

INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE

THEATRE ARTS 101Y (Summer 2014)

Instructor: Lee Soroko

On-Line Office Hours: Sunday's 7:00-9:00PM

E-mail: LSoroko@Miami.edu

Welcome to Introduction to Theatre. In this course you will learn about the various elements of theatrical production. You will read and study plays, learn about different styles of performance, discover the roles and responsibilities of theatre professionals, as well as see at least one theatrical production.

REQUIRED TEXT:

- The Creative Spirit*, Fifth Edition by Stephanie Arnold. Publisher: McGraw Hill
- Backwards and Forwards* by David Ball. Publisher: Southern Illinois University Press
- Hamlet* (any edition -- as long as it is not abridged -- is acceptable, but watch it with the subtitles on via DVD and you will have a better time.)

REQUIRED FILMS:

Throughout this course, you will be directed to various online readings and video viewings. These are a required part of the course. The other solution is to buy one of these three videos (your choice), but it is your responsibility to obtain one of these at the beginning (2 weeks of the semester) so that a problem does not ensue when this project is due.

- Sunday in the Park with George* (1986)
- Oklahoma* (1955) **DO NOT** view/use the concert version with Alec Baldwin for this project
- West Side Story* (1961)
- *Angels in America* (not required but plays are always best 'watched' instead of read, still read the play)
- *Hamlet* (not required but you might enjoy this 2008 production with Patrick Stewart and David Tennant <http://video.pbs.org/video/1473795626/>)

COURSE GOALS:

- To develop an analytical approach to understanding the theatre as both a live event worthy of intellectual discourse
- To develop an understanding of the basic skills necessary for a collegiate understanding of the theatrical experience

- To develop vocabulary and communicative skills for use in theatrical collaborations, analyses, and criticism
- To improve creative and critical thinking and problem solving skills that are applicable to any profession

COURSE OUTCOMES:

- Students will discover and experience the personal connection between the audience and live theatre through readings
- Expanded creativity and imagination
- Basic understanding of analyzing a play
- Basic understanding of causation theory in literature
- Foundational knowledge of Aristotelian Dramatic structure
- Students will develop an appreciation of the work done by those artists who work in live theatre

COURSE GRADING OPPORTUNITES:

This course consists of twelve units. I would strongly encourage you to work ahead and strive to complete at least one unit a week. Below is a breakdown of the projects and their point value.

Unit Chapter Tests	25 points (approximately 2 points a test)
Unit 1 (5 questions)	
Unit 1 (9 questions)	
Unit 3 (5 questions)	
Unit 3 (5 questions)	
Unit 4 (5 questions)	
Unit 5 (10 questions)	
Unit 6 (10 questions)	
Unit 7 (5 questions)	
Unit 8 (5 questions)	
Unit 10 (5 questions)	
Unit Essay Assignments	35 points (approximately 6 points for each essay)
Unit 2 (500-750 words)	
Unit 4 (300 words)	
Unit 6 (750 words)	
Unit 9 (750 words)	
Unit 10 (400-500 words)	
Unit 7 PowerPoint Set Design Research	10 points
Unit 11 Course Assignment 1 Production Review*	10 points
Unit 12 Course Assignment 2 Final Project*	20 points
<u>Total Points Possible 100 points</u>	

GRADING POINT SCALE:

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	78-79	D	63-66
B+	88-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-87	C-	70-72	F	59 or below

*Course Assignments #1 and #2 must be completed to pass this course regardless of point total accumulated

Note: Please be advised that these essays do not qualify for UM writing credit, nor do I offer the opportunity for an incomplete in this class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Completion of the assignments is crucial to passing the course. All of the assignments are outlined in each unit on Blackboard. If you do not complete the assignment by the designated time, the unit will automatically close and this cannot be made up.
2. There are ten computer graded tests in the semester. These tests are designed for you to show me you are reading the material.
3. There are nine Essay Assignments. They are short, evocative and fun. That said, please follow MLA format on the written work and be sure your grammar and syntax is correct. Plays are underlined or italics and are to be treated like books. Use this URL for MLA in all of your written work <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
4. PowerPoint Set Design Image Research for unit 7 (you will do a Costume Design Image Research for unit 12). As a set designer, create a power point presentation of between 12 to 18 images that demonstrate the location, architecture, ideas for interior places, and pieces of furniture, background surrounding/environment. Label each image. What does the world of the play (as seen by the audience) look like? These images must support both the physical needs of the play and be informed by the ruling idea. **-DO NOT USE THE IMAGES SET DESIGNS OF OTHER SET DESIGNERS in this project!!!** Label every image (worth repeating) in the power point and provide a brief description of what part of the set design it relates to. For example, if you have several photographs showing ideas for a couch, you must first label it as a couch (I know it looks like a couch). It would behoove you to have multiple labeled research images that could work for that environment. Be sure you also have the scene in which this is “couch” is to be used also denoted in your research slides.

What images do I need to find?

Look for photos that are evocative of the “world” you would be creating on stage. Think of all of the objects necessary for the play. Look to the text for indications of what might be needed.

- a. For an interior play: What does the room look like?
- b. For a play that takes place outside: What does the exterior look like?
- c. Wall texture: If the play is set inside, does it have plaster walls that are painted or wallpapered? What is the style of the room? (This requires you to do research of a particular period style so you need to know the year in which the play takes place.)
- d. Floor texture: stone, hardwood, etc?
- e. Lighting fixtures: chandelier, standing lamps, etc.?)
- f. Furniture including rugs?
- g. Stairs and stair railings?
- h. Door styles: front doors, interior doors.
- i. For exteriors – backdrop image...do we see sky, trees, etc?
- j. Literal vs. figurative or realistic vs. non-realistic?
- k. If you find a single picture that encapsulates the mood of the play you can title it “Key Image”

Where do I find images and how do I locate the best images easily?

You can find images at the following locations online:

- www.gettyimages.com
- google image search
- www.corbis.com
- www.masterfile.com

NOTE: Before searching, create a list of keywords that will net images for your design. For example, for HAMLET your list might include the following search terms: Castle in Denmark, Danish Castle, Ruined castle - Denmark, scary castle, Throne room of castle, Danish tapestries, Danish royal home, stone floor of castle, Danish royal furnishing, antique Danish furniture, etc.

IMPORTANT: Save all images to a folder on your computer and name them so that you can identify them easily later. Do not save thumbnail versions of images. Always click on a thumbnail to view the highest resolution image. If the images are too pixilated they will not make a good presentation later.

How do I present my images?

Once you have collected your images, you can do your presentation in one of the following ways:

- a. Create a power point presentation or PDF- each frame can contain one or two images max. Insert your slides or PDF
- b. Make sure the images are large enough to see well. This will mean that your word doc will be several pages long. Number your pages.

Make sure you insert a text box next to each picture and **label it plus a referring phrase as to what the image is, what you liked about the image and where (what scene) this will be used.** For example, for HAMLET, next to a picture of a fancy bed you could label it "Bed for Gertrude's Bedchamber" then you would add what you like about it to why this bed—is a bed in the shape of a race car really the thing that Gerty likes to sleep on? DO NOT take a picture of complete Bedroom! This is someone else's idea and thus their intellectual property! But, if you like the bed-drapes because of the gauze like flow and sensuality (which you think might play up the incest tension between her and her son) then state that. Then pick another image for her Bed. Thus you mix and match images to create your own vision of what you think this bedroom will look like.

If you are doing a power point presentation, make sure to create a first frame to be used as a title page with your name, the course name and "Image Gallery for ...(name of play)". If you are doing a word doc or pdf, make sure to include that same information at the top of the page.

Free photo editing software available online at www.picnik.com if you need to resize your images or alter them in any way.

Finally, have fun (and start early)

5. Unit 11 Course Assignment #1 (Production Review). The review is due until the end of term, however, you might want to make plans to see this live (professional play) at some before then. It would be best to wait until at least halfway Unit 7 before you see the play and be sure to take copious notes during intermission and immediately after the show (BUT NEVER DURING THE SHOW!), and keep a copy of the program for reference because you will need it for the review you will write. Those of you who are not in Miami, please give me an email asap (by week 2 of the course) so as to discuss your situation. All of you in Miami, you will see *Guys and Dolls* at the Jerry Herman Ring Theatre between April 13 and April 23. Here is the URL for the box office, please make you own arrangements to suit your specific situation:

<http://www.as.miami.edu/ringtheatre/current-season/#d.en.41017/>

I recommend taking a date and making a night of it. Buy your tickets early, so that you can be sure nothing happens that prevents you from attending this production. It is your responsibility to attend as part of this online course—theatre is a live activity and if you don't see live theatre, the point of the class is significantly diminished! Your textbook (see Appendix) provides some guidelines for writing a review. In addition to those guidelines please adhere closely to the following:

- The review is based on the elements of production and not as a piece of dramatic literature.
 - Be sure to name the production, and where it was produced.
 - Be sure to name the director. What did you think of his or her direction (pick a moment or scene) and be as specific as possible. Did you like it, did it further your understanding of the play or not?
 - Use the examples I have provided line of other critiques of productions, so that you clearly understand how to do this project.
 - Be sure to name each of the designers (set, costume, lighting and sound) and pick a moment or scene that exemplifies their work.
 - Be as specific as possible. Was it effective? Did it further your understanding of the play or not?
 - Be sure to name one actor. What character did that actor play? Did you like what he or she did as an actor to convey character (not did you like the character)? What did the actor do to make you feel one or another about the character?
 - Be sure to have a strong conclusion. Use transitions to make sure that the paper flows from one idea to the next, supported by what you saw.
6. Unit 12 Course Assignment #2 (Final Project) You have already done some of these exercises. Now, you will need to choose one of the plays for which you **DID NOT already create a ruling idea in the previous unit**. This final project **MUST** be from one of the plays that we have read and studied this semester.

Once you have chosen your play, read through it several times (again). As Director and Costume designer. You will create a document in which you explain the following:

As the director

- a. What is your ruling idea?
- b. What is your tone goal statement for each element of the dramatic structure (i.e. exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution/catastrophe, and denouement)?

Write these down, including title and author of play.

As the costume designer

- a. Create a power point presentation of between 12 (C level) to 20 images that demonstrate your understanding of who this person is by the specifics of what they wear. This should also be informed by your ruling idea!
- b. You should have an array of images that relate specifically to your ideas in regard character (age, socio-economic background, etc.), etc. The idea is to use these images as a communication tool to fully explain your ideas to others. This is actually what happens in the professional Theatre. Think of it as a visual aid/outline that moves your ideas forward and allows others a

window into your thought process. Each image of must be specifically labeled as to what character, what act. These images must support both the physical needs of the play and be informed by the ruling idea. Label every image in the power point and provide a brief description, in terms of color and fabric choice so as to help inform the person looking at those images.

- c. DO NOT USE COMPLETE “costumes” or clothes from other productions or movies.
- d. DO NOT USE images of famous people. This makes us look at the famous person and not what they are wearing and thus our eye is betrayed.

What images do I need to find? Look to the text for indications of what might be needed in terms of the specifics—don’t confuse text of the play with stage directions. Clothes say everything about a person. Don’t why a white shirt and not a blue what—color has a philosophy to it.

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How do I present my images?

Once you have collected your images, you can do your presentation in one of the following ways:

- c. Create a power point presentation- each frame can contain one or two images max.
- d. Insert your slides into a word document. Make sure the images are large enough to see well. This will mean that your word doc will be several pages long. Number your pages.
- e. Create a pdf. (I recommend this over a word doc as it isn't as large a file in the end).

Make sure you insert a text box next to each picture and **label it plus a referring phrase as to what the image is, what you liked about the image and where (what scene) this will be used.** DO NOT use a picture of complete “outfit”! This is someone else’s idea and thus their intellectual property! But, if you like the bed-drapes because of the gauze like flow and sensuality (which you think might play up the incest tension between her

and her son) then state that. Then pick another image for her Bed. Thus you mix and match images to create your own vision of what you think this bedroom will look like.

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COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: Course Introduction to the Theatre and how it fits in Society

Students will begin by studying a brief history of theatre's role in society, consider theatre's relationship to society, read and discuss one of the important Greek tragedies, and explore the definition of theatre.

Unit 2: *Backwards & Forwards*. In this unit students will read and discuss the text *Backwards & Forwards* by David Ball, analyze *Medea* in terms of shape and method, and consider some "Tricks of the Trade."

Unit 3 Playwrights & the Play

In this unit students will explore the craft of playwriting, discover some great American playwrights, and read and discuss the play *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*.

Unit 4: Dramatic Structure

In this unit students will review Aristotle's elements of drama, consider the importance of theme in drama, analyze the dramatic structure of *Hamlet* and conduct a basic script analysis.

Unit 5: The Actor

In this unit students will consider the careers of some great actors of the past, explore the evolution of modern acting as well as examine the audition and rehearsal process.

Unit 6: The Director

In this unit students will consider the history of directing, explore the styles of different directors, and discuss the job of the director and practice approaching a scene like a director.

Unit 7: The Designers

In this unit students will study the history of design and learn about different types of theatrical design (set, costume, lighting). Students will also discuss the roles of the various designers (set, costume, lighting). Finally, students will practice approaching a scene like a designer for their

project. DO NOT include images/research for costumes or lighting, nor pictures of another designers stage setting. What I am looking for are research images that support your vision of the story as a the set designer for this project.

Unit 8: Realism

In this unit students will explore the antecedents and history of realism, examine the influence of the development of psychology on realism, learn about important dramatists in the realism movement, and read and discuss a play in the style of realism.

Unit 9: Theatricalism (Non-realism)

In this unit students will learn how to describe theatricalism, discover forms of theatricalism in the early 20th century, explore the Theatre of the Absurd, and discuss the play Angels in America.

Unit 10: Musical Theatre

In this unit students will consider the roots of American musical theatre, examine some important musicals and watch and discuss a filmed musical.

Unit 11: Genre

In this unit students will learn the definition and purpose of genre classification; consider differences between tragedy and comedy; explore farce, melodrama and tragicomedy; examine the role of the critic, and write a play review.

Unit 12: Review

In this unit students will review the concepts of ruling idea and tone goal; review the goals of the costume designer and complete a project on one of the plays studied in the course from that perspective. Do not include set or lighting design images.

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

Below please find the dates in which the Unit Assignments are due. You will be denied access to the units beyond the date listed at 11:55PM. As a consequence you will not have the ability to complete the assignments beyond the below date as denoted. DO NOT WAIT until 11:50PM on the due date to attempt this upload. Let me be clear, it “doesn’t work” if you waited and tried to upload past the cut off time. Do not email me your work, you must upload it to blackboard in order to receive a grade for the assignment.

Unit 1	Saturday, January 23
Unit 2	Wednesday, February 3
Unit 3	Saturday, February 13
Unit 4	Wednesday, February 24
Unit 5	Saturday, March 5
Unit 6	Wednesday, March 16

Unit 7	Saturday, March 26
Unit 8	Wednesday, April 6
Unit 9	Saturday, April, 16
Unit 10	Wednesday, April 20
Unit 11	Wednesday, April 27
	Course Assignment #1 from Unit 11 can be completed upon seeing a production provided your understand the assignment and follow the examples I have posted on line in Unit 11
Unit 12	Course Assignment #2, Saturday, April 30

HOW TO PASS THE COURSE:

Do the work. Simple right? Actually it is that simple. The trick to passing this course without developing a migraine is to do the work early and pace yourself. If everything is done for this course prior to final week, life will be good, and you will just be polishing a finished product (start on this sooner rather than later). Remember, if you don't due Course Assignments #1 and #2 from Unit's 11 and 12 you will fail this on-line course.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI HONOR CODE:

Students' rules and regulations are listed in the latest University of Miami Bulletin and Honor Code. Copies of those can be found at <http://www6.miami.edu/umbulletin/> and http://www6.miami.edu/UMH/CDA/UMH_Main/0,1770,2415-1;10933-2,00.html. Long story short—don't cheat!

FINAL THOUGHTS:

I love the Theatre and hope that you will also begin to build a passion and understanding for it, as a vital lively art form. Please let me know what I can do to aid you in your success in this course and in cultivating an understanding of the Theatre while avoiding any "drama" in the drama. Toward that end keep a copy of all the work you do in this course. Submit your work via Blackboard and not via email (not accepted) to me. Remember, work ahead and you will have a great time.