

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 9thed.

Theatre History, Brockett and Hildy

Century of Innovation, Brockett and Findlay

Course Description:

A survey of the modern theatre from the rise of Naturalism to the present day, with attention being given to the theatrical conditions and changing intellectual climate of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. To develop a working background on the late 19th and early 20th century theatre, its plays and theories, that will assist students in making intelligent assessments regarding modern theatre.
2. Display a learned knowledge of the skills of the working theatre historian.
3. Synthesize academic research into cohesive scholarly writing and oral presentation.

Course Objectives:

To examine and appreciate the legacy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with regard to contemporary theatre. To identify, with ease, historical antecedents at work on present theatrical practices. Particular emphasis will be placed on the influences of foundational theatrical giants Artaud, Brook, and Grotowski set against realism.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Active Participation (10 pts): Your active participation will play a substantial role in acquiring your final grade – for good reason! This graduate course is structured to support a “community of learners.” In order to contribute to the community, you must come to class fully alert, prepared, and ready to actively participate in discussions of assigned readings or engagement in determined activities, etc. Be aware that the “participation” aspect of your grade requires more than simply being present or arriving to class on time (although absences and late arrivals/early departures will significantly reduce your active participation grade). *Please keep in mind that you must be present in order to participate.* Lack of demonstrable preparation will have a substantial negative impact on your course grade.

As graduate students you should realize the importance of acquiring skill in voicing your opinions during discussion in positive and respectful ways. Realize that sometimes you will have to agree to disagree with other members of the class. As I know that you all can do: 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 the classroom. If such an instance occurs (either toward another student or the instructor), I will ask the student to leave and/or substantial points will be reduced from the student’s Active Participation grade.*

Participation grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation grade of 8 points.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

Talking Points (10 @ 2 pts = 20 pts.): Each student will complete ten lucid and cogent talking points for each class meeting. 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.

Precise (4 @ 5 pts = 20 pts.): Each student will complete four **organized** summaries of specified readings. These summaries should cover the major points made in the reading and should be anywhere from 3-15 pages in length. You may use bullet points, write in prose, make an outline, or a combination. If done correctly, these should be useful references/guides for our discussions of the readings (notate page numbers in MLA format).

Application Papers (2 @ 5 pts.= 10 pts. total): Students are required to attend two fully-produced, live theatre productions (play or musical) staged by a professional, semi-professional, community, or college/university theatre company (no high school or church productions). It is preferred that students attend the University Playhouse productions; however, productions outside of the University Playhouse season (below) **MUST** be approved by the instructor prior to attendance. Plan ahead & clear your schedules NOW! Students will submit papers that identify and discuss specific theories/theorists/practitioners discussed in class as they apply to contemporary productions. Papers should be approx. 3-4 pages, typed, 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.**

A Year with Frog & Toad

Directed by Jackie Rosenfeld

October 10-11 & 13-14 at 7:30 p.m. and October 15 at 3 p.m.

The Thanksgiving Play

Directed by Angela Vaughn

November 14-18 at 7:30 p.m. and November 19 at 3 p.m.

Reading Presentations (2 @ 10 pts = 20 pts.): Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to lead two discussions over assigned readings, as well as provide supplementary material in the form of visual aids or activities. Each presentation/discussion should approximately **fifteen-twenty minutes**. You are responsible for leading and facilitating the class discussion– not just summarizing points and lecturing to the class. You should plan your presentation very carefully as you are developing a short lesson plan (shorter presentations will receive substantial grade deductions.) **You should provide the class with a handout or study guide (uploaded to the Google Drive prior to your presentation).**

You must also come prepared with questions and topics to stimulate class discussion. One of the goals of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to hone your teaching and presentation skills. Be imaginative in your presentational strategies, including audiovisual material, activities, etc. You will be graded on the content of your presentation/handout, the structure/construction of your presentation/handout, ability to lead class discussion effectively, ability to field your peers' questions, and the overall professionalism/preparedness exhibited.

Research Presentation (20 pts.): You will be required to facilitate a well-researched, detailed presentation on a topic of your own selection that is informed by theoretical and/or historical work in the fields of theatre and/or performance and that intersects with the topic of this course in some way. This includes: 1) reading and relating scripts to the theories at hand; 2) identifying subsequent theatrical practitioners who were influenced by the person(s) you research; 3) finding appropriate sources to share with the class; 4) conducting hands-on activities and/or sharing visual aids and leading the class discussion. **A packet of information on the topic must be assembled and provided to the class via the Google Drive.** This packet must include web addresses and bibliographical material for sources utilized in preparing it – so each of us may benefit later. This packet should be around 15-20 pages long. Plan on actively engaging us for about **twenty-thirty minutes**.

Please plan all elements of your presentation carefully and offer it to the class in a formal, well-rehearsed manner. You will be graded on the content and construction of your material, your preparedness, your ability to knowledgeably respond to questions from the audience, and the professionalism exhibited in your formal presentation and as an audience member. We will have additional in-depth discussion about the requirements of this assignment during class sessions.

Options for research presentations **You may **not** choose to focus on a topic for which you have provided a readings presentation in this class*:*

REALISM/NATURALISM

- Ibsen
- Shaw
- Chekhov
- Zola
- Glaspell
- Hellman

SYMBOLISM

- Maeterlinck
- Strindberg
- Appia/Craig

EXPRESSIONISM

- O'Neill
- Rice
- Treadwell

SURREALISM

- Appollinaire
- Breton
- Cocteau
- Stein

- Bauhaus/Walter Gropius

CONSTRUCTIVISM

- Meyerhold

THEATRE OF THE GROTESQUE

- Pirandello

EPIC THEATRE

- Piscator/Brecht

THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

- Pinter
- Ionesco
- Beckett
- Genet

THEATRE OF THE 1960s

- Open Theatre
- Living Theatre
- Peter Weiss
- La Mama/Ellen Stewart
- Caffe Cino
- Amiri Baraka

POSTMODERNISM

- Wooster Group
- Mabou Mines
- Split Britches
- Spiderwoman Theatre
- Omaha Magic Theatre
- Teatro Campesino/Luis Valdez
- Anna Deavere Smith
- Guillermo Gomez-Pena/Coco Fusco
- David Henry Hwang
- Ntozake Shange
- Tectonic Theatre/Moises Kaufman

Grading:

The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

90-100 =	A
80-89=	B
70-79=	C
60-69=	D
59 and below=	F

Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, regardless of average.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. Scheduling an appointment in advance, however, is preferred, whether it be during or out of my office hours. Virtual meetings via Zoom are available, as well. To schedule an appointment, scan the QR code below or go to: <https://forms.gle/vLrQNDV6nZDxg3cv8>.



SCAN ME

Outside of appointments, the easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**.

Email Policy:

Before sending me an email with a general course-specific question, **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check D2L/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 you cannot find the answer, please feel free to email me.

When emailing me: Please make your emails clear, concise, and 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., "Modern Theatre question," or "THE 542 meeting 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 (see 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.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory and grades will be lowered ½ letter grade per absence. That being said, I do understand that there are unavoidable, *emergency* situations in life. You are allowed one *emergency* absence in this course with no attendance grading penalty (although you are still responsible for all work during said absences). Of course, if you have a prolonged illness or injury, or if a family emergency arises, speak with your instructor ASAP. **Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. I will work to support you getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.**

You should report a COVID-19 diagnosis to the university, regardless of where tested or if you have had close contact with someone who tests positive. This can be done by **emailing eoc@tamuc.edu**. Prompt reporting is required and is essential to allow for proper contact tracing and help limit the potential spread of the virus.

Late Arrivals:

The class will begin promptly at 4:30 p.m.! If you arrive after 4:40 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. *It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain.* Also, 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.**

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. 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:

Under normal circumstances, I do not accept late work.

Extra Credit:

As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

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>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

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:

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 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.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

AI Use in Courses (Draft)

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Reading and assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below. All written assignments are due via email in either a Word doc attachment or shared as a Google Doc. DO NOT send .pdfs & make sure you make me an editor if submitting Google Docs. Bring all appropriate texts to class!

WEEK ONE

Aug 28 Introduction to course & assignments
 Introductory Discussion
 **Determine Reading Presentation assignments

WEEK TWO

Sept 4 **NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**

WEEK THREE

Sept 11 **Reading:** *The Empty Space* (in its entirety)
Talking Points #1 due
Precise #1 due
 Discuss Peter Brook
 Facilitator(s) for Brook:

WEEK FOUR

- Sept 18 **Reading:** "Introduction" in Knopf AND re-familiarize yourself with a Realistic play (Ibsen or Chekhov for example)
Talking Points #2 due
 Review any brief and basic sources on late 19th – early 20th c. theatre on the theatrical ISMs
 In Class: Begin chronological exploration of theories and styles. Discuss Realism versus Non-Realism, etc.

WEEK FIVE**TxETA 9/27-30**

- Sept 25 **Reading:** "Franco-Russian Symbolism" and "Pataphysical Theater" (pp. 17-101) in Knopf
Talking Points #3 due
The Chalky White Substance
 Select Expressionistic plays to read for Oct 19
 Students should have spoken to me individually and decided on their research topic
 Facilitator for Symbolism:

 Facilitator for Pataphysical Theater:

WEEK SIX

- Oct 2 **FUTURISM AND DADA**
Reading: "Italian Futurism" pp. 163-182; "Dada" pp. 239-263 in Knopf
Talking Points #4 due
 Scenes from Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*
 Facilitator for Futurism:

 Facilitator for Dada:

WEEK SEVEN

DoT Production of *A Year with Frog & Toad* October 10-11 & 13-15
High School Theatre Day October 12

- Oct 9 **EXPRESSIONISM & SURREALISM**
Reading: "German Expressionism," pp. 183-238; "French Surrealism" pp. 301-346 in Knopf; Expressionistic play determined in advance: *Machinal*, *The Hairy Ape*, *A Dream Play*, *The Adding Machine*, *Emperor Jones* or another Expressionistic play of your choice; *The Breast of Tiresias*
Talking Points #5 due
 Facilitator for Expressionism:

 Facilitator for Surrealism:

WEEK EIGHT

Oct 16 **THEATRE OF CRUELTY**
Reading: "The Theatre of Cruelty" pp. 347-362 in Knopf; *The Theatre and Its Double*
 Discuss Artaud
Talking Points #6 due
Precise #2 due
 Facilitator for Theatre of Cruelty:

WEEK NINE

Oct 23 1st Application Paper due **via email**
 Wrap-up Artaud

WEEK TEN

Oct 30 **POOR THEATRE**
Reading: Begin *Towards a Poor Theatre*
Talking Points # 7 due
 Discuss Grotowski
 View clips
 Facilitator for Grotowski:

WEEK ELEVEN

Nov 6 **Reading:** Finish *Towards a Poor Theatre*
Precise #3 due
 Continue discussion

WEEK TWELVE

Nov 13 **DoT Production of *The Thanksgiving Play* November 14-19**
Reading: *Playing Underground*, "Part One: Emerging Venues, Emerging Playwrights, 1960-66"
Plays: The Living Theatre's *The Brig* or *The Connection*
Talking Points #8 due
 Living Theatre clips
 Facilitator for the CaffeCino:

 Facilitator for the Living Theatre:

WEEK THIRTEEN**THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/22-24**

Nov 20 **Reading:** *Playing Underground*, "Part Two: Present Collaborations, 1963-1968"
Plays: *The Serpent* or *Terminal*
Talking Points #9 due
 Facilitator for Open Theatre:

WEEK FOURTEEN

Nov 27 **Reading:** *Playing Underground*, Part Three, Changing Times, 1966-1973
Talking Points #10 due
Precise #4 due
Wrap-up/Discuss Final
Facilitator for Judson Church:
Facilitator for La Mama:

WEEK FIFTEEN

Dec 4 Begin Research Presentations
2nd Application Paper due **via email**

WEEK SIXTEEN

FINAL EXAM: Monday, Dec. 11 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.

OFFICIAL RUBRIC -
Grading of Performance Response Essays

Format and Details 1.5 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 1.5 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 1.5 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)?

.5 “free floating point” to be used as + or – at the instructor’s discretion.