
INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE



Introduction to Theatre | THEA 1313 04 | CRN: 26650 | Spring, 2019

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:00-10:20am

Undergraduate Learning Center, Room 342

Instructor: Greg Beam

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Office Hours: Monday, 10:30-11:30am, 1:30-3:30pm; Wednesday, 10:30-11:30am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers a variety of topics relating to the history, production, and theory of theatre, including the nature of performance, the relationship between performers and audience, and the elements of theatrical design and aesthetics. You will learn the components of theatre craft and production, how to watch plays with a critical eye and articulate your observations clearly, and how to view plays in their social and historical contexts.

The principal goal of this course is to help you view, discuss, and write about theatre as an informed observer—and hopefully develop a better appreciation and enjoyment of the medium along the way. You will also learn the basics of how theatre is produced (and the roles of the various artists and technicians who collaborate on a production) to give you better insight into the medium.

While we will get into the history of theatre as an art form, the course will be arranged topically and thematically rather than chronologically. Each week will feature a lecture and discussion focused on a different aspect of theatre or topic in theatre scholarship.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To build an understanding of the core elements of theatrical art a variety of theatrical genres and styles.
- To learn how to view live performance with a sensitive and penetrating eye.
- To develop critical thinking and communication skills, both written and spoken, relating to the arts in general and theatre in particular.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Knowledge and understanding of theatrical design, acting, directing, theatrical styles and genres, and elements of theatrical history.
- The knowledge and skill to write an informative and compelling review of a theatrical production.
- The ability to prepare and deliver, with clarity and confidence, a spoken presentation on a topic related to the theatre.



MATERIALS

Textbook: *The Theatre Experience* (13th Edition), by Edwin Wilson, ISBN: 978-0-07-351427-7

On-line: You must have an UTEP email address and check it regularly. And you should have regular access to Blackboard. These will be my primary means of communicating with you outside of class. Please note that I will not respond to emails sent from personal email accounts. If you want to contact me, use your UTEP email address.



You should make sure that you are able to access Digital Theatre Plus.

ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at UTEP provides students who require them with accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals. If you are dealing with any kind mental, physical, emotional, or sensory disability—whether permanent or temporary—you are encouraged to contact them for a confidential consultation. For more information, visit <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/> or consult the Student Handbook.

ATTENDANCE

A sign-in sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class. If you arrive more than five minutes late, you will have to see the teaching assistant to be credited with a tardy attendance. While attendance and participation are not assigned a percentage of your final grade, I do expect you to be present, and it will be to your benefit to be here and attentive. We will be going over upcoming assignments on a regular basis, and much of the information for the Study Guides will be discussed in class. Persistent absence, or severe or consistent tardiness, will have an impact on your grade or result in your being dropped from the course. The same goes for evidence of distraction or inattention (see electronic device policy).

If you are absent for more than three class sessions in the first four weeks, you may be dropped from the course.

If you are absent for more than three class sessions over the course of the semester, your final grade will be lowered by one point for each absence in excess of three, up to twelve absences. (Tardies and early departures count for half of an absence.) Absences in excess of twelve will result in automatic failure.

On the flip side, you may be rewarded extra credit for exceptional attendance and participation. If you know you will need to be absent during a class when an assignment is due, please inform me as soon as possible to inquire about possible accommodations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment and possible disciplinary action. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please check the UTEP Student Handbook for more information on academic dishonesty, and if you're in doubt about whether your use of a source is acceptable, don't hesitate to check with me.

SUBJECT MATTER

Some of the performances and readings used in this course may touch on mature subject matters, including violence, abuse, sexual activity, and verbal obscenity. Consequently, much of the discussion in class will touch on adult subject matter and may involve strong language. I will do my best to give you a heads up about any troubling material that may appear.

If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. I expect all discussions—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of cell phones/smart phones/iPads/tablets/lap tops is distracting for you, me, and your classmates and is therefore forbidden. Please take notes on paper.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Study Guides (45%)

Four times during the semester, you will receive a set of questions related to the reading and class presentations and lectures. You can find and complete the study guides in the Assignments folder on Blackboard. There is no time limit, and you can submit the assignment up to three times in advance of the due date, with your highest score counting for your grade on the assignment.

Don't wait until the last minute to complete these. Some of the questions will require you to process the information and apply the concepts in the text to given examples; you may have a difficult time with these questions if you try to finish them under a time crunch.

While the questions in the reading guides will refer mostly to the assigned reading, we will cover much of the relevant material in class... so your notes from the lectures will come in handy.

Refer to the course schedule for due dates.

Performance Attendance (10%):

Over the course of the semester, you are expected to attend two live performances from either the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance or the UTEP Dinner Theatre. Eligible performances this semester are:

Theatre & Dance Department Productions:

The Humans (UTEP Theatre and Dance)

March 27, 28, 29, 30 (7:30pm)

March 30, 31 (2:30pm)

Oedipus El Rey (UTEP Theatre and Dance)

April 26, 27, May 2, 3, 4 (7:30pm)

April 28 (2:30pm)

UTEP Dinner Theatre Productions:

Newsies (UTEP Dinner Theatre)

Dinner Performances (7:00 P.M.)

Jan. 25, 26, 30* 31*, Feb. 1, 2, 6*, 7*, 8, 9, 2019 (*Discount Dinner Performance)

Matinee Dinner Performance (1:30 P.M.)

January 27, 2019* (Meal Served / *Discount Dinner Performance)

No Dinner Matinee Performances (2:30 P.M.) General Admission Seating

February 3, 10, 2019 (No Meal Served)

Mama Mia! (UTEP Dinner Theatre)

Dinner Performances (7:00 P.M.)

April 19, 20, 24*, 25*, 26, 27, May 1*, 2*, 3, 4, 2019 (*Discount Dinner Performance)

Matinee Dinner Performance (1:30 P.M.)

April 21, 2019* (Meal Served / *Discount Dinner Performance)
No Dinner Matinee Performances (2:30 P.M.) General Admission Seating
April 28, May 5, 2019 (No Meal Served)

For each production you attend, you will receive 5 points.

You should verify your attendance by signing the sign-in sheet provided at the performance. Make sure that you locate the sheet for the correct section.

Production Review (25%):

Along with attending two performances, you will write a brief newspaper-style review of ONE theatre production: *The Humans*, *Oedipus El Rey*, or *Mama Mia!* See the Assignments folder on Blackboard for a detailed description of the assignment and the grading rubric. Have these handy and refer to them when you are writing your review.

Bring a pen or pencil and small notebook with you to the performance and hang on to your program. Both your notes and the information in the program will prove essential in writing your review.

The review is due one week after the final scheduled performance of the production. **Submit your review in the Assignments folder on Blackboard by Sunday, Apr. 7, for *The Humans* or by Sunday, May 12, for *Oedipus El Rey* or *Mama Mia!***

Buy your tickets early. Both department productions and Dinner Theatre shows often sell out, and telling me at the last minute that you failed to get a seat is not grounds for an extension.

If, however, you are unable or unwilling to review one of these productions for a valid reason, we can make other arrangement, provided that you approach me well in advance.

Final Presentation (20%):

In groups of three or four, you will prepare a presentation on a subject in the theatre not covered in depth in class. Examples of topics that have worked in the past: musical theatre, a particular playwright or director, a significant era in theatre history, a major theatre company, the theatrical styles and traditions of another culture.

Alternatively, you may give a creative presentation, such as performing a scene or giving a design concept and presentation for a play we've discussed in class.

The sky is the limit with regard to the subject matter. If you have any doubts about your chosen topic, simply approach me during office hours or send me an email to ask about your idea.

Presentations will be given during the final week of classes and the final exam period.

GRADING

ASSIGNMENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS
Study Guides:	45
Performance Attendance:	10
Performance Review:	25
Final Presentation:	20
TOTAL:	100

Grading Scale

A = 90-100 points

B = 80-89 points

C = 70-89 points

D = 60-69 points

F = 0-59 points

COURSE SCHEDULE FOR INTRODUCTION TO FILM (Subject to Change)

Week Meeting	Reading	Assignments
Week 1: What is Theatre? Tuesday, Jan. 22 Thursday, Jan. 24	Chapter 1 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 2: Why Do We Go to the Theatre? Tuesday, Jan. 29 Thursday, Jan. 31	Chapter 2 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 3: How Plays Get Made Tuesday, Feb. 5 Thursday, Feb. 7	Chapter 3 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 4: Truth & Entertainment - The Challenge of Performance Tuesday, Feb. 12 Thursday, Feb. 14	Chapter 4 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 5: Truth & Entertainment - The Challenge of Performance Tuesday, Feb. 19 Thursday, Feb. 21	Chapter 4 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	Study Guide 1 due Monday, Feb. 18, by end of day
Week 6: Truth & Entertainment - The Challenge of Performance Tuesday, Feb. 26 Thursday, Feb. 28	Chapter 4 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 7: Word & Action - The Playwright and the Script Tuesday, Mar. 5 Thursday, Mar. 7	Chapter 6 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 8: Word & Action - The Playwright and the Script Tuesday, Mar. 12 Thursday, Mar. 14	Chapter 7 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 9: Interpretation & Creation - The Role of the Director Tuesday, Mar. 19 Thursday, Mar. 21	Chapter 5 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 10: Interpretation & Creation - The Role of the Director Tuesday, Mar. 26 Thursday, Mar. 28	Chapter 5 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	Study Guide 2 due Monday, Apr. 1, by end of day
Week 11: Interpretation & Creation - The Role of the Director Tuesday, Apr. 2 Thursday, Apr. 4	Chapter 8 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	Production review for <i>The Humans</i> due by end of day on Sunday, Apr. 7. Submit in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

Week Meeting	Reading	Assignments
Week 12: Sight & Sound - The Elements of Theatrical Design Tuesday, Apr. 9 Thursday, Apr. 11	Chapter 9 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 13: Sight & Sound - The Elements of Theatrical Design Tuesday, Apr. 16 Thursday, Apr. 18	Chapter 10 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	
Week 14: Musical Theatre Tuesday, Apr. 23 Thursday, Apr. 25	Chapter 11 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	Study Guide 3 due Monday, Apr. 29, by end of day
Week 15: World Theatre Tuesday, Apr. 30 Thursday, May 2	Chapter 12 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	Response to <i>Oedipus El Rey</i> due Sunday, May 5, by end of day
Week 15: Presentations Tuesday, May 7 Thursday, May 9	Chapter 13 of <i>The Theatre Experience</i>	PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECTS DURING CLASS Production review for <i>Mama Mia!</i> due by end of day on Sunday, May 12. Submit in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.
Finals Week Final: Tuesday, May 14 (10:00am-12:45pm) - Presentations Continued	None	PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECTS DURING EXAM PERIOD Study guide 4 due Friday, May 17, by end of day