

(THE 3311) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 1

2017
Fall

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Course Description from the 2017-2018 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 makers 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

- *The Norton Anthology of Drama Vol. 1*, second edition, ed. J. Ellen Gainor, Stanton B. Garner Jr., and Martin Puchner, (W.W. Norton). 978-0-393-92151-9
- *The Witch of Edmonton (Arden Early Modern Drama)*, ed. Lucy Munro (Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare). 978-1904271529

Course Texts Linked from Webcourses

- Aristotle's *Poetics* (Περὶ Ποιητικῆς)
- Æschylus' *Persians* (Πέρσαι)
- 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)*
- Kālidāsa's *The Recognition of Śakuntalā* (अभिज्ञानशकुन्तलम्)
- *The Reincarnation of Rama (Wahju Purba Sedjati)*
- Zeami's *The Well Cradle* (井筒)
- Komparu Zenchiku's *The Kasuga Dragon God* (春日龍神)
- Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Mandrake (La Mandragola)*
- *Pulcinella, the Physician by Force (Pulcinella Medico a Forza)*
- Kathleen McGill's "Women and Performance"
- William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*
- Valerie Traub's "The (In)significance of Lesbian Desire"

Grade Breakdown

Analytical Essay	23.5%
Final Exam	20%
Quizzes on Reading	21%
Syntheses & Exegeses	15%
Attendance/Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Imagined Theatre	.5%

Grading Scale

93-100: A	80-82.9: B-	68-69.9: D+
90-92.9: A-	78-79.9: C+	63-67.9: D
88-89.9: B+	70-77.9: C	60-62.9: D-
83-87.9: B		0-59.9: F

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. The purpose of this assignment is to get students to practice *reading arguments, quoting other scholars, and correctly citing quotations.*

*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). Students may not write on a play we are reading for class. 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) how society or culture made an impact on the piece and how it works. This essay will be submitted online through Webcourses, graded electronically, and returned to students through Webcourses.

This assignment is broken down into the following due dates:

- Essay Topic (October 13)
- Final Essay (October 30)

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 to discuss possibilities for the paper and to bounce ideas around.

All written assignments may be revised and resubmitted for a higher grade until the Study Day. You are encouraged to do this. Beginning on the Study Day, no revisions/resubmissions will be accepted.

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. 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 discussions and never to waste your time in class. There are forty-one 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. Students with phones out will find their attendance/participation grades affected at the end of the term.

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.

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

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 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 that interfere with your ability to demonstrate learning or participate effectively 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 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.

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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 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 21		Discuss syllabus and my expectations Define theatre, performance, performativity Discuss historiography, dramaturgy, entertainment
Wed, Aug 23		Discuss ancient Egyptian performance
Fri, Aug 25	Imagined Theatre due	Introduce ancient Greece

Week Two: Aristotle and Tragedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Aug 28	Read (W): Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i>	Discuss the <i>Poetics</i>
Wed, Aug 30	Read (W): Æschylus's <i>Persians</i>	Quiz #1: the <i>Persians</i> Discuss Greek <i>tragōidia</i>
Fri, Sep 1	Read (W): Sue-Ellen Case's "Classic Drag: the Creation of Female Parts"	Discuss Greek <i>tragōidia</i> and transvestite performance

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Week Three: Euripidean Tragedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 4	Labor Day	No Class Meeting
Wed, Sep 6	Read (N): Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i>	Quiz #2: the <i>Bacchae</i>
Fri, Sep 8	Hurricane Irma to make landfall in Florida on Sep 11	No Class Meeting

Hurricane Irma

Because the University cancelled seven days of classes, we lost **four** days from our course. My solution for this is complex, but here it is:

- 1) We will no longer have a midterm. It will be partially combined with the final assessment, which will now be worth 25%. Please do not let this freak you out; I will not ask about vocabulary from week two on the final assessment, and we will still have a review day where you will be able to go over all of your questions about the final.
- 2) Quizzes 4 to 14, except for quiz 13, will now each be worth 2% of your final grade instead of 1.5%.
- 3) Quiz 13, the one for Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, will now be online.

The bottom line is this: There is no midterm. You will need to work harder to study for the final. The quizzes are now worth more of your grade. Do not freak about this final assessment. The test is designed so that you have an opportunity to tell me what you know; it is not designed to evaluate you in an arbitrary manner.

Week Five: Ancient Greek Comedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 18	Synthesis and Exegesis #1 due by the end of today	Discuss Greek Old Comedy
Wed, Sep 20	Read (W): Aristophanes' <i>Acharnians</i>	Quiz #3: the <i>Acharnians</i> Discuss New Greek Comedy
Fri, Sep 22	Read (W): fragments from Menander's <i>Girl with the Shaven Head</i>	Quiz #4: the <i>Girl with the Shaven Head</i>

Week Six: Ancient Rome I: Comedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Sep 25		Introduce ancient Rome
Wed, Sep 27		Discuss Roman Comedy
Fri, Sep 29	Read (W): Terence's <i>Phormio</i>	Quiz #5: the <i>Phormio</i>

Week Seven: Ancient Rome II: Tragedy

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Oct 2		Discuss Roman Tragedy
Wed, Oct 4	Read (N): Seneca's <i>Thyestes</i>	Quiz #6: the <i>Thyestes</i>
Fri, Oct 6		Discuss Roman paratheatrics

Week Eight: Medieval European Drama I

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 9		How to Write a Research Paper
Wed, Oct 11		Introduce Medieval drama
Fri, Oct 13	Read (N): Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim's <i>Dulcitius</i>	Quiz #7: the <i>Dulcitius</i>

Week Nine: Medieval European Drama II

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 16	Read (W): Hildegard of Bingen's <i>Ordo Virtutum</i>	Quiz #8: the <i>Ordo Virtutum</i> Discuss Medieval morality plays
Wed, Oct 18	Paper Topic Due	Discuss Medieval cycle drama
Fri, Oct 20	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

Week Ten: Medieval India, Indonesia, and Japan

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 23		Introduce Sanskrit drama
Wed, Oct 25	Read (W): act one of Kālidāsa's <i>The Recognition of Śakuntalā</i>	Discuss <i>Wayang Kulit</i>
Fri, Oct 27	Read (W): part three of <i>The Reincarnation of Rama</i>	Introduce Nō

Week Eleven: Japanese Nō

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Oct 30	Read (N): Zeami's <i>Atsumori</i>	Discuss Nō and its formal qualities
Wed, Nov 1	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
Fri, Nov 3	Final Essay due by midnight	Introduce the Italian Renaissance Introduce Neo-classicism

Week Twelve: Renaissance Italy

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Nov 6	Read (W): Niccolò Machiavelli's <i>The Mandrake</i>	Quiz #11: <i>The Mandrake</i> Discuss influences of the <i>commedia erudita</i>
Wed, Nov 8	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>
Fri, Nov 10	Veterans Day	No Class Meeting

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Week Thirteen: Early Modern England

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Nov 13	Read (W): Kathleen McGill's "Women and Performance"	Discuss Italian Renaissance Comedy
Wed, Nov 15	Read (W): William Shakespeare's <i>Twelfth Night</i> (acts 1 & 2) Synthesis and Exegesis #2 due by the end of today	Transition to the English Renaissance
Fri, Nov 17	Finish (W): William Shakespeare's <i>Twelfth Night</i> Online Quiz #13: <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Discuss Early Modern England

Week Fourteen: Gender and Performance in Early Modern England

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Nov 20	Read (W): excerpt from Susan Zimmerman's <i>Erotic Politics</i>	Discuss Renaissance sexual practices and transvestite performance
Wed, Nov 22	Read: Dekker, Ford, & Rowley's <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> (acts 1 & 2)	Discuss Early Modern English generic taxonomies
Fri, Nov 24	Thanksgiving Holiday	No Class Meeting

Week Fifteen: Jacobean Court Masque and the Interregnum

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Nov 27	Finish: Dekker, Ford, & Rowley's <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i>	Quiz #14: <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i>
Wed, Nov 29	Synthesis and Exegesis #3 due by the end of today	Discuss masques and design
Fri, Dec 1		Final Assessment Prep

Final Assessment: Friday, December 8, 10.00a-12.50p