

THEA 1313 Introduction to Theatre

Analysis of the principles and techniques involved in representing human experience in a play; the relationship of acting, directing, staging, lighting, costuming, and other Theatre Arts to one another and to the written word. The course is designed to serve not only as an introduction to drama for departmental majors, but as a general survey for non-majors.

MW 12:00-1:20 | Fox Fine Arts Center – Drama D180

Rebecca Frost Mayer, MFA - Assistant Professor of Instruction

Please call me “Rebecca” or “Professor Mayer.”

Email: rfmayer@utep.edu

Please allow 48 hours excluding weekends for a response to email.

Phone: 915-747-5502

Office: Prospect Hall, Room 307

Office Hours: Weekdays 14:30-15:30; other times by appointment.

Do not attempt to contact instructor on social media.

Course objectives and content:

- Written assignments and in-class activities will examine the collaborative art of Theatre, from the perspectives of actors, directors, designers, technicians, critics, arts administrators, and audience members.
- Students will explore the cultural impact of this artistic and literary form and its potential to ignite thought-provoking discussions about societal issues.
- Students will be able to evaluate and present a critical view of social and cultural influences of live and online productions.

Required texts, assignments and grading:

Refer to each assignment on Blackboard for complete instructions, due dates, and grading rubrics.

“Written assessment” assignments are short essay tests that require you to demonstrate comprehension of assigned class readings and to think critically and creatively. These assignments are to be completed online, on your own time, by the due date.

Your participation in in-class discussions and activities is accounted for by means of your attendance grade (see attendance policy as outlined later in this syllabus).

Day-to-day schedule is subject to change at instructor discretion.

See Blackboard for more information about final project including instructions, grading, and due dates.

Topic	Day & Date	Text or Viewing (before coming to class)	In-Class Discussions, Activities	Assignments (See Blackboard for due dates)	Points Possible
Introduction to This Course	W 1/18		Introductions Syllabus	Syllabus Acceptance	
The Audience Experience	M 1/23	“The Audience: Its Role and Imagination.”	Audience activities Instructor’s presentation: Musical theatre	“The Audience” Written assessment	20
	W 1/25		<i>RENT: Live on Broadway</i> Part I		
	M 1/30		<i>RENT: Live on Broadway</i> Part II		
	W 2/1		<i>RENT</i> : In-class discussions and activities	<i>RENT</i> Response Quiz	20
	M 2/6	“The Background and Expectations of the Audience.”	Instructor’s presentation: Community Theatre	“The Background and Expectations” Written assessment	20

	W 2/8		Community Theatre: Virtual guest speaker		
Theatricality: Design and Staging	M 2/13	“Creating the World of the Play”	In-class staged readings	“Creating the World of the Play” Written assessment	20
	W 2/15		In-class staged readings		
	M 2/20	“Scenery”	Scenery presentation	“Scenery” Written assessment	20
	W 2/22		Scenery activities		
	M 2/27	“Lighting and Sound”	Guest instructor TBA	“Lighting and Sound” Written assessment	20
	W 2/29		Guest instructor and activities TBA		
	M 3/6	“Costuming”	Costuming presentation		
	W 3/8	View UTEP’s production of <i>Heroes and Saints</i> before this class.	In-class discussion (graded) of <i>Heroes & Saints</i>	<i>Heroes and Saints</i> written response	25 (in-class discussion) 50 (written response)
	M 3/13		Costuming activities		
	W 3/15		Review/catch-up		
Theatricality: Performance	M 3/20	Excerpt from <i>Acting: The Basics</i>	Acting presentation	<i>Acting: The Basics</i> Written assessment	20
	W 3/22		Acting activities		
	M 3/27		Outline of final project Acting activities		
	W 3/29		Acting activities		

Producing, Directing, and Production	M 4/3	Article on Directing	Directing presentation Directing activities	Directing: Written assessment	20
	W 4/5		Producing presentation Producing activities		
	M 4/10	Article on Production	Production presentation	Production: Written assessment	20
Review, catch-up, bonus features	M 4/17		Final project status updates In-class activities		
	W 4/19		In-class activities		
	M 4/24		In-class activities		
	W 4/26		In-class activities		
Final project	FINAL EXAM	Written portion of final project	Informal verbal presentation to class		Written portion: 100 Verbal: 100

Students need access to Blackboard outside of class meeting times in order to utilize instructional materials and submit assignments. While a personal computer is recommended for this use, the computers available on campus will be sufficient as the Blackboard content will not be used during class times.

Students should keep a dedicated folder or binder for handouts and short scripts distributed in class as well as a notebook for in-class activities.

Extra credit is not offered in this course.

All assignments must be completed by each student individually and independently. Suspicion that students have colluded on written assignments may lead to investigation of plagiarism. Proof that students have colluded on written assignments will result in zero (0) points for the assignment and could lead to disciplinary action by the University.

Letter grades:

Percentage of points possible is available on Blackboard and reflects the assignments that have been submitted and graded. Instructor will submit letter grades to the records system at midterm and end of semester, which correspond with percentages rounded to the **nearest** percentage.

- 90-100% - A
- 80-89% - B
- 70-79% - C
- 60-69% - D
- Less than 60% - F

Late Work:

Requests for leniency on due dates and late work are subject to instructor discretion. In order for a due date extension to be granted, the student must contact the instructor via email *before* the day and time that the assignment is due. Any assignment that is submitted after an extended deadline will be graded according to the assignment's rubric; the grade will be multiplied by .7 and overridden in the system. In other words, approved late work (submitted with the instructor's prior permission) is only worth 70 percent of work submitted on time. Please remember to allow 48 hours for instructor response excluding weekends. For assignments not completed by the due date, unless the student requests an extension before the deadline, a grade of 0 will be entered for the assignment.

If a student has a CASS accommodation that allows for late work, the 70-percent rule may not apply; it is still incumbent on the student to communicate with the instructor to make arrangements for specific due dates. **The student should not assume that a CASS accommodation means due dates are not relevant.**

Attendance Policy for Mayer's sections of THEA 1313 (Effective January 2023):

At each class meeting, sign into the attendance log *when you are ready to remain in the classroom*. If you sign in and then leave, your name will be crossed out and you will have to sign in again.

A line will be drawn after class starts. If you arrive late, sign in below the line.

Sign in for yourself only.

Attendance Grading (Class Meetings):

A point value between (-2) and 5 will be assigned for each class meeting.

5 points: Arrive on time (before class starts) and ready to work at the start of class, stay in class throughout (subject to instructor discretion).

5 points: Use one of two personal days by emailing instructor prior to the start of class.

4 points: Arrive up to 15 minutes late (after line is drawn), stay in class throughout.

4 points: Attend class via Zoom (subject to Zoom Attendance Policy as outlined below).

3 points: Arrive 15 to 30 minutes late.

2 points: Arrive more than 30 minutes late.

1 point: No attendance after both personal days are utilized; email instructor prior to the start of class.

1 point: Asked to leave class at instructor discretion.

-2 points: No attendance; no email to instructor prior to start of class.

Additional personal days may be granted at instructor discretion and may include days when students are required by the University or the Department to attend events or work elsewhere.

If a student has a CASS accommodation that allows for missed classes, it is still incumbent on the student to communicate with the instructor regarding attendance before each class. **The student should not assume that a CASS accommodation means the attendance policy is not relevant.**

Exceptions to Attendance Policy:

Exceptions to the attendance policy are subject to instructor discretion and are not guaranteed. In the event that exceptions are granted, they will be based on student's track record and ability to communicate clearly and ahead of or during unusual circumstances. Remember: You have two personal days, and in order to use them you must email the instructor prior to the start of class.

Zoom Attendance Policy:

Virtual class attendance is discouraged and is subject to instructor approval. In order for instructor to consider allowing virtual attendance, student must take the following steps:

- Email the instructor *from UTEP email account* no less than thirty minutes prior to the start of class to request an online attendance link.
- Student must keep camera on for duration of class and respond to discussions verbally or via chat.
- If student chooses virtual attendance, they may only earn a maximum of four points for the day. If the student chooses to disable camera or use other devices during class, score will be recorded as 1 or 0.
- Student must be currently at a grade of C or better to qualify for Zoom attendance.

Notes on grades:

A grade is an objective measurement of the student's demonstrated competence with specific concepts as outlined in the assignment instructions, rubric, and course syllabus. The grade does not measure your talent, intelligence, or work ethic. Because grades are based on specific metrics, they are not subject to negotiation.

Grade dispute policy:

If, upon viewing your grade on a specific assignment and examining its breakdown according to the rubric posted, you observe a calculation error, bring it to the instructor's attention for an immediate correction.

If you believe an assignment was graded inaccurately, you have 48 hours from the time the grade was posted to dispute it. Initiate the grade dispute via email. If you choose to dispute the grade on a written assignment, the assignment will be blindly re-graded by another faculty member within the department, according to the rubric associated with the assignment. If you choose to dispute the grade on an assignment, and it is regraded, you must accept the new grade, whether higher or lower than the original grade.

Attendance at Department, Community, and Professional Productions:

Attendance at two theatrical productions is required for this course. For each production, you will complete a written assignment. For UTEP's production of *Heroes and Saints*, you will participate in an in-class discussion; for the production of your choice, you will give an informal verbal presentation to the class.

You are required to attend UTEP's production of *Heroes and Saints*. You are free to choose the second production. UTEP's Department of Theatre and Dance offers student-produced plays and workshop productions in our acting studios throughout the semester, which are usually free to attend.

Other suggested venues:

- [UTEP Dinner Theatre](#)
- [Shakespeare on the Rocks](#)
- [El Paso Playhouse](#)
- [Broadway in El Paso](#)
- [El Paso Community College](#)
- [Las Cruces Community Theatre](#)
- [New Mexico State University](#)

See Blackboard for complete instructions and policies on attending productions, including acceptable proof of attendance, affording the cost of tickets, requirements for your verbal presentation, and requirements for written work.

Personal Boundaries and Consent - Rights and Responsibilities:

Activities and assignments may include physical contact with other class members. You will be given adequate time and space during instruction to discuss your boundaries with partners and grant consent or decline to consent each time before working together. You will not be penalized for asking for alternative instructions, activities, or partners.

Theatre is a physically, intellectually, and emotionally demanding art form. If you need to take a moment to look out for yourself or be alone, you may do so in the studio or briefly step out.

Classroom Policies:

Water, beverages, and snacks are permitted; please eat and drink quietly, avoid noisy foods or packaging, and clean up before leaving the classroom.

Daily tasks and assignments are subject to change at instructor discretion.

Limit use of your phone during class. Instructor reserves the right to ask students to put away phones or stop using them during discussions or activities.

A note on subject matter (Department of Theatre and Dance):

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable discussing. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please contact 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.

Course Drop Policy:

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, "When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of "W" before the course drop deadline and with a grade of "F" after the course drop deadline." See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for further information on this policy. If, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours' advance notice via email.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

Accommodations Policy:

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747- 5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Scholastic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Copyright Statement for Course Materials:

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

Syllabus Acceptance:

This syllabus resides on Blackboard. In order to continue participation in this course, you must complete the **Syllabus Acceptance** assignment on Blackboard by the due date. This assignment includes a digital signature indicating that you have asked the *instructor* any questions you may have about the course and your acceptance of the terms of this syllabus.

Failure to complete the Syllabus Acceptance assignment by the due date may result in dismissal from the course.