



Intro to Theatre THEA 1313

"Theatre is the art form of the present: it exists only in the present, and then it's gone."

-Simon McBurney

Instructor: Jay Stratton
Class: M, W, F 9:30-10:20am
Liberal Arts 107
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Office Hours
By appointment
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Required Texts: The Theatre Experience 13E by Edwin Wilson.
You also will each read four plays that I will provide in PDF format on Blackboard.

Course Overview and Objectives

This course covers a variety of topics relating to the history, production, and theory of theatre.

You will learn how to attend, read, discuss, and write about theatre as an informed observer—and develop a better appreciation and enjoyment of the medium along the way. While this is not an acting, directing, playwriting, or design course, you will learn the basics of how theatre is produced to give you better insight into the medium.

Grading

Departmental Production Attendance (2 shows at 5% each = 10%)

You must see any two of the following UTEP live productions.

- *Oedipus El Rey* in the Wise Family Theatre in Fox Fine Arts,
- *Humans* in the Studio Theatre in Fox Fine Arts,
- *Newsies* at the UTEP Dinner Theatre,
- *Mama Mia* at the UTEP Dinner Theatre

To receive credit for seeing the show, you must attend the show in its entirety.

You must **sign in** at the end of the production.

This is NOT a graded assignment – you will either get full credit or no credit for both required productions.

Live Production Review: *Humans*, *Newsies*, or *Oedipus El Rey* (20%)

You will write a production review of **one** of the three above shows.

Details to follow separately.

Short Exams (4 at 11% each = 44%)

Our course is broken into four sections.

At the end of each section, we will have a short written exam on all material covered in that section. This includes all reading materials and all lectures.

Script Analysis, Small Group (16% of grade)

You will write a short analysis of one of our four semester scripts that will be available on Blackboard in PDF form.

Details to follow separately.

Script Discussion, Small Group (5% of grade)

There will be a class day dedicated to discussing the play described above. You must attend class that day. You will be graded on your preparation and participation in class that day.

Playwriting Project, Small Group (5% of grade)

You will create and perform one short scene with your small group. You will be graded as a group on the overall success of the script and performance. Participation will be a factor in this grade.

Grading Scale

You will be assigned a letter grade on each of the above assignments. (A=4.0, B=3.0 etc.)

Your final class grade is based on a weighted average of these grades (before any modification for attendance) according to the following scale.

A	=	3.50+
B	=	2.50 - 3.49
C	=	1.50 - 2.49
D	=	0.50 - 1.49
F	=	Less than .50

Extra Credit

There are two ways to earn extra credit in this class:

First, I give extra credit to students with PERFECT attendance. For more on this, please see the attendance section of our class policies.

Second, you may earn extra credit by attending additional live productions.

Every student is required to attend two of the four shows described earlier in this syllabus. However, you can earn extra credit by seeing additional live theatrical performances and providing me with proof. Examples include additional UTEP department plays, World Dance Alliance performances, plays at El Paso Playhouse or the Plaza as well as a number of small theatres in Las Cruces.

You must then be prepared to talk about the event in our next class.

You will NOT write a paper on this event.

Examples of things that qualify: plays, musicals, opera, World Dance Alliance performances

Examples of things that don't qualify: live concerts and music, public lectures, fairs and theme parks

Examples of things that are in between and that we would have to discuss: a magic show, a haunted house, a live show at a theme park, performance art

Syllabus may change with appropriate notice



Introduction to Theatre Class Policies

(Two grouchy pages for a fun class)

Communication: I rely heavily on both email and Blackboard for communication. You **MUST** check your student email and Blackboard daily.

Over the course of the semester, you will submit two short papers.

There are two ways to submit written work:

1. My favorite way to receive written assignments is a **WORD DOCUMENT** attached to an email.
2. I also happily accept hard copies of written work. No other channel but these two is acceptable unless you make prior arrangement with me.

Attendance: I take attendance very seriously. Each class, I will send around a sign in sheet to track attendance. If you have signed in, you are present. If you are not signed in, you are absent.

It will be tempting to sign in for your classmates and ask them to do the same for you. I get it! But this behavior constitutes academic dishonesty. If I catch you doing this, I reserve the right to drop you from class, fail you, or escalate the situation to academic affairs.

In this class, *absent and late are the same thing*, and in fact, late bugs me way more than absent since late disrupts the class. Class starts on time. One minute late is late.

You may be absent or late 5 times, no questions asked. On your **sixth** attendance issue, your final grade will be reduced one letter grade. On your **eighth** attendance issue, your final grade will be reduced two letter grades. If you have ten or more attendance issues, you cannot receive a passing grade in the course.

At my discretion, an absence may be excused for legitimate medical reasons, professional obligations, or family emergency. The request for an excused absence must be asked for in writing and must be accompanied by some kind of proof.

If you have an absence, you are still responsible for missed work. Absences do not change the due dates of assignments.

EXCEPTION TO ATTENDANCE POLICY

Four of our semester class days will be devoted to in class discussion of plays.

You **MUST** attend class the day your play is being discussed.

You are **NOT** required to attend class on the other discussion days.

At my discretion, a student with **perfect attendance** may be given a *bonus to their final grade!*

Seeing Shows: You are required to sign an attendance sheet at the end of the performance you attend. If you do not sign this sheet at the end of the performance you will not get credit for attendance, your paper will not be accepted and you will receive a 0 for the assignment. The house manager will have the sign out sheet available at the end of each performance.

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual's rights to choose what shows you want to see, I expect all our discussions—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

Phones and Electronics: Phones and electronics in class are a pet peeve of mine. All phones and electronics should be turned off for the duration of class. If you take out a phone, tablet, or other electronic device without permission during class, you may be asked to leave and the day will count as an absence. If a phone rings during class, you may be asked to leave and the day will count as an absence. Also, I will freak out. Exception, if you use a laptop or tablet to take notes or reference a script that is cool. However, a phone is NOT acceptable for that purpose. I should never see or hear your phone.

Late Work: Written work is due by the *beginning of class* the scheduled calendar day. Written work turned in after the due date will be penalized 1 full letter grade. Written work turned in more than one week late will be penalized 2 full letter grades.

Academic Dishonesty: University Policy will be strictly adhered to and absolutely no academic impropriety will be tolerated. All transgressions of university policy including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, the unauthorized exchange of information for written assignments or tests, theft via the computer or infringement of the rights of other to academic freedom (i.e. disrupting class, disrespectful comments towards classmates or instructor) will result in a failing grade for this course as well as disciplinary procedures as adopted by the university and described in the current student handbook.

Disabled Student Statement: In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call [915-747-5148](tel:915-747-5148) for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you may have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and the Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso.

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