

(THE 3311) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 1

2016
Fall

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Course Description from the 2016-2017 Undergraduate Catalog
Theatre history and literature from the Greeks to the Renaissance.

Course Objectives

The study of theatre history allows those who make and enjoy theatre to discover how theatrical practices of the past continue to influence trends in theatre, film, and storytelling in the present day. Learning about the history and the historical context of specific plays, artists, and performance practices allows maker and lovers of theatre to make connections between the ways in which theatre and society are always working to shape each other. How do performances try to support - or change - the cultures that produce them? What are some of the very different functions that performances can serve in a society? How do the reasons that audiences go to theatre change over time? These are some of the questions we will be asking as we journey through a couple thousand years of changes, challenges, risks, and struggles in the story of theatre and performance.

This course is designed to introduce the student to significant periods of theatre history by:

- Reading and discussing plays from important periods in theatre history,
- Discussing the staging practices of certain periods of time: acting styles, theatre architecture, major theatre artists, performance companies, and theories of performance,
- Contextualizing plays and staging practices within the cultures that produced them in order to examine how performance and society interact and intersect, and
- Exploring connections between how texts work and the contexts in which they were first produced.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Identify major theatre artists, architectural elements, staging practices, performance events, and theatrical forms of the major periods of theatre history from ancient Egypt through to Early Modern England and explain their significance to theatre practice;
- ✓ Place plays, theatrical events, and theatrical practices within a larger cultural and historical context for each major period and demonstrate ways in which performance and culture influenced each other within that time period;
- ✓ Examine play-texts critically from historical, cultural, practical, and theoretical points of view and be able to draw connections between a text's form and its context;
- ✓ Effectively communicate analysis of texts and their contexts;
- ✓ Conduct basic but thorough research;
- ✓ Present clearly written analysis of that information that makes connections and creates new knowledge.

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Course Content

Note well that some of the material in this course will include language and topics that some people might find objectionable. *If some of this material is so offensive to you that it negatively affects your ability to learn, you are encouraged to take another course to satisfy this requirement.* If you have any concerns, please see me as soon as possible.

Assigned Texts

We are reading what amounts to a play every other class period. All students are required to read all plays and other texts assigned for the course. In order to analyze scripts individually and as a group it is imperative that everyone read each day's material.

Required Texts

- *Norton Anthology of Drama, 2nd edition, volume 1*, edited by Martin Puchner and Ellen Gainor

Course Texts Linked from Webcourses

- Aristotle's *Poetics* (Περὶ Ποιητικῆς)
- Sue-Ellen Case's "Classic Drag: the Creation of Female Parts"
- Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (Ἀχαρνεῖς)
- Menander's *Girl with the Shaven Head* (Περικειρομένη)
- Terence's *Phormio*
- Hildegard of Bingen's *The Play of the Virtues (Ordo Virtutum)*
- Zeami's *The Well Cradle* (井筒)
- Komparu Zenchiku's *Kasuga Ryūjin* (春日龍神)
- Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Mandrake (La Mandragola)*
- *Pulcinella, the Physician by Force*
- Kathleen McGill's "Women and Performance"
- William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*
- Valerie Rohy's "Fortune's Turn"
- Thomas Dekker, John Ford, & William Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton*

Grade Breakdown		Grading Scale		
Analytical Essay	23.5%	93-100: A	80-82.9: B-	68-69.9: D+
Final Exam	20%	90-92.9: A-	78-79.9: C+	63-67.9: D
Quizzes on Reading	21%	88-89.9: B+	70-77.9: C	60-62.9: D-
Syntheses & Exegeses	15%	83-87.9: B		0-59.9: F
Attendance/Participation	10%			
Midterm Exam	10%			
Imagined Theatre	.5%			

Required Assignments

Quizzes on Reading. There will be a quiz nearly every day that I have assigned a play-text. This is the best way I know how to assess that students are completing the assigned reading. Because I consider the reading to be paramount to each student's achievement of the course objectives, *these quizzes will be a significant component of your final grade.* All quizzes are pass/fail. A three out of five or better is a pass and students with a two or lower fail the day's quiz.

Syntheses & Exegeses. On three different occasions during the course we will read a theoretical essay discussing some aspect of theatre practice. We will then discuss this essay in class. Following this class discussion, and in order to assist students with understanding these essays, students will write brief summaries of the arguments contained in each article (*synthesis*) and then explain briefly how the article might better help us to read theatre texts and understand theatrical practices (*exegesis*). Each of these assignments will be completed with a minimum of 400 words.

Analytical Essay. The course will include one written research paper consisting of a minimum of 1,500 words. This essay will be a contextualized reading of one of the plays on the list of "Notable Plays" or another play or performance of the student's choosing (pending instructor approval). The essay will combine historical research about the context of the piece with a reading of the piece itself so that the essay makes an argument about how the piece significantly impacted its society or (and this version is much easier) society made an impact on the piece and how it works. This essay will be submitted online through Turnitin, graded electronically, and returned to students through Canvas.

This assignment is broken down into the following due dates:

- Essay Topic (October 14)
- Final Essay (November 4)

All written assignments will be submitted in Chicago format (preferably) or MLA (if you must), and all quotations will be accurately and exhaustively cited. **There are a lot of you, but I am committed to making each of you better, clearer writers, and I want to help you as much as I can with this.**

Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor and/or the graduate teaching assistant to discuss possibilities for the paper and to bounce ideas around.

Exams. Both the midterm and the final assessment will address how certain theatrical practices *worked* in their performance contexts. I will not ask students about dates. Rather, I will want students to be able to describe the main performance styles we discussed over the period of the course and feel comfortable with theories of theatrical practice. The questions are always: *How does this performance mode work?* and *What were these artists attempting to accomplish?*

Imagined Theatre: Students will carefully imagine and craft a theatrical scenario. The assignment will work like this: begin with the thought “Imagine this...” and then carefully describe what happens in this imagined theatre scenario. Avoid describing how an audience member might feel watching such a scenario and simply let the scenario exist in the imagination. Students will submit this imagined theatre through Webcourses, but these will also become public (if anonymous) performance that others can read.¹

Here’s a scenario of my own. (Imagine this): *The curtain rises on a pair of horses eating grass. Very slowly, a cow enters, chewing. They eat together. A dog runs on with a bone in its mouth, chewing noisily and occasionally growling as it wrests meat off of the bone. As the animals eat, the food that they are eating does not seem actually to get consumed. There is always more food to eat. Perhaps, over a period of several hours, imperceptibly but unmistakably the animals get fatter and fatter. The stage floor eventually begins to creak and make noise until finally it collapses under the weight of the animals.*

Attendance and Tardiness Policies

Class periods will involve discussion and clarification of the day’s reading, and will also consist of instruction found nowhere in the readings. It is my aim to fill each class period with useful information and discussion and never to waste your time in class. There are forty-two class periods in this term. **You may miss four days without it affecting your grade. Each unexcused absence in excess of four will be deducted from your final grade at the rate of 2.5% per absence.**

Please be on time to class. Coming late to class disrupts discussion. Quizzes on the day’s reading will be given at the beginning of class. **If you miss a quiz, you may not make it up unless you have a really good story.** I am serious about this.

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Laptops and Phones

Please keep your laptops closed and your cell phones quiet and dark during class. *You can check your email and respond to texts from your grandmother after class is over.* You will probably want to take notes in class; please do not use a laptop for this activity.

Scholarship and Integrity

UCF faculty members support the UCF Creed. Integrity – practicing and defending academic and personal honesty – is the first tenet of the UCF Creed. This is in part a reflection of the second tenet, Scholarship – honoring learning as a fundamental purpose of membership in the UCF community. Course assignments and tests are designed to have educational value; the process of preparing for and completing these exercises will help improve your skills and knowledge. Material presented to satisfy course requirements is therefore expected to be the result of your own original scholarly efforts.

UCF faculty members have a responsibility for your education and to the value of a UCF degree; I seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to infringements

¹ The idea for this assignment comes from Daniel Sack, “Some Imagined Theaters: Selections for a Theoretical Stage,” *Theater* 45.3 (2015): 6-25.

of academic integrity. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a “Z Designation” on a student’s official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see z.ucf.edu. If you are having trouble completing or handling the assignments in this course, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. I want to be accessible to you when you need me.

Gordon Rule

This course is a Gordon Rule course. The required four assignments which fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk. Each has the following characteristics:

1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
3. It will be organized clearly and logically
4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

Community

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If, as currently designed, this course poses barriers to effectively participating or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss options or adjustments. You may also contact SAS directly to talk about the resources they provide such as note-takers and other assistance. (Ferrell Commons 185 / 407.823.2371 / sas@ucf.edu). You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

From L.P. Hartley’s *The Go-Between*

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

From Achipatong Weerasethakul’s *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*

*Facing the jungle, the hills and vales,
my past lives as an animal and other beings rise up before me.*

From Raymond Williams’ *Marxism and Literature*

Tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits. ... What we have to see is not just ‘a tradition’ but a selective tradition: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification.

From Heather Love’s *Feeling Backward*

The effort to recapture the past is doomed from the start. To reconstruct the past, we build on ruins; to bring it to life, we chase after the fugitive dead. Bad enough if you want to tell the story of a conquering race, but to remember history’s losers is worse, for the loss that swallows the dead absorbs these others into an even more obscurity.

From N. Scott Momaday's *A Man Made of Words*

I belong in the place of my departure, says Odysseus, and I belong in the place that is my destination.

From Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*

One must find the minor language, the dialect or rather idiolect, on the basis of which one can make one's own major language minor. That is the strength of authors termed "minor," who are in fact the greatest, the only greats: having to conquer one's own language, in other words, to attain that sobriety in the use of a major language, in order to place it in a state of continuous variation (the opposite of regionalism). It is in one's own language that one is bilingual or multilingual. Conquer the major language in order to delineate in it as yet unknown minor languages. Use the minor language to send the major language racing. Minor authors are foreigners in their own tongue. If they are bastards, if they experience themselves as bastards, it is due not to a mixing or intermingling of languages but rather to a subtraction and variation of their own language achieved by stretching tensors through it.

Course Calendar:

W = Reading is available through Webcourses

N = Norton *Anthology of Drama*, 2nd edition

Week One: Ancient Performance

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Aug 22		Discuss syllabus and my expectations Define theatre, performance, performativity Discuss historiography, dramaturgy, entertainment
Wed, Aug 24		Discuss ancient Egyptian performance
Fri, Aug 26	Imagined Theatre due	Introduce ancient Greece

Week Two: Aristotle and Tragedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Aug 29	Read (W): Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i>	Discuss the <i>Poetics</i>
Wed, Aug 31	Read (N): Æschylus's <i>Agamemnon</i>	Quiz #1: the <i>Agamemnon</i> Discuss Greek <i>tragōidia</i>
Fri, Sep 2	Read (W): Sue-Ellen Case's "Classic Drag: the Creation of Female Parts"	Discuss Greek <i>tragōidia</i> and transvestite performance

(THE 3311) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 1

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Week Three: Euripidean Tragedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 5	Labor Day	No Class
Wed, Sep 7	Read (N): Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i>	Quiz #2: the <i>Bacchae</i>
Fri, Sep 9	Synthesis and Exegesis #1 due by the end of today	Discuss Greek "Old" Comedy

Week Four: Ancient Comedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 12	Read (W): Aristophanes' <i>Acharnians</i>	Quiz #3: the <i>Acharnians</i> Discuss Greek Comedy
Wed, Sep 14	Read (W): fragments from Menander's <i>Girl with the Shaven Head</i>	Quiz #4: the <i>Girl with the Shaven Head</i>
Fri, Sep 16		Introduce ancient Rome

Week Five: Ancient Rome

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 19		Discuss Roman Comedy
Wed, Sep 21	Read (W): Terence's <i>Phormio</i>	Quiz #5: the <i>Phormio</i>
Fri, Sep 23		Discuss Roman Tragedy

Week Six: Medieval Europe Part One

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 26	Read (N): Seneca's <i>Thyestes</i>	Quiz #6: the <i>Thyestes</i>
Wed, Sep 28		Discuss Roman paratheatrics
Fri, Sep 30		How to Write a Research Paper

Week Seven: Medieval Religious Drama (It's All Religious, Actually)

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Oct 3		Introduce Medieval drama
Wed, Oct 5	Read (N): Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim's <i>Dulcitius</i>	Quiz #7: the <i>Dulcitius</i>
Fri, Oct 7	Read (W): Hildegard of Bingen's <i>Ordo Virtutum</i>	Quiz #8: the <i>Ordo Virtutum</i> Discuss Medieval morality plays

(THE 3311) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 1

2016
Fall

Week Eight: Medieval Cycle Drama

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 10		Discuss Medieval cycle drama
Wed, Oct 12	Read (N): The Wakefield Master's <i>Second Shepherd's Play</i>	Quiz #9: the <i>Second Shepherd's Play</i> Discuss Medieval staging practices
Fri, Oct 14	Paper Topic Due	Midterm Prep

Week Nine: "Midterm and Introduction to Asia

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 17		Midterm Exam
Wed, Oct 19		Introduce Medieval Asian performance traditions
Fri, Oct 21		Discuss Medieval Asian performance traditions

Week Ten: Medieval Japanese Drama

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 24	Read (N): Zeami's <i>Atsumori</i>	Introduce Nō
Wed, Oct 26	Read (W): Zeami's <i>The Well Cradle (Izutsu)</i> Read (W): Zenchiku's <i>The Kasuga Dragon God (Kasuga Ryūjin)</i>	Quiz #10: <i>Izutsu</i> and <i>Kasuga Ryūjin</i> Discuss Nō and its formal qualities
Fri, Oct 28		Discuss <i>Wayang Kulit</i>

Week Eleven: Italian Renaissance / Neoclassicism

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 31		Introduce the Italian Renaissance Introduce Neo-classicism
Wed, Nov 2	Read (W): Niccolò Machiavelli's <i>The Mandrake</i>	Quiz #11: <i>The Mandrake</i> Discuss influences of the <i>commedia erudita</i>
Fri, Nov 4	Final Essay due by midnight	No Class

Week Twelve: *Commedia Erudita* and *Commedia dell'Arte*

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Nov 7	Read (W): selected <i>lazzi</i> and the scenario <i>Pulcinella, the Physician by Force</i>	Quiz #12: <i>Pulcinella, the Physician by Force</i> Discuss the <i>commedia dell'arte</i>
Wed, Nov 9	Read (W): Kathleen McGill's "Women and Performance"	Discuss Italian Renaissance Comedy
Fri, Nov 11	Veterans Day	No Class

(THE 3311) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 1

2016
Fall

Week Thirteen: Early Modern English Theatre

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Nov 14	Synthesis and Exegesis #2 due by the end of today	Transition to the English Renaissance
Wed, Nov 16	Read (W): William Shakespeare's <i>Twelfth Night</i> (acts 1 & 2)	Discuss Early Modern England
Fri, Nov 18	Finish (W): William Shakespeare's <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Quiz #13: <i>Twelfth Night</i>

Week Fourteen: Gender and Performance in Renaissance England

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Nov 21	Read (W): Valerie Rohy's "Fortune's Turn"	Discuss Renaissance sexual practices and transvestite performance
Wed, Nov 23	Read (W): Dekker, Ford, & Rowley's <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> (acts 1 & 2)	Discuss Early Modern English generic taxonomies
Fri, Nov 25	Thanksgiving Vacation	No Class

Week Fifteen: Jacobean Theatre

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Nov 28	Finish (W): Dekker, Ford, & Rowley's <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i>	Quiz #14: <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i>
Wed, Nov 30	Synthesis and Exegesis #3 due by the end of today	Discuss masques and design
Fri, Dec 2		Exam Review

Week Sixteen: Final Assessment

Fri, Dec 9	Final Assessment: 10.00a-12.50p
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