

# THEA 101 Introduction to Theatre

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Texts: *Theatre: The Lively Art* by Wilson and Goldfarb, 11<sup>th</sup> edition

*The Colored Museum* by George C. Wolfe

*The Funeral Parlor* by Christopher Durang – on Blackboard

You are required to attend one performance this semester at FMU. I will add dates to this document soon.

## General Education Goals

1. To provide experiences that enable students to understand the effects of the arts and to identify and analyze artistic aspects of cultures.
2. To enable students as citizens and educated members of their communities to know and appreciate their own human cultural heritage and its development in a global context;
3. To develop an understanding of the present as informed by the past.

## Course Objectives:

1. To aid you in becoming a more informed, critical and frequent audience member and possibly future theatre practitioner.
2. To develop an understanding of theatre as a collaborative art form.
3. To provide a critical framework with which you can evaluate the artistic quality of a script of performance.
4. To examine theatre as a reflection and product of culture(s), how it relates to other arts and forms of entertainment, and how it is a reflection of the human condition

## Important Dates

11/4-5 Fall Break, no class

12/2 Last Day of class

12/3 Reading Day

## GRADES

Four regular exams	125 pts each	500	A 1000-900
5 Practitioner Project questions - 20 pts each	100	100	B+ 899-879
10 quizzes open book	10 each	100	B 800-878
Final Exam	200	200	C+ 779-799
Production Project	50	50	C 700-778
Attendance Fall play	25	25	D+ 679-699
Attitude/Participation	25	25	D 600-678
Total Points Possible		1000	F below 600

**BLACKBOARD WILL NOT REFLECT YOUR CORRECT GRADE.** Because tests will be taken in person, Blackboard will not show you the correct total. In order to calculate your grade at any time, add the blackboard total to any other work not graded on Blackboard. THEN take that result and divide it by the total points possible. That will give you a percentage. 90s-A, 80s-B, etc.

No W's will be given for any reason after the student withdrawal date.

### **A Word About Grades**

In a recent study by researchers at the University of California, a third of students surveyed expect a “B” just for attending class, and 40 percent said they deserved a “B” for only completing the course requirements. It is my goal to help you think differently about this class and your university experience, as well as help you connect your education to your profession.

- Working hard, or working harder than someone else, does not mean that you deserve a higher mark.
- Working hard, putting in many hours, does not create a good paper or performance. Natural creativity and a well-organized thought process is the key to successful problem solving.
- Be careful not to confuse the level of effort with the quality of work. A lot of effort does not merit a higher grade.
- The default grade for completing everything per the criteria on the course syllabus, including attendance, is a “C”, not an “A”.
- Students are expected to read and research for knowledge and perform either on paper or actively with the goal of exploring ideas.
- You will not get a grade, you will earn a grade, and therefore you deserve the grade posted.
- The academic burden falls to you, the student. Therefore take it upon yourself to read, research, and concept your proposed problem (be it test, paper, or performance) to a higher solution. When you develop a genuine interest in the field of theatre, a holistic and intrinsically motivated learning can take place, which better prepares you for the world, no matter your chosen field.

## **Correspondence**

### **Email**

The best way to correspond with me one-on-one is through email. If you choose to email me, in order for you to receive a response from me within 48 hours M-F, you must: email me from your FMU Gmail account only (required for all FMU students); in the subject line put "THEA 101 MW or TR, First Name Last Name"; within the email, address me as Dr. Larsen; sign your full name; the email should use grammatically correct English. If these rules are not followed, I will not respond to your email.

### **My Webpage**

Check Blackboard EVERY DAY. I will use Blackboard to communicate to you.

### **Phone Messages**

You may leave a phone message, but if I can't understand you, your telephone number, your name, and/or your message, I will not return your call.

## Appointments

You may make an appointment to see me face-to-face. Office hours are posted in a link on my website. To make an appointment, please send an e-mail message in the format outlined above. You must receive an email message from me confirming the appointment. If you don't, it means I didn't get your message. Keep your appointment time.

## Homework • Reading

### Reading

**YOU NEED THE BOOK FOR THIS CLASS IMMEDIATELY!** You are adults. I do not believe in reading the text to you. You will be responsible for your own reading (see tentative schedule and check Blackboard daily). You should have all assigned reading completed on the first day of the week. Lectures will supplement the text. Exams and quizzes will be based on both. Review the bold, italicized, and summaries and key terms at the end of each chapter.

### **READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS on the assignment pages in the main menu CAREFULLY!**

Nothing is more frustrating for me than to grade a paper where the student has not at all read the instructions. In those cases, the paper will receive a 0.

**Reading plays:** You are going to read two plays this semester. You have to read the stage directions and the introductory material as well as the dialogue. It is important. Since plays are meant to be performed, you might want to gather friends to do a reading. You will understand it so much better. You can even do this over Zoom. If you can't find others to read with, read it out loud.

**Writing:** This is college, you are expected to know how to write. All documents must be word processed and proofed. I will provide you with detailed instructions about what content I would like included in assignments. It is your responsibility to make sure all papers are in the proper style. All papers for this class will need to be in the latest edition of MLA style. This is part of your grade. For help with style and general writing concerns, please contact the writing center See writing center link on Blackboard under "Syllabus, Policies, Schedule," as well as info below. See "Writing for Dr. Larsen" section below.

**All assignments must be uploaded as a .pdf through Blackboard...** a .pdf is not a .docx or any other type. To do this, once you have word processed your document, go to File: Save As, then save as a .pdf. If they are not .pdfs, I cannot grade them and you will not receive credit for the assignment. You get one 1 ONE warning, then the rest will be 0s. All assignments are due per the date and time on the schedule and assignment link. Please see the "Late Work and Extra Credit" section below.

### Blackboard Problems

I hate Blackboard with my whole heart. I feel your pain. If you cannot figure out how to use Blackboard or your computer is not working with Blackboard, I don't know how to help you fix that. Call the student computer help desk. If you upload an assignment and Blackboard doesn't actually upload it, you **HAVE TO** email me a screenshot of the confirmation email so that I know you tried to upload your assignment. Without that confirmation, you may not upload a second time.

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## Writing for Dr. Larsen

- I will be checking for **plagiarism** so you cannot copy and paste information that is not yours. You need to use your own words. Please check plagiarism policies below.
- **Grammar and spelling** count. If there are a significant number of grammatical errors, your grade will be lowered by one letter.
- YOU MUST USE **MLA STYLE**. If you don't know what that is, go to the writing center. I will start counting off after the first assignment that you fail to use MLA style.
- You may certainly **research** outside of your text, but make sure if you do that you attach an MLA works cited page.
- **ORGANIZATION and Content:**
  - If a question asks you to "compare and contrast," it is best to write two paragraphs (one to compare and one to contrast).
  - If a question asks you to "list and explain," you can either list and introduce in one paragraph and then explain fully in subsequent paragraphs OR you can use one paragraph to list and explain EACH item.
  - If there are multiple parts to a question, answer each part in its own paragraph always supporting what you say.
  - Use specific words. For example, "That table is good for the play." That doesn't tell me anything, nor does it use theatrical terms. What is "good"? How does it do what you say it does? A better statement might be: "The heavy, oval table set piece situated center stage grounds the set and symbolizes the predominance of mother. It grounds the set by...." Then go on to prove/explain what you asserted.
  - Use terms specific to theatre, since that is what you are studying. It will make your work clearer. For example, don't say, "the *skit* was sad." Say, "the *play* or *script* was sad." Don't say, "her *outfit* was too young for her." Instead say, "Her *costume* did not reflect the age of the character."
  - Always answer HOW and WHY. Don't just say, "the costume was bad." Tell me HOW and WHY it was not appropriate to the play and/or character.
  - Make your writing specific and clear. ○ Have an opinion, but back it up with intelligent argument.

**USE THE WRITING CENTER!** - For help with style and general writing concerns, please contact the writing center at 661-1528, FH 114C. Our faculty and undergraduate consultants provide students with help on writing assignments for any class and at any stage of the writing process. Any student—even the strongest writer—can benefit from an individualized conference with a tutor.

## Links

Link to the website (<https://www.fmarion.edu/writingcenter/>) scheduler: <https://fmarion.mywconline.com/index.php> and to our helpful videos on 1) How to create a WCOonline account: <https://youtu.be/R7Cd7nE79Cw>

- 2) How to make and cancel appointments: <https://youtu.be/pwy1mPKchT8>
- 3) How to navigate our online tutorial space: [https://youtu.be/slb\\_VYgLiRU](https://youtu.be/slb_VYgLiRU)

## Pre-Grading Assignments

I am happy to do this for you. It shows me you care. But following are the parameters:

1. I will only look at work 48 hours (2 days) before work is due. No later.
2. I will only look at your work one time. Ask questions first either in email or in class. Then write the best draft you can and send it to me over email.

## Late Work and Extra Credit

I believe college should prepare you for the world and part of the world is learning to be responsible. For that reason, I take NO late work (except for hospitalization of you or an immediate family member). I take ANY early work. To balance this policy, I provide ample opportunity for extra credit throughout the course. Therefore, I suggest that you take every opportunity to earn extra credit in case of assignments missed. You may complete two projects of 50 points each, totaling 100 points. For a possible 50 pts, you can attend an/other production(s) and write performance review(s) about it/them. You may not write about an FMU production you are required to attend. You can volunteer for 10 hours (50 pts) or 20 hours (100 pts) on a production crew for an academic or professional theatre company. Specific instructions for extra credit are found on Blackboard under "Extra Credit." **YOU MAY ONLY DO UP TO 100 POINTS EXTRA CREDIT.** All written extra credit will be due by **11/21/24** - no exceptions.

## General Class Policies

### Attendance

I will attach a roll sheet to the door at the end of class. Sign the roll sheet each day because I have to report your attendance at various times. The door to the classroom will close and LOCK promptly at the class start time per my watch. Note: you can't participate if you are not there, so attitude/participation points will be affected if you are absent. I will also stress that if you don't come to class, you won't pass. If you choose to be absent, YOU are responsible for all material covered the day you missed class. Do not call or email me for information covered in class, contact one of your classmates and check Blackboard.

**ILLNESS POLICY:** ONLY the following absences are excused with proof: Hospital admittance, Covid notification from a Doctor, Student Health Services notification. If you have an extended illness, or extenuating circumstances, contact me as soon as you can and we will try to work something out. However, late work, late exams and excused absences will only be allowed if you have been admitted to the hospital or have COVID. You must show me proof. If you contact me after you have missed 2 classes, there will be no makeup/late opportunities.

### **FMU COVID Policy**

FMU covid policy says, if you are quarantined or have COVID, you **must** contact the FMU COVID office and then they will contact your professors. Only if the COVID office contacts me, do you get your absences excused, but because most of the work in my class is submitted on blackboard, you can still upload it on time. As well, you can email me weekly quizzes. Only if I get an official notice from the COVID office that you are quarantining or ill, can you take a late exam, but ONLY then.

### **Exam Policy**

All purses, backpacks, notebooks, books, etc. must be placed on the floor under your desk. ONLY your test, scan sheet and a pencil may be on your desk. You may not wear hoodies, hoods, hats, jackets, or scarves during the test. No electronic devices of any kind are allowed including earbuds. If I see you talking to another student, looking at another student's paper, all penalties for cheating outlined in this syllabus will apply.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be comprehensive. Per the student handbook, if you do not attend the final exam, you will fail the course. If you are late to the final exam, you will only be allowed the remaining time until the last person that was on time finishes the exam.

### **Final Grades**

I will not email you with your grade close to the end of the semester. You can keep track by using the grading information given in this syllabus. I will not email your final grade to you. You can check your grade as soon as I post it online.

### **Office of Disability Services**

For those registered with the Office of Disability Services, please remind me at least 2 days prior to the exam date to send your exam to the office of Disability Services.

### **Midterm Deficiencies**

At Midterm, grades will be averaged. Freshmen students with a D average or lower will receive a Midterm Deficiency via letter or email.

### **Graduating Seniors**

Please alert me to your status at Midterm so that I can plan to schedule your final exam.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated per the FMU student handbook and the FMU Honor Code. For the first offense, the assignment will receive a 0; second offense, you will fail the course. For all instances of plagiarism and cheating, the Fine Arts Dept Chair and the Associate Provost will be notified. This is serious business. Make sure you know what plagiarism and cheating are.

### **Electronic Devices**

There are many studies that show that students who take notes on an electronic device do NOT retain the same information as those who take notes with pen and paper. If you want to use an electronic device: computer, phone, tablet, you MUST sit in the back half of the room. If you make any kind of noise with that device, I will tell you to leave class, count you absent, and issue you a behavior form (described below). You may not have any of those devices out where you or I can see

them during an exam. If you do, I'll assume you are cheating and tell you to leave class, count you absent, give your exam a 0, and issue you a behavior form.

## **Behavior**

Though you are adults, it is necessary in some cases, to have strict behavior guidelines. Please see the Groundrules for Discussions link on my website for more information. Please read the following carefully: If you should choose to engage in behavior that is disruptive or offensive to others; talking, reading, doing other classwork, daydreaming; you will receive one warning from me. This class may be videotaped and/or photographed for disciplinary purposes. All attendance rules apply. See below:

## **Behavior Forms**

For failure to comply with of any above criteria (electronic devices, behavior, etc.) set forth in this syllabus, I will issue a FMU Behavior Form, which cites University Violation #12:

Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other University activities, including public service functions, or any authorized activities on University premises.

If you are issued this form, you will be directed to leave class and will not be allowed to return until you have visited the Student Affairs office (referred to the instructions found on the form). You will be counted absent for that day.

## **My Teaching Style**

Learning is a collaborative experience. I want to create a productive and safe environment where we can work and learn. Research has shown that an informal teaching style, if the students are mature enough, is the most effective style. Therefore, I expect you to be respectful of others through acknowledging that oppression exists because of ignorance and misinformation; and accepting responsibility for not repeating oppressive behaviors. Your behavior must be honest and assertive, thereby creating a safe atmosphere for open discussion.

As for me personally, I am concerned about you. I want you to benefit from this class. Please feel free to contact me when you have questions about the material or if you want me to look at your work before it is due. I expect honest and responsible behavior from you and will promise the same in return. I make every effort to be fair. This syllabus is a contract between you and me. I expect you to adhere to it. Taking the syllabus test on Blackboard means you agree to the policies and will abide by them. NO GRADES WILL BE RECORDED until the Syllabus test is taken by **8/30/24** 5pm.