

THEA 320 THEATRE HISTORY I: "FROM RITUAL TO RESTORATION" FALL 2023

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"We know what is right, we distinguish it clearly, but we don't achieve it."

Euripides

"They [playwrights] are the abstract and brief chroniclers of their time."

William Shakespeare

Required reading:

Wilson and Goldfarb, *Living Theater*

Plays – all are in public domain

Antigone, Menacchmus Brothers, Everyman, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Life is a Dream, Tartuffe, The Country Wife

You are required to attend one performance this semester, *Much Ado About Nothing* October 16 – 19, 2019 at the FMU University Theatre on campus. You must call the box office (661-1365) a week before the performance to reserve free tickets.

Course Description:

It has been written that theatre is the arena where humans attempt to make sense of their experiences, as individuals and as members of a community. Consequently, the theatre is more than the sum of its technological developments. It is intimately and sometimes immeasurably bound up with a community's history, i.e., its politics, economics, wars, celebrations and defeats, and, most emphatically, its gendered, racial, and class identities. This course will examine the known and frequently contested history of the, mostly, western European theatre, from the ancient Greeks to England, Italy, Spain. This history will survey styles of performance, theatrical architecture and costuming, and technological machinery. And we will read several play texts and influential critical essays.

Theatre history, like political history, is an act of interpretation. Every generation redefines its priorities and revises what was previously known and accepted within the community orthodoxy. This course will offer opportunities to think about how history works, and how a community responds by telling itself stories through performance and spectacle.

Course Objectives:

To equip each student with new and/or renewed critical and analytical skills in the reading and interpretation of historical events, players, and theories regarding historical theatrical practices, productions, reception, and controversies. As well, to equip students with better writing and communicative skills through intensive practice over the course of the semester.

My Teaching Philosophy

I am committed to the idea that theatre education needs to involve the symbiosis of practice and scholarship. I believe this philosophy is one that not only champions the liberal arts ideal (i.e., a nuanced and sophisticated *appreciation* of the practice and power of theatrical expression), but also best prepares the next generation of theatre artists and scholars (i.e., those who will *create* and *critically document and consider* theatre). Theatre training entailing at every level of undergraduate and graduate study the complementary activities of artistry and intellectual development ensures future generations of theatre artists, scholars, and audiences the practical and critical skills necessary for producing, responding to and documenting, as well as witnessing compelling and meaningful theatre. I argue that one would be sufficiently prepared for the profession (be it in the academy or the commercial theatre) when s/he demonstrates a thorough understanding of the theoretical and historical foundations of drama, is capable of applying this knowledge in production, and who can, through speaking and writing, soundly communicate his/her thoughts about the theatre. In short, then, unlike a conservatory program in theatre—one focusing primarily on skills acquisition—, or a dramatic literature program—one focusing principally on the passive analysis of theatrical texts and contexts—, I champion a model of theatre education that seeks to train the whole person; one that teaches and encourages students to locate and engage in a continual dialogue between practice and theory. This notion that the study of theatre and performance needs to be a symbiotic endeavor is the foundation of my teaching philosophy. It is, in fact, a sentiment I carry with me into this or any classroom. It is also this belief that keeps me active in my field as both artist and academic.

Important Dates

8/31/23 – syllabus test must be completed for you to remain in the class.

9/4 – Labor Day No Class

10/9-10/23 – Fall Break No Class

11/22-24 – Thanksgiving Holiday

12/4 - Last Day of class

12/55 - Reading Day

Grades

Evaluations/Grading: (based on 1000 points)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Final Exam: | 200pts |
| Midterm Exam: | 100pts |
| 3 papers | 300pts |
| 7 Play sheets (30 pts ea) | 200pts (+10 extra credit) |
| Commedia Presentations | 150pts |
| <u>Class Participation:</u> | <u>50pts</u> |
| Total = | 1000 points maximum |

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.

Attendance

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory and is absolutely critical to your success in this course. This course has a collaborative nature and requires both your physical and your intellectual presence. Accordingly, if you miss more than two (2) classes, your participation grade will be lowered **ten points for each additional absence**. This does not mean that you have two “freebies.” This means that you have two separate days in which to handle those inevitable days when you are sick or are otherwise unable to attend class. Use them judiciously. Likewise, perfect attendance will be favorably considered. Besides, the classes will prove to be a joy and you wouldn’t want to miss them anyway. The baseline attendance policy in the 2023-24 Francis Marion University catalog concerning Fs and Ws will be adhered to as well, which states that if you are absent more than twice the number of class days in the week, you will be dropped with an F.

Tardiness Policy:

The same rules apply as for attendance. Lateness is highly disruptive to the teacher and the students. You are expected to be here on time. The rule of thumb is simple: if you’re not here when I take attendance, you’re late. And **three lates equals one absence**. Obviously, there will be special circumstances, but they should be very few and far between.

Assignments/Exams

All assignments are due by the beginning of the class (by 11:20am) uploaded via dropbox. You will receive an invitation from me to your FMU gmail address at the beginning of the semester. Documents **MUST** be uploaded as a pdf file. If they are not, you receive a 0 for that assignment. **Name your documents:** lastname.firstname.assignment.pdf (Larsen.Dawn.Paper1.pdf) you will receive a 0 for that assignment.

Reading: You are adults. I do not believe in reading the text to you. You will be responsible for your own reading (see tentative schedule). **ESPECIALLY** if we are discussing a play and you haven't read it, how will there be a discussion?! Lectures will supplement the text. Exams and quizzes will be based on both.

Paper review: You will attend and write a review of *Songs for a New World*, even if you are in it. Details for each review are provided on the website. Paper #2 the critique.

Writing: You are expected to know how to write, I will provide you with detailed instructions about what content I would like included in each paper. It is your responsibility to make sure papers are in the proper style. All papers for this class will need to be in latest edition MLA style. For help with style and general writing concerns, please contact the writing center at 661-1528, FH 114C.

Extra Credit: You may do one paper #1 for a possible 50 points of extra credit. Read a play that was written before 1785 and write paper #1 on it. This extra credit is due by dropbox by **5pm Nov 21, Monday.**

Plagiarism and Cheating: Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated per the student handbook and 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 is.

Late Work: 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.

Writing Assignments: You will be given 3 writing assignments, 3-5 pages each, about a given subject. You will generally be given a week to complete the assignment. Then you will get a graded and annotated response from me. For paper one, you will then have up to three days to rewrite the assignment for a better grade if you choose. Papers 2 & 3 are a one shot deal.

Play Sheets: You will be required to complete a play sheet on each of the seven plays you will read for the class. These reports will be due the day each play is scheduled to be discussed.

Group Presentation: You will create a short 10 min scene based on a Commedia stock character who you learned about this semester using appropriate prologue, epilogue, and lazzi. Each member of the group will be responsible for one area of the commedia topic for that particular character (acting, staging, governance, etc.) and will provide a 1-2 page paper about their research for this area, due at the time of the presentation. Specific instructions will be provided.

Exams: There will be both a midterm and a final exam given in this course. Both will have essay elements. There may be an occasional unannounced quiz on the readings. Hint: Stay current.

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. 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: 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. Also, I will not email your final grade to you. You can check your grade as soon as I post it online.

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 320, *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 my website EVERY DAY. I will use the website and your THEA 320 page to communicate with you as a class.

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.

Other Policies

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.

Cell Phones & mp3 Players

All cell phones and mp3 players must be turned **OFF** during this class. Vibrate mode is a distraction. Should your phone ring, you will be asked to leave class and counted absent for that day regardless. After 2 warnings, you will be reported to the chair of the department and the Dean of Students and withdrawn from the class with an F.

Behavior

Though you are adults, it is necessary in some cases, to have strict behavior guidelines. Please see the "Groundrules for Discussion" 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. For your second offense, you will be asked to leave class for that day and be counted absent. For your third offense you will be asked to leave class for that day and directed to see the Dean of Students before you are allowed to return to class. Any missed time will be counted toward absences. After 3 warnings, you will be withdrawn from the class with an F. This class may be videotaped for disciplinary purposes. All attendance rules apply.

Tentative Schedule

Subject to Change

Dr. Larsen THEA 320

| Week | | Assignment |
|------------|---|---|
| 1 (8/22) | Course Introductions, syllabus – Zoom (8/22-31) chapter (on website) and pp 2-21 Wilson – R | my chapter Wilson pp 2-21 |
| 2 (8/29) | Origins -T Greek theatre - Th Extra Credit Thought due - R | p 23-end of 1 2 |
| 3 (9/5) | Greek theatre / <i>Antigone</i> Discussion- T Playsheet <i>Antigone</i> - R | 2 & <i>Antigone</i> |
| 4 (9/12) | Roman Theatre – T play discussion - R Playsheet <i>The Menacchmus Brothers</i> -R | 3 <i>Menacchmus Bro</i> |
| 5 (9/19) | Medieval - T Asian – Th I will not be in class so you will not get a lecture on this. Read the chapter carefully. No class TH Paper #1 DUE - Th | 5 4 |
| 6 (9/28) | <i>Everyman</i> & <i>The Second Shepherd's Play</i> <i>Everyman</i> Playsheet DUE – T Commedia instructions & group set-up | <i>Everyman</i> & <i>The Second Shepherd's Play</i> |
| 7 (10/3) | Italian Renaissance Paper 1 rewrite DUE – TUESDAY by 11:20 am <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Playsheet Due – R | 6 <i>Midsummer's</i> |
| 8 (10/10) | FALL BREAK – NO CLASS Tues Guest Lecture – Th | Commedia readings |
| 9 (10/17) | Group Work & Review for Exam | x |
| 10 (10/24) | Group Work - T Exam 1 (ch 1-4 and plays) – R | |
| 11 (10/31) | Group work - T Paper #2 DUE - R English Renaissance -R | 7 |
| 12 (11/7) | Work Day - T Spain's Golden Age - R Commedia Paper Outline DUE - T Playsheet DUE – R | 8 <i>Life is a Dream</i> |
| 13 (11/14) | French Neoclassical & comedy -T Workday - R Playsheet DUE - R | 8 & <i>Tartuffe</i> 9 |
| 14 (11/21) | English Restoration Commedia Paper DUE - T THANKSGIVING BREAK | <i>The Country Wife</i> |
| 15 (11/28) | Paper #3 DUE - T <i>Country Wife</i> Playsheet DUE - T Final Review Commedia Performance - 11/29 | |
| TBA | FINAL | |