

Theatre 305 – Theatre History and Drama, Ancients through the Renaissance Production Reconstruction Project

THE PROJECT: For this project, each student will be assigned to a group, and each group will be assigned a past Seton Hill Theatre production . Each group must use every tool at its disposal to learn as much as they can about that production and to gain an accurate understanding of the production and all of the circumstances that surrounded it. The goal is to be able to reconstruct in detail the production so as to give as clear a picture and understanding as possible of the live performance. You must work **as a group**; divide up the research duties, but share and brainstorm the analysis of the evidence gathered.

THE EVIDENCE: The following data and information should be sought out, collected, and presented:

1. The script. Everyone in the group must read it and become knowledgeable about its production requirements, challenges, and problems.
2. A synopsis of the dramatic action of the play as well as a description of all production requirements called for or suggested in the script. **Keep it efficient** – tell us what we need to know and what we can comprehend in the telling. Brevity is a distinct virtue.
3. A short production history of the play focusing on the original production and its critical and popular reception.
4. Why was this play done at Seton Hill? What was the rationale for picking it for the season?
5. Dates, times, place of the Seton Hill production.
6. Personnel of the SHU production. All students? Guest artists? Community members? Theatre majors vs. non-majors? Analyze and draw relevant conclusions.
7. Financial report of the SHU production. How was it financed? Budget breakdown? Income?
8. How was it interpreted? Production concept?
9. How was it produced? Rehearsals, construction, coordination, special production or rehearsal problems or events?
10. Evidence of the visual concept of the production, including scenery, costumes, and lighting. What did it look like and why? Skill at interpreting visual evidence (photos, drawings, renderings, models, ground plans) is crucial here. Don't just show us this evidence as an end in itself, but **interpret it for us**. Direct our attention to what is important.
11. An analysis of the actors and their performances. What was the general level of talent in the production? Did anyone connected with the production go on to have a career in the theatre?
12. Critical (that of any reviewers, critics, and other experts), popular (audience), and participant reaction to the SHU production. Interpret the sources. Can they be trusted for accuracy? Bias? Expertise? What's the conclusion?
13. Was it successful? Measured by attendance? Measured by box office receipts? According to those who saw it? According to those who did it?
14. Interesting incidents? (Don't get carried away with this)
15. Materials to seek out: Programs, promptbook, designs, renderings, working drawings, models, script, photographs, slides, recordings, publicity, reviews, artifacts, props, scenery, costumes, personnel, witnesses.

THE PAPER: Each group will be required to submit a paper that summarizes your findings, presents

all evidence collected in an organized fashion, provides all background information and sources for the evidence, and presents the division of labor among the group members.

THE PRESENTATION: The most important part of the project is the presentation of your findings. Each group will prepare a 15-20 minute presentation to the class that details the production. Work should be divided up equally among group members, as should portions of the paper and the presentation.

1. This must be a **rehearsed** group presentation that uses a variety of visual aids and mixed media.
2. The presentation should present easily understood **summaries of evidence** and emphasize conclusions drawn from the evidence.
3. Each group member should make a significant contribution to the presentation.
4. Be as informative, creative, and entertaining as possible. Be prepared to answer questions.
5. Rehearse all technical aspects prior to the presentation so you know it will all work and flow smoothly.
6. Ad libbing is not acceptable. Rehearse rehearse rehearse. Plan. Analyze. Draw conclusions. Make recommendations for future productions.

THE GRADE: The project is worth 200 possible points. The grade will be based on the accuracy (40 points) and amount (40 points) of important information gathered, the quality of the visual and other evidence presented (40 points), the creative and engaging quality of the presentation (40 points) and, above all, the analysis of all information gathered (40 points).

THE TIME FRAME: All projects will be presented on Wednesday, May 12th, 8:00-10:00 AM during the Final Exam Period (unless an alternative day/time is chosen). As such, you have approximately 6 weeks to complete the project. At a minimum, regular weekly meetings of the group are suggested, and regular consultation with the instructor is strongly encouraged.

Groups: