

THEATRE CRITICISM SYLLABUS

THEATRE: CONTEXT & CULTURE

Revised 1/25/12

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Course Goals:

To familiarize honors journalism students with all practical and aesthetic aspects of contemporary theatrical production, including acting, directing, playwriting, and design (scenic, costume, lighting, sound) within the context of theatre history, theory, and criticism.

- To develop an understanding, appreciation, and aesthetic for theatre
- To understand the audience's role in the theatre
- To learn how actors and directors create roles and productions
- To grasp the nature of drama and the text behind a performance
- To understand the playwright's craft and the tools of the dramatist
- To appreciate the task of the designer in the theatre
- To understand the role of the critic and reviewer in this process.

The major goal of this course is to help journalism students develop the skills to appreciate and respond to theatrical productions using a thoughtful, critical method based upon an understanding of both practical theatre production, and theatre scholarship including theatre history, dramatic literature, theatre theory and criticism.

Course Methods:

- Lecture and discussion groups; students will develop ideas on particular theatrical productions. Each class will include a mix of lecture, in-class exercises and participation, and discussion.
- Theatre attendance and participation; students will be given opportunities to see and critique theatrical productions in the MU Department of Theatre, the University Concert Series, in Kansas City and/or St. Louis professional productions, as well as at other colleges in town including Stephens College, Columbia College and local community theatre productions.
- Use of an "introduction to theatre" text specifically written for critics; we'll be using Wall Street Journal Theatre Critic Edwin Wilson's *The Theatre Experience*. Students will have weekly online quizzes tied to the text and lecture material.
- Readings of major theatre critics & theorists on the theatre including Aristotle, Horace, Lope de Vega, Castelvetro & Italian Renaissance Critics, Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, Harold Clurman, Frank Rich, Alisa Solomon, Michael Feingold, Mel Gussow, Robert Brustein, Jill Dolan, Edward Albee, and others.
- Participation in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival/Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center National Critics Institute. Students will compete at the 2007 KCACTF Region V Festival in Ames, Iowa.

WEBPAGE: BLACKBOARD course <http://courses.missouri.edu>

Course ID: Theatre 3005: INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE CRITICISM, Sec 1 – WS2007 (Crespy)

The Blackboard website is a means of keeping you informed about upcoming events, instructions for assignments, taking online exams, and for providing discussions about class. It is important to check Blackboard daily to keep current. Under course login, select Blackboard and enter your PAW Print. If you have difficulty in logging in to the course or you do not see the course listed, please contact the IAT Services Help Desk at 882-5000. **NOTE:** You will have all your exams via WebCT and there are **no make-ups**, so please make sure you schedule your time accordingly. *Computer and electronic malfunctions never qualify as an excuse for missing a deadline.*

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

For this course, examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Collecting information from other sources, including textbooks and the internet and claiming it as your own.
- Collaborating with a classmate to the extent that your own work is not apparent.
- Copying during an exam.
- Having someone else take your online quizzes or write your final project.

REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENT GRADE PERCENTAGE:

ATTENDANCE

DAILY ATTENDANCE	10%
DAILY PARTICIPATION	10%
ATTENDANCE TOTAL	<u>20%</u>

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

5 REVIEWS	30%
15 UNIT QUIZZES	20%
THEATRE CRITIC PAPER (10-15 PAGES)	30%
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
PROPOSAL	
OUTLINE	
FIRST DRAFT	
FINAL DRAFT	
TOTAL WRITTEN	<u>80%</u>
<u>TOTAL FOR CLASS</u>	<u>100%</u>

GRADING SCALE FOR COURSE

97-100 A+	77-80 C
95-97 A	65-77 C-
93-95 A-	63-65 D+
90-93 B+	60-63 D
87-90 B	57-60 D-
83-87 B-	Below 57 F
80-83 C+	

ATTENDANCE : Students will be expected to attend **all** classes; attendance will be taken *randomly* over the course of the semester. Students must be present for **all** random attendance checks to receive the attendance credit. Each attendance check involves student answering two questions, based upon the lectures and text. You must answer at least **one** of these two questions **correctly** to get the attendance credit. If you miss **any** of the attendance checks, you will lose your classroom attendance grade. No excuses are accepted. Attendance is worth 100 points—if you don't make one of these attendance checks you'll lose these points. The only acceptable absences for either class or theatre attendance are the following:

DEATH OR FAMILY EMERGENCY. You **must** have **your parent or guardian** call or email instructor immediately after such an instance.

ILLNESS VERIFIABLE BY DOCTOR'S NOTE. You must have a doctor's note to be excused from class.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU MISS CLASS FOR ANY OF THESE REASONS, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INFORMATION IN THE LECTURE. IF YOU MISS THEATRE PERFORMANCE DATES, YOU MUST ATTEND THOSE SHOWS AND PROVIDE A TICKET STUB AND PROGRAM FOR THE DATE YOU ATTENDED.

PARTICIPATION: You are expected to participate in class—which means arriving at class having read the chapter assigned for that day, and prepared to answer questions.

WRITTEN WORK : Your grade on written work is based upon the depth and diligence in meeting assignment requirements, care and professionalism in presentation (all work must be typed and on time). All papers follow either MLA or Chicago Manual of Style—however, an excellent text on Chicago Manual of Style is Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. It is available at the bookstore and at Ellis Library. Deadlines are important to all theatre professionals. I do not accept late work of any kind, regardless of the situation. All work must be typed (no handwritten material is accepted), and dropped into the appropriate assignment box on the Blackboard website (See **Grading Rubric**).

GRADING RUBRIC

"A" LEVEL WRITING: An "A" paper is one that presents an original, interesting, and well-

supported thesis. The writer offers strong and clearly elucidated evidence supporting it. Such a paper is elegantly organized, contains a strong initial thesis paragraph that offers a preview of its argument. An "A" contains few errors of grammar and style, and shows careful proofreading. It represents <i>excellence</i> and demonstrates the work of a student who goes above and beyond the norm.
"B" LEVEL WRITING: A "B" paper represents <i>good</i> work, has a sound though perhaps not very original thesis and uses fairly obvious evidence in support of its assertions. Its arguments, while not extraordinary, are clear and understandable. A "B" paper may be outstanding in some respects but weak in others (i.e. strong argument, but poor grammar or not enough evidence). Grammar and style are expected to be very strong in a "B" paper.
"C" LEVEL WRITING: A "C" paper is quite weak in at least one of its major aspects; it has a poorly articulated thesis, flimsy evidence supporting it, is unimaginatively but adequately argued, and is presented with sufficient, though not exemplary grammar and style.
"D" LEVEL WRITING : A "D" paper presents no sort of thesis, weak or little evidence or support, and extremely poor grammar and style.
"F" LEVEL WRITING : Student has made no attempt to complete the assignment. Writing is unacceptable in form and content. Student will be asked to redo the work in its entirety for a "C" level grade. If unrevised and uncorrected, student stands a chance of being dropped from the course. Two "F" level assignments and the student will be dropped from the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

TEXTS: Wilson, Edwin & Alvin Goldfarb, *The Theatre Experience*. Tenth Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Palmer, Richard. *The Critics' Canon: The Critics' Canon: Standards of Theatrical Reviewing in America*. Greenwood. 1988

PLAYS: Wilson, Edwin & Alvin Goldfarb, *Anthology of Living Theatre*. Third Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2004.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office.

To request academic accommodations (for example, a notetaker), students must also register with Disability Services, AO38 Brady Commons, 882-4696. It is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on Disability Resources on the MU homepage.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the provost office.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- ✓ Late assignments will not be accepted; the assignments must be turned in by the end of class on the date assigned. All online quizzes must be taken by the dates scheduled on the syllabus. You will have one try to take each test. There are no make-ups for any of the tests. Each test is 15 minutes long with 25 multiple choice questions. You will have approximately 45 seconds to answer each question.
- ✓ Any student who is distracting or disrespectful to instructors, teaching assistants, fellow students or guests of the class may be asked to leave. Repeated instances will result in a drop from the class. Repeated angry emails, or ugly responses in discussion boards will also be grounds for being dropped from class.
- ✓ If you need to leave a class early, please advise the instructor or teaching assistants before the class begins; repeated exits will result in loss of attendance points. Attendance will be taken at the end of classes, so leaving early is not the best choice.
- ✓ Lecture material is included in all tests for the course. You are responsible for taking notes, or bringing recording devices to class if you are a slow note-taker. Lecture notes will NOT be posted; you must take notes for this course.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

The class will receive a final schedule of performances to attend; some will be attended together as a class; others will be attended separately. Students are required to reserve tickets for productions on their own at their own expense. The shows that we're planning on seeing as a class are asterisk'd (*). The date for the trip to Kansas City to see the UMKC production of *THE SECRET LIFE OF LOSERS* at the H&R Block City Stage, Union Station is SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 7:30PM (so hold that date!). The choices include:

MU Theatre Department Winter Season

Call 882 PLAY (7529) for Tickets

Feb./22-24, Mar. 1-4	<i>Arms and the Man</i>	Rhynsburger *
March/15-18 & 20-22	<i>The Story</i>	Corner Playhouse*
April/3-8	<i>Mizzou New Play Series</i>	Corner Playhouse
April/25-30	<i>The Pedlar</i>	Rhynsburger

Stephens College Theatre Department Winter Seasons

Call (573) 876-7199 for Tickets

February 9 – 11, 14-17	<i>Taming the Shrew</i>	Macklanburg Playhouse*
February 21 – 24	<i>43 Plays for 43 Presidents</i>	Warehouse Theatre*

University Concert Series

February 9	<i>Camelot</i>	Jesse Hall
February 22	<i>Man of La Mancha</i>	Jesse Hall
February 27	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	Jesse Hall

UMKC Dept. of Theatre

February 10-24.	<i>The Secret Life of Losers (N.O.W.)</i> by Megan Mostyn-Brown*
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March 28-April 7 *Present Laughter* by Noel Coward
April 14-22 *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare

Repertory Theatre of St. Louis

January 3–January 28, 2007 *Heartbreak House*
February 7–March 4, 2007 *The Heidi Chronicles*
March 21–April 15, 2007 *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*

Kansas City Repertory

Jan. 19-Feb. 11, 2007 *King Lear*
Feb 23-Mar. 18, 2007 *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*
Feb. 2-Mar. 18, 2007 *Love, Janis - A New Musical*

DRAFT CLASS SCHEDULE – Readings & Assignments

Week/Day	Subject	Text	Assignment
WEEK 1	THE AUDIENCE		
Mon., Jan. 15	ONLINE Class Welcome	Preface, Introduction	
Wed., Jan. 17	Audience Role	Chap. 1	
Fri., Jan. 19	Audience Expectations	Chap. 2	
Weekly Readings	Play: Sophocles' <i>Antigone</i> Critic: Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> Harold Clurman: <i>Antigone</i> Harold Clurman: <i>On Theatre</i> Richard H. Palmer: "Nature & Function of a Review"		
Mon., Jan. 22	Online Quiz #1 – Introduction, Chaps. 1 & 2, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Jan. 22 - Fri., Jan. 27	NO CLASS – KENNEDY CENTER AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATRE FESTIVAL, AMES, IOWA		
WEEK 2	THE CRITIC & THEATRE SPACES		
Mon., Jan. 29	The Critic & The Audience	Chap. 3	
Wed., Jan. 31	Stage Spaces	Chap. 4	
Friday, Feb. 2	NO CLASS (Dr. Crespy attends KCACTF Region One)		
Weekly Readings	Play: Shakespeares' <i>Hamlet</i> Theorist: Horace's <i>Ars Poetica</i> (online) Critic: John Simon, "Hamlet at the Public Theatre" Stark Young, "Barrymore's Hamlet in London" Mel Gussow, <i>Visions and Voices</i> Richard H. Palmer: Chap. 10 "Strengths and Weakness of a Theatrical Review" & " Journalistic Requirements for a Theatrical Review"		
WEEK 3	THE PERFORMER		
Mon., Feb. 5	Online Quiz #2 – Chaps. 3 & 4, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Feb. 5	Acting: Offstage and in the Past	Chap. 5	
Wed., Feb. 7	Acting: History		
Fri., Feb. 9	Acting: History cont'd		
Weekly Readings	Play: Chekhov, <i>Cherry Orchard</i> Theorist: Stanislavski's <i>An Actor Prepares: Chap. 3-Action</i> Critic: George Bernard Shaw on Duse vs. Bernhardt George Bernard Shaw, "Two Reviews" Richard H. Palmer: Chap. 3 "Reviewing the Actor"		

WEEK 4	THE PERFORMER		
Mon., Feb. 12	Online Quiz #3 – Chap. 5, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Feb. 12	Theatre Review Due: <i>KING LEAR</i>		
Mon., Feb. 12	Stage Acting Today	Chap. 6	
Wed., Feb. 14	Technique of Acting		
Fri., Feb. 16	Business of Acting		BIBLIOGRAPHY
Fri., Feb. 16	DUE: THEATRE CRITIC PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Weekly Readings	<p>Play: Moliere's <i>Tartuffe</i></p> <p>Theorist: Moliere's <i>Versailles Impromptu</i></p> <p>Critic: Frank Rich, "Audacious Gambles with High Comedy" from <i>Hot Seat: Theater Criticism for The New York Times, 1980-1993</i></p> <p>Critic: Robert Brustein: Acting—Pleasures of Imitation</p> <p>Critic: Richard H. Palmer: Chap. 4, Reviewing The Actor: Characterization</p>		
WEEK 5	CHAPTER 7: THE DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER		
Mon., Feb. 19	Online Quiz #4 – Chap. 6, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Feb. 19	Theatre Review Due: <i>SECRET LIFE OF LOSERS</i>		
Mon., Feb. 19	History of Directing	Chap. 7	
Wed., Feb. 21	Directing Technique		
Fri., Feb. 23	Performer & Director		
Weekly Readings	<p>Play: Bertolt Brecht, <i>The Good Woman of Szechuan</i></p> <p>Theorist: Brecht: "The Short Organum on the Theatre"</p> <p>Critic: Robert Brustein: "Brecht and his Women"</p> <p>Critic: Harold Clurman: "The Principles of Interpretation"</p> <p>Critic: Richard H. Palmer: Chap. 6 "Reviewing the Stage Direction"</p>		

WEEK 6	THE PLAYWRIGHT: CREATING THE ESSENTIALS		
Mon., Feb. 26	Online Quiz #5 – Chap. 7, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Feb. 26	Theatre Review Due: <i>TAMING OF THE SHREW</i>		
Mon., Feb. 26	Subject and Verb of Drama	Chap. 8	Exam 2
Wed., Feb. 27	Dramatic Structure		<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Suzan Lori-Parks, Playwright</i>
Fri., Mar. 2	Viewpoints and Genre		Proposal Due
Fri., Mar. 2	DUE: THEATRE CRITIC PAPER PROPOSAL		
Weekly Readings	Play: Tennessee Williams' <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> Critic: Ben Brantley on <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> (Revival w/Jessica Lange) Louis Nichols on <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> (Original w/Laurette Taylor) Playwright: Thornton Wilder—Some Thoughts on Playwriting Richard Palmer: Chap. 5 "Reviewing the Script"		
WEEK 7	DRAMATIC FORMS & CHARACTERS		
Mon., Mar. 5	Online Quiz #6 – Chap. 8, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Mar. 5	Theatre Review Due: <i>43 PRESIDENTS</i>		
Mon., Mar. 5	NO CLASS/LYNN NOTTAGE		
Wed., Mar. 7	Dramatic Structure: Climatic, Epic	Chap. 9	<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Richard Foreman, Director, Playwright, Designer</i>
Fri., Mar. 9	Types Characters: Juxtaposition/ Interaction	Chap. 10	
Weekly Readings	Play: August Wilson <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> Critic: Frank Rich on <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> Critic: Robert Brustein's "Subsidized Separatism" from <i>Cultural Calisthenics</i>		

WEEK 8	TRAGEDY & OTHER SERIOUS DRAMA		
Mon., Mar. 12	Online Quiz #7 – Chap. 9 & 10, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Mar. 12	Traditional/Modern Tragedy	Chap. 11	<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Emily Mann, Playwright-Director</i>
Wed., Mar. 14	Heroic Tragedy/Bourgeois Drama		
Fri., Mar. 16	Melodrama		OUTLINE DUE
FRI., MAR. 16	DUE: THEATRE CRITIC PAPER OUTLINE		
Weekly Readings	Play: Henrik Ibsen's <i>A Doll's House</i> Ibsen: "The Modern Tragedy" from Toby Cole's <i>Playwrights on Playwriting</i> Critic: Alisa Solomon (<i>Village Voice</i> critic) <i>The New Drama and the New Woman: Reconstructing Ibsen's Realism</i>		
WEEK 9	COMEDY AND TRAGICOMEDY		
Mon., Mar. 19	Online Quiz #8 – Chap. 11, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Mar. 19	Characteristics of Comedy	Chap. 12	<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Nicky Silver, Playwright</i>
Wed., Mar. 21	Forms of Comedy		
Fri., Mar. 23	Tragicomedy/Theatre of the Absurd		
Weekly Readings	Play: Charles Ludlam's <i>The Mystery of Irma Vep</i> Critic: Mel Gussow on <i>The Mystery of Irma Vep</i> and <i>The Man Who Made Theater Ridiculous</i>		
Mon., Mar. 26 - Fri., Mar. 30	SPRING BREAK		

WEEK 10	SCENE DESIGN		
Mon., Apr. 2	Online Quiz #9 – Chap. 12, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Apr. 2	Theatre Review Due: <i>ARMS & THE MAN</i>		
Mon., Apr. 2	Scenery: History	Chap. 13	Exam 3
Wed., Apr. 4	Scenery: Design		<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Robin Wagner, Scene Designer</i>
Fri., Apr. 6	Scenery: Construction		
Weekly Readings	Play: August Strindberg's <i>A Dream Play</i> August Strindberg: Preface to <i>A Dream Play</i> Designer/Theorist: Robert Edmond Jones, "Art in the Theatre" Designer: Jo Mielziner, "Designing A Play: Death of a Salesman" Critic: Richard Palmer, Chap. 7 "Reviewing the Performing Space"		
WEEK 11	COSTUME DESIGN		
Mon., Apr. 9	Online Quiz #10 – Chap. 13, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Apr. 9	Costumes: History	Chap. 14	<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Jess Goldstein, Costume Designer</i>
Wed., Apr. 11	Costumes: Design		
Fri., Apr. 13	Costumes: Construction		
Weekly Readings	Costume Designer: Theoni Aldridge from <i>Costume Design: Techniques of Modern Masters</i> Critic: Richard Palmer, Chap. 8 "Reviewing the Performing Space"		

WEEK 12	LIGHTING AND SOUND DESIGN		
Mon., Apr. 16	Online Quiz #11 – Chap. 14, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Apr. 16	Theatre Review Due: <i>THE STORY</i>		
Mon., Apr. 16	Lighting: History & Design	Chap. 15	<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Peggy Eisenhauer, Lighting Designer</i>
Wed., Apr. 18	Sound: Design & Creation		
FRI., APR. 20	DUE: THEATRE CRITIC PAPER FIRST DRAFT		
Fri., Apr. 20	NO CLASS – DR. CRESPIY AT NATIONAL KCACTF		
Weekly Readings	Play: Samuel Beckett's <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> Critic: Brooks Atkinson on <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> Lighting Designer: Adolphe Appia, from "The Work of Living Art"		
WEEK 13	CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN/MUSICAL THEATER		
Mon., Apr. 23	Online Quiz #12 – Chap. 15, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Apr. 23	Traditional/Avant Garde Theater	Chap. 16	
Wed., Apr. 25	Theatre of Diversity		
Fri., Apr. 27	Musical Theater	Chap. 17	<i>Getting Started in Theatre: Nathan Lane, Actor</i>
Weekly Readings	Play: <i>Freak</i> by John Leguizamo Video: <i>Rent</i> Critic: Ben Brantley on <i>Rent</i>, Ben Brantley on <i>Freak</i> Composer: <i>Conversations with Sondheim</i> by Frank Rich		

WEEK 14	INTERNATIONAL THEATRE		
Mon., Apr. 30	Online Quiz #13 – Chap. 16, 8AM-9PM		
Mon., Apr. 30	European Theater	Chap. 18	
Wed., May. 2	African & Latin American Theatre		
Fri., May 4	Middle-Eastern & Asian		
FRI., MAY. 4	DUE: THEATRE CRITIC PAPER FINAL DRAFT		
Fri., May 4	Online Quiz #14 – Chap. 17, 8AM-9PM		
Weekly Readings	Play: Caryl Churchill's <i>Blue Heart</i> Critic: Ben Brantley on <i>Blue Heart</i> Critic: Augusto Boal on <i>Theatre of the Oppressed</i> Critic: Jill Dolan's "Feminism and the Canon: The Question of Universality" from <i>The Feminist Spectator as Critic</i> Critic: Alisa Solomon's "Queering the Canon"		
WEEK 15	FINAL EXAMS		
Mon., May. 7	Online Quiz #15 – Chaps. 18, 8AM-9PM		
Mon-Wed. May 7-11	Exam Week: Presentation of Papers		