

TABOO THEATRE:

SEX & VIOLENCE ON STAGE

THE 3383 01

Professor: Shafer

Fall 2016

Office: TA-217

MWF 1:30 PM- 2:20 PM

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Lecture Hall: PAC MO 261

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Office Hours: TBA or by appointment

**WARNING:** This course is for adults who are capable of being exposed to very disturbing and sometimes unpleasant images and topics without becoming upset, defensive, and/or socially aggressive. There will be graphic imagery and socially offensive material in the reading assignments, the video presentations, and the class discussion. For example, the dramatic presentation of rape appears in our classic and modern scripts. This will be a part of what is covered. However, if you find that you are easily offended about any topic? This may not be the right course for you. There will also be ideas discussed that may not conform to your world view. Course content, classic & modern play presentation, and the various entertainment coverage that are intended for the benefit of the wider class will not be changed at your request. If other view points make you angry? Have a frank discussion with yourself before continuing in this course. You know yourself best. This is an elective course. Choose what course to buy. Choose wisely and safely for your over-all well being and enjoyment.

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Our collective shadowed subconscious has summoned darkly fascinating dramatic characters to life in our theatres time and time again. The villains; the incestuous, the murderers, the vile, and the profane abound in our dramatic literature. But, not all sex and not all violence are painted as horrific or criminal. Many are presented as the 'normal' or appropriate actions for the circumstances. Our heroes indulge in sex and violence as well. Drama has therefore been dead center in the debate about sex, gender, violence, and taboo as far back as our records exist. This class shall discuss the societal need for these presentations, their communal context, common human themes, and their impact on the storytelling and entertainments of today.

Class time will consist of a mix of lecture, discussion, scene reading, student presentation of class projects, and video. Students may expect announced tests. Students are expected to have completed all

assigned material in a timely fashion. Students should be prepared to participate in class discussion and activities. Reading assignments will be plentiful. MATURE THEMES will be discussed.

Recommended Text:

Theatre Provocateur: When Drama Isn't Sanitized, An Anthology for Today's Consumer by Shafer  
Revised 1st Edition

\*\*Cognella (publisher) is the best place to get it. Check your e-mail for detailed directions. The UCF Bookstore will not have this as I did not submit it there- it was nearly double the cost to you there. While available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble web sites, the publisher is the most affordable source. The change in availability has been made to be more affordable for you. The electronic version will be permitted and is the least expensive version. Hard copies are also available for those (like me) that prefer holding a book.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory. The student is responsible for any missed classes. However, there will be NO make-up tests. There will be NO make-up presentations. A request for an exception may rarely be granted in extreme circumstances, but only with compelling documentation. In addition, students that miss more than the three days of class allowed for illness and emergency may have 100 points deducted from their final grade tabulations. Some absences may be excused with compelling documentation. Under these circumstances, the student is still solely responsible for any missed material or assignments. A student with more than six days of absences may fail the course automatically. Three tardy appearances are equivalent to one full absence. Please, be punctual.

Much video and multimedia will be used to support lecture & discussion. It is vital to keep up with readings. Please, make an appointment early in the semester if you are having trouble.

ELECTRONIC AND ANALOG DEVICES

No cell phone use is permitted. No texting devices are permitted. No digital or analog recordings are permitted. We will be covering a lot of copyright sensitive material. No audio recordings which require the use of ear jacks/buds are permitted. No computers are permitted- unless in use for the electronic text! Use of brains is approved. Consider yourself a Luddite during this class.

NOTE: Use of these devices during testing will automatically be considered cheating.

Note: NO late assignments, or papers will be accepted. All written assignments are to be typed unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE WITH YOUR SYLLABUS IN HAND. DO NOT EXPECT CLASS SCHEDULES, TESTS, OR DUE DATES TO SHIFT. WE WILL HOLD CLASS EVERY DAY WE ARE SCHEDULED- ESPECIALLY JUST BEFORE HOLIDAYS.

The following will be counted as excused absences with compelling documentation; ☐University functions, including participation in sporting events, teams clubs academic functions, scholarly conferences) ☐Illness that is documented by a doctor's note.

☐Death (do not try to convince me that you are dead- I probably won't buy it) or serious illness in the immediate family.

☐The observance of religious holy days - you must notate in writing the dates and names of any religious holy days that you must observe during the course of the semester and hand it into the instructor no later than Sept. 1st. (Note- if you can prove you are a robot, I will also honor Robonica.

US Service personnel and their families may receive release on a case by case basis. The Professor is very supportive of our service men and women and their families.

A Poem for a Day That Follows or Proceeds a Holiday or Exam day (with respects and apologies to Dr. Seuss)

INTENTION:

I will not change or cancel class

I could not, would not, for a house.

I would not, could not, for a spouse.

I would not change them for a pox.

I would not change them for some lox.

I would not move them here or there.

I would not move them anywhere.

I would not change a scheduled class

I do not like to, so don't be crass!

Please, do not ask. Please, do not book travel. Please, inform your families they may not schedule you on trips during these times. Please, inform your employers they may not schedule you. Please, feed your family vitamins so they may be healthy on these days. Experience has shown these dates are perilous for your loved ones. Please, have no religious conversions, magic spells, alien abductions, exorcisms, big foot attacks, or out of body experiences on these days. Due dates, class, exams, and projects will go on without you.

Advice for care and feeding of professors- Never say the following to any instructor. Biting may occur.

1. Did we do anything important last class?
2. Will we do anything important next class?

The following are powerful incantations that can drive a professor to the dark side.

1. Do not lobby a professor for higher grades that are unearned
2. Do not ask for answers to questions that may be found in a syllabus, UCF academic calendar, or have been answered in class more than three times.
3. These dark acts have been known to transform professors into various evil creatures like banshees, ghouls, Shaun Hannity, and Donald Trump.

Helpful Note: If you find yourself offended by something that happened in class, please tell yourself this simple truth: No offense to you was intended. The over all intention of the class/instructor is meant to

be positive life-growth for you. Breathe, and ask yourself to cut everyone some slack as these are very difficult topics to discuss. If really troubled, come meet with the Professor during office hours and discuss the situation politely in a calm setting, away from the pressure of a large crowd. Concerns may best be addressed this way. If you need to leave a class due to becoming upset? You may. Do so quietly and respectfully. Communicate with your instructor.

#### COURSE EVALUATION:

All assignments will be worth 100 points or 200 points. Your grade will be calculated using percentage scores applied to the scale below. Absence penalties will then be applied and the result will be your final grade. Major assignment examples include papers, midterms, & finals. Daily assignment examples include 2 minute papers, class activities, participation, & homework.

There are no make ups for daily projects even with excused absences.

Grade Scale will be a percentage based value. The example below assumes 1000 points of work. The ultimate total score is not important. The PERCENTAGE of the total earned will be your grade. For example, an 'A' means 94%.

A = 1,000-940

A- = 939-900

B+ = 899-870

B = 869-840

B- = 839-800

C+ = 799-770

C = 769-730

C- = 729-700

D+ = 699-670

D = 669-630

D= 629-600

F = 599-0

CLASS TOPICS:

Week ONE 8/22/2016

Topic: Introduction to the Semester: Definitions

Week TWO

Topic: Review of Sex and Violence on Stage in Ancient Play Writing History

Aristophanes, Plautus, Aeschylus, Euripides, Roman Golden Age, Liturgical Drama, Shakespeare

Week THREE

Topic: Introduction to Sex and Violence on Stage in The Renaissance

The Neoclassicists stance on portrayals of sex and violence

Week FOUR

Topic: Written Application or Rejection of Social Mores on the Stage

Rebellion against and validation of the moral status quo on stage

Week FIVE

Topic: Typical Violent Acts on Stage

Murder, Incest, Torture, Animal Cruelty, Suicide, Child Abuse, War, Rape, Prostitution, and their portrayal

Week SIX

Topic: Musical Violence and Dancing Sexuality

The musical's relationship to our appetites

Week SEVEN

Topic: Review

Week EIGHT

Topic: Midterm

WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE! OCTOBER 31st

Eject by now if you KNOW you need to...

Week NINE

Topic: Exceptions to Evil

When extreme behaviors are considered moral?

Week TEN

Topic: Social Change and Taboo

When and why have plays changed social perspectives?

Week ELEVEN

Topic: The Benefits of Evil on Stage

Week TWELVE

Topic: Student Presentations

Week THIRTEEN

Topic: Student Presentations

Week FOURTEEN

Topic: Student Presentations

Week FIFTEEN

Topic: Review

Schedule

August 22- Class begins

NO CLASS ON THESE DAYS

Labor Day 9/5

Veteran's Day 11/11

Maybe Football 10/7

Turkey Day 11/24-11/26

Faculty Confirmation of Academic Activity August 22-26

Withdrawal Deadline

October 31st

Last Day of Class

December 4th

Study Day

December 5th

Final Week

December 6- December 12

(NOTE: While the Finals Day for this class will be announced in class multiple times, please note that you may look this up at anytime during the course of the semester, too. Here is the link...

<http://registrar.ucf.edu/exam/2016/fall>

Actually, this tool is handy for looking up all your class Finals.) YOUR FINALS DATE:

Monday, December 12, 2016

1:00 PM – 3:50 PM

Violations of student academic behavior standards are outlined in The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's student handbook. See [HTTP://www.ucf.edu/goldenrule/](http://www.ucf.edu/goldenrule/) for further details.

Plagiarism- whereby another's work is deliberately used or appropriated without any indication of the source thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials taken from another source has plagiarized.

Cheating- whereby non-permissible written, visual, or oral assistance including that obtained from another student is utilized on exams, course assignments, or projects. The unauthorized possession or use of examination or course related material shall also constitute cheating.

A student who has assisted another in any of the aforementioned breach of standards shall be considered equally culpable.

Academic Action- Taken by Instructor, Chair, or Dean of College

1. Counseling
2. Loss of credit for specific assignment, examination, or project
3. Removal from course with a grade of 'F'

Conduct Review Action- Taken by the Office of Student Conduct

1. Warning
2. Probation
3. Suspension
4. Expulsion
5. Permanent conduct record with UCF accessible by other institutions by request

The plays, materials, and ideas covered during this class may express adult or controversial themes as well as strong language. If this presents a problem for you, please see the instructor immediately to access your chances for success and happiness in the course. Topics of sex and violence are inherently political historically. Expect to have questions raised that may raise your hackles. The professor is going to engage you as 'devils' advocate in ways intended to inform your personal choices for yourselves. Some views expressed will not even be the position of the instructor. This is NOT a high school-hand holding-standardized test kind of course.

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity.

It is the policy of the University to reasonably accommodate absences due to observed religious holidays. However, the student will be held responsible for any material covered during the absence and must inform the instructor two weeks prior to the holiday.

Since the theatre requires the use of mind, voice, body, there might be situations that will require a certain amount of physical contact between you and the instructor and other students. If this presents a problem for you, please see the instructor immediately to assess your chances for success and satisfaction.