

THTR 3121 Fall 2010
Development of Theatre and Drama 1: Ancient Greece through Neoclassical France
MWF 11:30-12:30
103 Coates Hall

Instructor: John Fletcher, PhD

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Office: 325 M&DA Building

Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This course is a survey of the literature and history of theatrical practice and thought from Ancient Greece to the French Neoclassical era. Since most of you are not theatre historians (yet), I am not interested in turning you all into walking encyclopedias of theatrical trivia. Instead, I've designed this course with the following goals in mind:

- **I want you to acquire a solid working knowledge of past periods, styles, conventions, texts, events, and people that form a common vocabulary for present-day theatre practitioners.** Lecture notes, class discussions, and exams work to make sure that you're absorbing this basic working knowledge.
- **I want you to encounter and grapple with the various ways past societies have conceived of and practiced what we call *theatre*.** Even if (heaven forbid) you eventually forget this or that little fact about Roman pantomime or Spanish *pasos*, I hope that you leave this class with a broader understanding of what theatre and performance can be. The weekly writing activities in particular focus on helping you to challenge and expand your notions of performance.
- **I want you to apply, actively and critically, a historiographic awareness of the past to present practices and circumstances.** Learning about how past imaginations have practiced *theatre* ought to put our own, present-day definitions of theatre into perspective. Group performance projects will push you to explore how past and present interact in production.

To achieve these goals, I've drawn upon a variety of learning formats. At certain times this course will probably resemble other standard history courses you've taken, with lectures, notes, and exams. At other times, I'll ask you to engage with the material in other ways through writing exercises, class discussions, and performance.

I do expect a considerable amount of effort from you in this course, both in terms of book work (writing and reading) and in terms of critical thought (stretching your imagination beyond what's familiar for you). I have every confidence, however, in your ability to rise to this challenge, and I believe you will find the journey rewarding.

Required Texts (2)

It is your responsibility to secure copies of these course materials in time to complete assignments related to them.

1. Wilson, Edwin and Alvin Goldfarb. *Living Theatre: A History*, 5th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006.
2. Gainer, J. Ellen, Stanton P. Garner Jr., and Martin Puchner, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Drama*. 2 vols. New York City: Norton, 2008. ISBN 13: 978-0-393-97470-6. **Two notes:** 1) Do not purchase the "shorter edition" of this text. 2) If you are taking only 3121 (and not 3122), you only need Volume 1.

Note that there is **no course packet**. Plays not in the *Norton Anthology* will be made available online.

Assignments, Activities, Grading

Midterm/Final Exams and Group Projects (40%)

Exams (Midterm and Final): The exams test your raw knowledge of the periods, styles, events, people, and texts we study. They will consist of multiple choice and short answer responses. The exams are each worth 100 points. Note that Midterm and Final Exams cover material from the book, from the plays, *and* from class lectures. You should not expect to pass the test simply by reading the text book (otherwise, why come to class at all?). The Final exam is non-cumulative, only testing material covered from the Midterm on.

Performance Projects (Midterm and Final): These group projects aim to move you beyond the memorize-and-spit-back-out format of the exams. In groups of 5-6 students, you will choose one of three open questions about the relationship between the historical material we've covered and the present day. Working with a group of 5-6, you will develop and stage a 10-minute response to that question. I will provide more details on these projects as the semester progresses. Each Project is worth 100 points.

Weekly Assignments (55%)

Chapter Study Guides: These are short, guided questionnaires that you will complete as you read each chapter. They must be typed and are due in class on the date listed. Handwritten study guides receive an automatic 5 point (20%) deduction. They are worth 25 points apiece.

Play Projects: Like the study guides, these responses push you to engage with particular aspects of the play being assigned. Often these responses rely on information given in class lectures (i.e., not in the book). Any written component to these responses must be typed. These are worth 25 points apiece, (20 points for the project itself, plus 5 points for an in-class, multiple-choice quiz about the plot and characters). You may attempt the quiz for 5 points of credit even if you don't turn in the project itself.

Study Guides and Play Projects are due in hard-copy format, in class, and on the day listed on the schedule. They may not be turned in after class, in absentia, in my mailbox, or by e-mail. See policies on early turn-in procedures under "Miscellaneous Policies," below.

Daily Participation Points (10%)

Ten percent (100 points) of your grade consists of participation credits. Usually, these credits take the form of points that I give based on a roll call at the beginning of each class. At other times, I will assign participation credits based on quizzes, discussions, in-class activities, and other exercises. I take roll at the beginning of each class (not counting project rehearsal days or the Midterm Exam). For every day I register you as present and on time, you will earn 3 participation points (30+ attendance-taking days @ 3 points per day=100+ points). Any points above 100 that you earn will be factored into your total as extra points. If you aren't in class, for whatever reason, you will not earn participation points for that day. If you are late to class (meaning—you arrive after I've called your name), you earn 2 points. Thus, three tardies equal one absence. If you miss more than 10 minutes of class (leaving early; coming in more than 10 minutes after I've called role), you do not earn any points. Disruptive or distracting behavior will likewise cost you points.

Grade Breakdown

13 Play Projects @ 25 Points each	325
9 Study Guides @ 25 points each	225
2 Performance Projects @ 100 points each	200
2 Exams @ 100 points each	200
<u>Daily Participation</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	1050

Final Grades

I determine final grades using the following scale:

895 and above: A
795-894: B
695-794: C
595-694: D
594 and below: F

Buffer Points: Note that you can earn 1,050 points (not counting any extra credit you may earn by doing outstanding work on weekly assignments). I determine your final grade as a percentage of 1,000 points. This means that 50 points (5%, or about two weekly assignments' worth) of your final grade function as "buffer points." Buffer points ensure that a few sick days, a missed assignment, or a low score on midterm/final doesn't wreck your average. Use this buffer sparingly, however. If you burn up your 50 points by skipping some assignments in September, don't cry "where's my buffer points?" if you find yourself missing two weeks of class in November due to mono. Any part of the buffer zone that you do not use up gets factored into your final score as extra credit.

Incompletes: The College of Music and Dramatic Arts at LSU lays out strict criteria for Incompletes. Incompletes are given by the College, not by me, and then only in rare cases where a student is unable to complete the course due to an extraordinary situation, which the student must document.

New Policies on Withdrawals and Failing: As per LSU policy, students are allowed only one W per year after their Freshman year. Students who fail a course twice may not retake that course without special permission from the Dean of the College of Music and Dramatic Arts. Note that the LSU Theatre Department will not arrange independent studies that substitute for required history and literature coursework.

Miscellaneous Policies

Attendance and Participation: In determining daily participation scores, I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You're graded on your participation; if you aren't here, you aren't participating. I do not need to see doctor's notes, official letters, or explanatory e-mails detailing why you missed class. I recognize that circumstances may force you to miss the occasional class; that's what buffer zone points are for. Plan ahead—if you know you'll be absent on a day something is due, follow the procedures below to turn in the project or study guide early. **Special note: please do not come to class if you're exhibiting symptoms of any contagious illness. Your buffer points are there to cover for you in case of illness; use them.**

Make-up Policy and Anticipated Absences: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed. Since part of my rationale for assigning Chapter Study Guides and Play Projects involves insuring active in-class participation, **I do not accept late assignments.** This includes "I'll put it in your box," "my printer didn't work," or "I'll e-mail it to you after class" excuses. If you know that you will be absent, I suggest you take the following steps:

- **Arrange for one of your classmates to take notes for you.** You are responsible for any material covered or announcements made on days you are absent. In general, I do not forward or post my class notes, nor do I arrange private sessions to explain missed coursework.
- **Turn in any assignments due that day before class** to my mailbox or to my office (M&DA 325). Remember that I do not accept or give partial credit for e-mailed assignments. Nor do I accept assignments turned in after class on the due date. Note that the in-class quiz portion of Play Projects may not be made up.
- If you turn in an assignment early, **follow up with an e-mail message to me** at drjohnfletcher@gmail.com just to make sure I got it ("Dr. Fletcher—This is Jane Everystudent from your TH 3121 class. I turned in Friday's assignment to your mailbox on 10/27/10 since I

won't be in class then. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks, Jane
Everystudent"). **I allow you to use this turn-in-early option twice.**

Class Environment: This class will work best if speakers feel they are being listened to and if class members feel free from distraction or intimidation by fellow classmates. I expect you to be attentive and respectful toward your classmates and toward any speakers or performers. At minimum, such respect involves arriving on time to class, silencing and putting away all cellphones/smartphones, putting away earphones, refraining from side conversations (including text messaging), keeping outside reading material stored away, and staying awake. I will deduct participation points from those who engage in disruptive or disrespectful behavior.

No Laptop/Computer Policy: Past experience moves me to institute a "no laptop" policy. I do not allow computer notebooks, netbooks, laptops, or any other electronic device in class due to the distractions/disruptions they inevitably pose to me, to guest speakers, and to other students. If you for whatever reason feel you absolutely must use a laptop, you must contact me individually, explain your case, and (if I approve) sign a Laptop Agreement policy specifying among other things that you will use the computer only for note-taking (disabling wireless functions), that you will sit in the back, and that you will minimize disruptions to the rest of the class.

Academic Misconduct: Everything you turn in to me for this class must be your own, original work. The LSU *Code of Student Conduct* defines plagiarism as "the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data" (CoSC 5.1). In other words: *do not present someone else's writing, ideas, or structure as your own*. This includes (but is not limited to) copying, cut-and-pasting, paraphrasing, or borrowing from a web page, encyclopedia, dictionary, book, newspaper, journal, or someone else's assignment for this or another class. We do a lot of writing in this course, but unless I specifically tell you otherwise, no assignment requires you to use any source (book, play, article, on-line, etc.) beyond lecture notes, the assigned play, the *Living Theatre* textbook, or a class handout. If you wish for your own edification to use an outside source, talk to me about it. If you have a question or concern about whether or not something qualifies as academic misconduct, ask me. I take issues of academic integrity very seriously and will not hesitate to forward any suspected instances of plagiarism to the attention of the Academic Dean.

Disability Statement: Any student with a disability should contact me during the first week of class with a Semester Accommodation Letter from the Office of Disability Services. I will make necessary accommodations in consultation with the ODS.

Class Schedule (subject to change as needed)

M Aug 23 Intro to class, go over policies
W Aug 25 Begin Historiography
F Aug 27 DUE: Study Guide: Intro Chapter

M Aug 30 Continue notes on historiography
W Sep 1 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 1 Ancient Greek Theatre
F Sep 3 DUE: Play Project: Euripides, *Bacchae* (in Anthology)

M Sep 6 LABOR DAY
W Sep 8 DUE: Play Project: Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriasuzae* (PDF on Moodle)
F Sep 10 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 2 Roman Theatre

M Sep 13 DUE: Play Project: Seneca, *Thyestes* (in Anthology)

W Sep 15 Notes on Rome

F Sep 17 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 3 Early Asian Drama

M Sep 20 Notes on Asian

W Sep 22 DUE: Play Project: Śudraka, *The Little Clay Cart* (in Anthology)

F Sep 24 DUE: Play Project: Zeami, *Atsumori* (in Anthology)

M Sep 27 Finish Asian

W Sep 29 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 4 Medieval Performance

F Oct 1 Notes on Medieval

M Oct 4 DUE: Play Project: Hrosvit, *Dulcitius* (in Anthology)

W Oct 6 DUE: Play Project: *Cornwall Death of Pilate* (PDF on Moodle)

F Oct 8 DUE: Group Project Rehearsal I

MIDTERMS

M Oct 11 Group Project Rehearsal II

W Oct 13 Group Project Presentations I

F Oct 15 Group Project Presentations II

M Oct 18 Midterm Exam (in class)

W Oct 20 Hurricane Make-up/Catchup

F Oct 22 FALL BREAK

M Oct 25 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 5 Italian Renaissance

W Oct 27

F Oct 29 DUE: Play Project *The Enchanted Arcadia* (commedia dell'arte scenario, PDF on Moodle)

M Nov 1 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 6 English Renaissance

W Nov 3

F Nov 5 DUE: Play Project Marlowe, *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (Anthology)

M Nov 8 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 7 Spanish Golden Age

W Nov 10

F Nov 12 DUE: Play Project Calderón, *Painter of Dishonor* (PDF on Moodle)

M Nov 15 DUE: Play Project Sor Juana, *House of Trials* (PDF on Moodle)

W Nov 17 DUE: Study Guide: Chapter 8 Neoclassical France

F Nov 19

M Nov 22 DUE: Play Project Molière, *Tartuffe* (Anthology)

W Nov 24

F Nov 26 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

M Nov 29 Written Final Exam (in class, non-comprehensive)

W Dec 1 Group Rehearsal Day

F Dec 3 Group Rehearsal Day

Final Exams

TH Dec 9 12:30-2:30 (7130)

S Dec 11 7:30-9:30 (3121) Final Group Presentations

Final Exam Session for Final Group Presentations: Saturday, Dec 11, 7:30-9:30 AM
Yes, that's *Saturday* morning. Yes, that's not a great time for any kind of evaluation. Nevertheless, as per University policy, I cannot reschedule the Final Exam session for anyone. Make your end-of-semester plans accordingly. I will not entertain "but I already purchased tickets" pleas.

Final Word—Succeeding in THTR 3121

- 1. Come to class and turn in assignments on time.**
- 2. No, really: come to class and turn in assignments on time.** The number one problem people have with this class involves keeping up with weekly assignments. Just doing the exams and performance projects will not earn you a passing grade.
- 3. Take responsibility for your performance in the class throughout the semester.** It's your responsibility to make sure that I have received, graded, and recorded your assignments. Finals week is too late to fix problems (like a paper you thought you handed in two months ago but that didn't actually get to me).
- 4. Let me know if you have questions or concerns.** Impressive as I am in some respects, I'm not telepathic. I don't know if you're upset or confused about something until you tell me. I am eager to address frustrations or questions, but I rely on you to make me aware of them.
- 5. Be curious.** I try to present the material in as engaging a way as I can, but I can't guarantee that everything we study will immediately appeal to you. Fortunately, as humans, we can rise above our initial reactions. Dorothy Parker once said, "The cure for boredom is curiosity." Realize that curiosity is a choice, and train yourself to invest curiosity in the plays and chapters we read