



**THE 543: DEV OF AMERICAN THEATRE
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2025
ONLINE**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Associate Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: MW 12:30-2:30 p.m., T/R 9:30-10:30 a.m or by appointment
University Email Address: Rebecca.worley@tamuc.edu
Communication Response Time: M-F within 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks:

Early American Drama, ed. Jeffrey Richards
Entertaining the Nation, Tice Miller
 Assorted Hand-outs (posted in D2L under “Articles” or “Handouts”)
 PDFs of plays (posted in D2L under “Plays”)

Plays Covered:

“Dialogues” (pdf)
The Group (1775) (pdf)
The Contrast (1787) in Richards
Andre (1798) in Richards
Metamora . . . (1829) (pdf)
Fashion (1845) and Prologue in Richards
Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) in Richards
The Octoroon (1859) in Richards
Held By the Enemy (1888) (pdf)
The Great Divide (1906) (pdf)
The Verge (1921) (pdf)
Bury the Dead (1936)

Recommended Reading:

Starring Women: Celebrity, Patriarchy, and American Theatre, 1790-1850, Sara E. Lampert
Performing America: Cultural Nationalism in American Theater, ed. Jeffrey D. Mason and J. Ellen Gainor
Interrogating America through Theatre and Performance, ed. William H. Demastes and Iris Smith Fischer
An Outline History of the American Theatre, Walter Meserve
American Drama: Colonial to Contemporary, ed. Stephen Watt & Gary A. Richardson

Course Description:

A study of the theatre as it reflects the social, artistic, and literary interests in America from the colonial period to the contemporary scene. The organizing principle of this course will be the question of what it means to be *American*. We will critique the loaded term *American* and interrogate notions of *history* and *theatre* as well. We will study plays from the accepted American drama canon in light of marginalized groups who rightfully claim a place in the American theatre, tracing flagrant stereotypes (race, ethnicity, class, gender). We will study the historiography of the American theatre as well as its history. In this course, the emphasis is on traditional “scripted” plays. We will also hone the skills of the working theatre historian.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. To develop a working background on the history of the American theatre, its plays and players, that will assist students in making intelligent assessments regarding the American theatre of the twenty-first century.
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 REQUIREMENTS**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:**

Conceptual Frameworks (10 @ 1 pt = 10 pts total): (CF on Class Schedule) are statements of the lens(es) through which you might view a particular play – in essence, approaches to analyzing the piece(s) or production(s). They might utilize a particular theory, social practice, thematic concern, etc. These should be a few sentences long (2-3 sentences), typed, and written in complete sentences. You can think of them as mini-abstracts. I will post CF examples for your reference.

Reading Presentation (10 pts): Over the course of the semester, working as individuals, you will lead the class discussion via documented research, a brief PowerPoint, and discussion points. You are responsible for moderating the discussion for that play, playwright, and cultural norms and shifts in the period, for that week. You will offer overviews of the playwright & play in question and lead the discussion on your work. Each of these presentations require outside scholarly research by the presenters. On your assigned week, you must post your presentation to the discussion board along with pertinent discussion questions to elicit meaningful, critical responses from classmates. Your presentations must provide professionally relevant biographical sketches of the playwrights in question, the theorists'/playwrights' main contributions to the dramatic canon (in focusing a play, please also contextualize the play). Grading will center on the content of your presentation/handout, the structure/construction of your presentation/handout, ability to moderate class discussion effectively, ability to field your peers' questions, and the overall professionalism/preparedness exhibited.

PRESENTATION TOPICS ARE ASSIGNED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Discussion Posts (Best 10 @ 2 pts each = 20 pts. total): In order to successfully complete this assignment, students will need to post **one** initial response to the Reading Presentation discussion question(s) and **two** responses to your classmates' initial posts. Please include insights, thoughts, and comments &/or questions into the discussion questions(s). The ideal initial post is one that is open ended and allows for ongoing conversation & further consideration.

The remaining two-three posts should be in conversation with the others in the class. You may choose to respond to two-three different classmates' initial posts (ie: multiple discussions) OR you may remain engaged in a single classmate's post via two-three replies (ie: an ongoing discussion with a single classmate). Your responses will be assessed in the following manner:

- An **exemplary** response is multi-faceted and allows respondents to craft well-reasoned replies.
- A **proficient/competent** response may spark conversation but does not allow the respondents room to dig deep.
- A response in **need of improvement/novice** level is not on topic, is too simplistic and/or is late (past automatic deadline without requesting extension).

Your replies to your classmates' responses will be assessed in the following manner:

- An **exemplary** reply engages in & allows for thoughtful, reasoned, and supported discussion with examples from the play(s) &, potentially, outside investigation.
- A **proficient** reply demonstrates relevance to the topic and is well written, but may be missing some support or other necessary components.
- A **competent** reply lacks depth, is not fully on topic, or does not fully allow for further discussion.
- A reply **needing improvement** does not fully engage in the discussion, is off topic, and/or is late (past automatic deadline without requesting extension).
- A **novice** reply is one that is inappropriate and/or is late (past automatic deadline without requesting extension).

	Exemplary	Proficient	Competent	Needs Improvement	Novice
Initial Response	1	.75	.75	.5	0
Reply 1	.5	.5	.25	.10	0
Reply 2	.5	.5	.25	.10	0

The goal of these discussion posts is to help hone our critical thinking and communication skills as scholars & educators. This assignment 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. As graduate students, you should realize the importance of voicing your opinions/insights 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.***

Abstract (10 pts): Students will submit a short (250-300 word) abstract that summarizes their paper topic and the critical lens(es) they will use. I will post abstract examples for your reference.

Rough Draft (15 pts): Students must turn in a rough draft of their paper. Rough drafts need not have formal “scholarly apparatus” as in proper formatting of Endnotes and Works Cited, **but be forewarned.** These are not to be slap-dash efforts. These must be coherent, fully formed papers, 10-15 pages in length. They must be well-organized and draw a conclusion. You have to give me a paper that is ready for editorial comments, not stream-of-consciousness. **PLAN AHEAD.**

Polished Paper (20 pts): Each student will turn in a conference length paper (10-15 pages) analyzing a particular performance (**note:** performance does not necessarily denote “traditional” theater) or play, applying a theoretical lens(es)/concepts covered in class (particularly the questions: What is American? Who is featured? Who is left out? Who is implied?). Papers must “cut to the chase” and demonstrate what, using the material we have studied, you can add to critical conversation. Best papers will incorporate contemporary critical theory, give the critical history of the performance/play, and provide an original argument on this topic. This project is to familiarize students with the research process and to prepare them for future, more extensive research.

Final Presentation (15 points): The final project will consist of posting a PowerPoint presentation of sufficient length to give the class a good understanding of your topic. You will defend your conclusions when questioned by your classmates or the instructor. The presentation is due on Monday of the same week the final polished draft of the paper is due and will stand open for the following week. You are expected to review and comment upon your peer’s presentations.

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 ETAMU 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 ETAMU 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

My Personal Policy:

Please keep in mind that I am a human. I have a family. As such, please see below for my boundaries so that I may maintain my own self-care yet still be available for you as my student:

- You may email me at any point for guidance, questions, etc. I will respond within 24 hours between the hours of **9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday**
 - General course-specific questions: **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check D2L/ask a classmate first**. If your question has already been addressed, then you will have the answer you need.

- **When emailing me:** Please make your emails clear and concise. 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 (ie: “American Theatre class question,”)
 - Address me by name (ie: "Dear Professor Worley" or "Hi Becca" or just "Becca")
 - Concisely state what it is you need. If it can't be communicated in a concise manner, schedule an appointment (see below)
 - **Sign your name**
- I will **NOT** check email on the weekends, which means I will respond Monday morning.
- If you need to ask me an **URGENT** question regarding class at *night*, you may text me. Note, however, that I will **only respond between the hours of 5-8 p.m.**
- If you need me outside of the student/teacher relationship, please text me. I will respond (via text or phone call) as soon as I can.

Office Hours & Appointments:

To schedule an appointment, scan the QR code below or go to:

<https://forms.gle/QUFUr2ZZ5Sbvi39Q9>.



COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Late Work:

Under normal circumstances, I do not accept late work; however, if you have difficulty submitting **assignments in D2L DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUES:**

1. Contact Technical Support with the problem
2. Contact me regarding a technical problem with the case number assigned to the problem

For all other reasons (work, family, illness, etc.), please contact me via email ASAP.

For both technical & personal issues, I will determine the need for an extension on a case by case basis.

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.

Syllabus Change Policy:

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [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 ETAMU 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](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.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

ETAMU

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

ETAMU 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 ETAMU 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 ETAMU 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 ETAMU campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Mental Health

Please make sure that you are taking care of yourself, not just with the work in this class, but also balancing what is happening in your life. Know that there are people willing to listen and help if needed. If you or someone you care about is in need of any assistance, please reach out to me or use the following resources:

- The Counseling Center at ETAMU, 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
- The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app or go to <http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html> and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.
- Crisis Text Line: Text “MHFA” to 741741
- Lifeline Crisis Chat: www.crisischat.org
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
 - Main Number: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 - Spanish: 1-888-628-9454
 - TTY (teletypewriter): Preferred relay service or daily 711 then 1-800-799-4889

AI Use in Courses (Draft)

ETAMU 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.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

All assignments are due by 11:30 p.m. on the day in 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. Reading Presentations & Discussion Posts are completed in D2L.

WEEK/DATES	READING	WHAT'S DUE	DUE DATE
1: JAN 13-17	Syllabus Fletcher & Irelan, "Staging 'Americanization'" – in "Articles" folder	Discussion Post 1: Unpacking "American Theatre History"	JAN 17
2: JAN 21-24	Miller, Intro-Chpt. 1 "Dialogues" & Mercy Otis Warren, <i>The Group</i> – in "Plays" folder	Reading Presentation: Early Theatre of the Americas	JAN 21
		Discussion Post 2: Responses to Reading Presentation	JAN 24
3: JAN 27-31	Miller, Chpt. 2 Royall Tyler, <i>The Contrast</i> (with Prologue) – in Richards text	Reading Presentation: The English Restoration in America	JAN 27
		Discussion Post 3: Responses to Reading Presentation	JAN 31
4: FEB 3-7	William Dunlap, <i>André</i> – in Richards text	Reading Presentation: An American Tragedy	FEB 3
		Conceptual Framework 1: <i>The Contrast</i>	FEB 7
		Discussion Post 4: Responses to Reading Presentation	FEB 7

WEEK/DATES	READING	WHAT'S DUE	DUE DATE
5: FEB 10-14	<p>Miller, Chpt. 3</p> <p>Grose, "Edwin Forrest, <i>Metamora</i>, and the Indian Removal Act of 1830" – in "Articles" folder</p> <p>John Augustus Stone, <i>Metamora</i> – in "Plays" folder</p>	<p>Reading Presentation: Jacksonian Democracy & Romanticism</p>	FEB 10
		<p>Conceptual Framework 2: <i>André</i></p>	FEB 14
		<p>Discussion Post 5: Responses to Reading Presentation</p>	FEB 14
6: FEB 17-21	<p>Miller, Chpt. 4</p> <p>Anna Cora Mowatt, <i>Fashion</i> – in Richards text</p>	<p>Reading Presentation: Melodrama & 19th century American Theatre</p>	FEB 17
		<p>Conceptual Framework 3: <i>Metamora</i></p>	FEB 21
		<p>Discussion Post 6: Responses to Reading Presentation</p>	FEB 21

WEEK/DATES	READING	WHAT'S DUE	DUE DATE
7: FEB 24-28	George Aiken, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> – in Richards text Condee, "Uncle Tom's Cluster" – in "Articles" folder	Reading Presentation: Melodrama & Changing Ideology	FEB 24
		Conceptual Framework 4: <i>Fashion</i>	FEB 28
		Discussion Post 7: Responses to Reading Presentation	FEB 28
8: MARCH 3-7	Dion Bouicault, <i>The Octoroon</i> – in Richards text Chiles, "Blackened Irish and Brownfaced Amerindians" – in "Articles" folder	Reading Presentation: Changing American Identity	MARCH 3
		Conceptual Framework 5: <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	MARCH 7
		Discussion Post 8: Responses to Reading Presentation	MARCH 7
9: MARCH 17-21	NONE	Abstract	MARCH 17
		Conceptual Framework 6: <i>The Octoroon</i>	MARCH 21

WEEK/DATES	READING	WHAT'S DUE	DUE DATE
10: MARCH 24-28	William Gillette, <i>Held by the Enemy</i> – in "Plays" folder	Reading Presentation: American Theatre & the Civil War	MARCH 24
		Discussion Post 9: Responses to Reading Presentation	MARCH 28
11: MARCH 31-APRIL 4	Miller, Chpt. 5 William Vaughn Moody, <i>The Great Divide</i> – in "Plays" folder	Reading Presentation: Westward Expansion	MARCH 31
		Conceptual Framework 7: <i>Held by the Enemy</i>	APRIL 4
		Discussion Post 10: Responses to Reading Presentation	APRIL 4
12: APRIL 7-11	Susan Glaspell, <i>The Verge</i> – in "Plays" folder	Reading Presentation: Anti-Realism & The Great Depression	APRIL 7
		Conceptual Framework 8: <i>The Great Divide</i>	APRIL 11
		Discussion Post 11: Responses to Reading Presentation	APRIL 11

WEEK/DATES	READING	WHAT'S DUE	DUE DATE
13: APRIL 14-18	NONE	Rough Draft	APRIL 14
		Conceptual Framework 9: <i>The Verge</i>	APRIL 18
14: APRIL 21-25	Irwin Shaw, <i>Bury the Dead</i>	Reading Presentation: WWI & Protest Theatre	APRIL 21
		Discussion Post 12: Responses to Reading Presentation	APRIL 25
15: APRIL 28-MAY 2	NONE	Conceptual Framework 10: <i>Bury the Dead</i>	MAY 2
		Discussion Post 13: Re-visit "American Theatre History"	MAY 2
FINAL EXAM WEEK: MAY 5-9	NONE	FINAL PRESENTATION	MAY 5
		FINAL PAPER	MAY 6
		Discussion Post 14: Response to Peer Final Presentations	MAY 9