



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

THE 549.01W — Theatre as Art, Entertainment, and Business
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: [Aaron Adair, Ph.D.](#)

Office Location: Online

Office Hours: by appointment

Office Phone: 903-886-5346

Office Fax: 903-468-3250

University Email Address: aaron.adair@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: < 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials: Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. Scribner (1995). ISBN: 978-0684829579

Kaiser, Michael M. *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide*. Brandeis University Press (2018). ISBN: 978-1512601749

Snider, David. *Managing Arts Organizations*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (2022). ISBN: 978-1538160604

Software Required: None

Other Texts and/or Materials: Assigned articles provided in Brightspace/D2L

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This online graduate course examines theatre at the intersection of artistic vision, social responsibility, and business enterprise. Students will explore the competing demands placed on theatre organizations by their artistic missions, the communities they serve, and the economic realities of sustainability. Topics include the aesthetics and cultural significance of live performance, the workings of nonprofit organizational structures and board governance, and the practices of effective board operations. Additional study addresses strategic planning, marketing, fundraising, financial management, and human resources, equipping students with both the theoretical grounding and practical skills necessary for leadership in the performing arts.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Analyze theatre as a tripartite institution (simultaneously an art form, a form of entertainment, and a business) and articulate the productive tensions and synergies among these three dimensions using texts and articles.
2. Develop and articulate a personal leadership philosophy for the performing arts that integrates artistic, social, and business values.
3. Interrogate the political economy of live performance: who gets funded, who gets produced, and why.

4. Apply strategic planning frameworks, including mission alignment, goal setting, environmental scanning, and sustainability planning, to real or hypothetical arts organizations.
5. Synthesize artistic philosophy with organizational theory and strategic planning to produce an integrated leadership perspective.
6. Evaluate the ethical obligations of theatre organizations to their artists, communities, and funders, and assess how those obligations interact with financial sustainability.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

- Reliable internet access
- Access to Brightspace/D2L LMS

Instructional Methods

- Readings
- Discussion Board Posts
- Video Journal Posts and Replies
- Paper
- Case Study

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

- Remain engaged throughout the course
- Communicate with professor
- Note all due dates
- Submit assignments on time

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%–100%

B = 80%–89%

C = 70%–79%

D = 60%–69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 900 – 1000 Points

B = 800 – 899 Points

C = 700 – 799 Points

D = 600 – 699 Points

F = 0 – 599 Points

Assessments

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Discussion Board Posts (30 posts × 10 pts each)	300	30%
Video Journal Posts and Replies (15 weeks × 20 pts each)	300	30%

Leadership Philosophy Paper (1 × 150 pts)	150	15%
Case Study (1 × 250 pts)	250	25%
TOTAL	1000	100%

Assignment Descriptions

DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS (300 points | 30 posts × 10 pts each)

Each week students will contribute a substantive primary discussion post (minimum 350 words) to the Brightspace/D2L discussion board. Posts should engage critically with the week's assigned readings and connect textual ideas to the course themes of theatre as art, entertainment, and business. Strong posts will move beyond summary to offer original interpretation, raise probing questions, or draw connections across texts. Students are strongly encouraged but not required to reply to at least one peer post per week.

Discussion posts are due by Sunday at 11:59 PM each week.

VIDEO JOURNAL POSTS AND REPLIES (300 points | 15 weeks × 20 pts each)

Each week students will record and upload a short video journal entry (3–5 minutes) via Brightspace/D2L reflecting on the week's readings, themes, or personal connections to course material. Video journals allow students to practice articulating ideas about theatre leadership, philosophy, and business strategy in a spoken, professional format. Students are required to submit a written response (5–7 sentences) to at least one peer's video journal each week. *Video journals are due by Sunday at 11:59 PM each week.*

LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY PAPER (150 points | due Week 8)

A 2,000–2,500-word analytical paper in which students articulate, defend, and situate a personal leadership philosophy at the intersection of theatre's three competing mandates: Art, Entertainment, and Business. Students must position the philosophy against at least one named theorist from the course or related arts management/critical theory literature, explaining specifically where and why there is disagreement. A detailed rubric will be posted in Brightspace/D2L. *A Progress Summary is due at the end of Week 4.*

CASE STUDY PROJECT (250 points | due Week 15)

A 2,500–3,000-word case study where students will diagnose the structural and ideological tensions between artistic mission and financial sustainability, analyze how institutional power (boards, donors, subscribers, artistic leadership) shapes decision-making, evaluate the strategic options available to a theatre organization under mission-related pressure, and propose a defensible resolution that balances artistic integrity and fiscal responsibility. A detailed rubric will be posted in Brightspace/D2L. *A Progress Summary is due at the end of Week 11.*

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Learning Management System (LMS)

All course content, assignments, and communication will be managed through Brightspace/D2L. Students must have reliable access to the LMS throughout the course.

[LMS Platform Requirements](#)

[LMS Browser Support](#)

[Zoom Video Conferencing](#)

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 a backup PC at home or work, use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, or an ETAMU campus open computer lab.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Professor in Brightspace/D2L or by email.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778.

[Brightspace Support](#)

Interaction with Instructor

Students should expect a timely response to email questions (within 24 hours) and prompt grading and posting of assignments. Be sure to include your name in the body of every email as well as the assignment number you are referencing. Instructor feedback will be provided before the next assignment is due (within 7 days). The professor reserves the right to make adjustments to the syllabus and/or grading policy as needed. Students will be notified of any changes.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course-Specific Policies

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 in your Student Guide Handbook.)

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.

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.

[Student Guidebook](#)

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for information on how to interact with students in an online forum.

[Netiquette Guidelines](#)

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

[Attendance Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University 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](#)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES — ADA STATEMENT

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

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax: (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

[Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

[Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#)

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

EAST TEXAS A&M SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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 visit:

<https://www.etamu.edu/counseling-center/>

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 ("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation").

COLLECTION OF DATA FOR INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

In order to measure the level of compliance with accreditation, throughout the semester I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness that in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week	Topic / Focus	Readings	Due This Week
Week 1	What is Theatre?	Brook, Part 1: The Deadly Theatre Snider, Ch. 1: Finding Our Purpose	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 2	Theatre as Art	Brook, Part 2: The Holy Theatre Snider, Ch. 2: Focusing on Our Principles	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 3	Mission and Vision I	Kaiser, Chapter 1: A Framework for Strategy Development Pandey, Do Mission Statements Work?	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 4	Mission and Vision II	Kaiser, Chapter 2: Writing a Mission Statement Snider, Ch. 3: Defining Mission, Vision, and Values	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies Progress Summary Midterm Project
Week 5	Theatre as Entertainment	Brook, Part 3: The Rough Theatre King, Popular Appeal and Artistic Merit	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 6	Programming I	Brook, Part 4: The Immediate Theatre Snider, Ch. 4: Building Programming	Discussion Board Post #6 Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 7	Programming II	Kaiser, Ch. 3: Understanding the Environment Kaiser, Ch. 5: Artistic Planning	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 8	Strategic Planning I	Kaiser, Ch. 8: Institutional Marketing Trolio, Behavior in Performing Arts	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies Leadership Philosophy Paper
Week 9	Strategic Planning II	Kaiser, Ch. 9: Development Planning Snider, Ch. 5: Growing an Organization	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 10	Theatre as Business	Kaiser, Ch. 11: Organizational Structure/Staffing Snider, Ch. 10: Managing People	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 11	Audience Development I	Snider, Ch. 11: Engaging Audiences Grisolia, Evening at the Theatre	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies Progress Summary Final Project
Week 12	Audience Development II	Kaiser, Ch. 13: Implementation Planning Snider, Ch. 13: Activating Communities	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 13	Financial Management	Kaiser, Ch. 14: Financial Planning and Management Snider, Ch. 9: Budgeting Strategically	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies

Week 14	Next Steps I	Snider, Ch. 17: Listening to the Field Grisolia, Theatre Demand	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies
Week 15	Next Steps II	Kaiser, Ch. 16: The Planning Environment Snider, Ch. 18: Looking Forward	Discussion Board Posts Video Journal Post & Replies Case Study