

# Theatre 317: Pre-Modern Theatre

## Spring 2012 – AC 312

### Monday/Wednesday/Friday

### 11-11:50 p.m.

**Instructor:** Dr. Tyler Smith

**Office:** AC 115

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**Office Hours:** Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9-10 a.m., 2-3 p.m.

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Course Rationale: Theatre 317 is an upper level theatre history course designed to engage students in the vibrant and complex forces that both constitute and shape theatrical performance. Through discussions, readings, video, research, and live theatrical presentations, students will encounter a significant body of theatrical work that enables them to more thoroughly and thoughtfully engage in their culture and its production. This course assumes that such an understanding of theatre requires a blend of scholarship and inspiration, of academic pursuit and artistic endeavor, rationality and imagination. Therefore, lectures and readings will address the mechanics of theatrical productions as well as theatre's history, correlation to social developments, and noted participants and innovators. Equally, because good theatre is a successful combination of rational and inspirational processes, the modes of evaluation used in this course will extend beyond exams and reports and include theatrical efforts as well.

Course Description: THEAT 317: Study of the Western theatre from its origins through 1800, with emphasis on theatre architecture, production elements, theory, and representative dramatic literature. (3 hours credit)

#### Course Objectives

1. To sharpen the tools necessary to intelligently create and comment upon theatre and performance.
2. To develop an understanding of the major issues and forces in theatre history from pre-history to 1800 and their theoretical bases.
3. To appreciate the interplay between historical context, theatrical theory and artistic practice as such interplay has shaped theatrical production.
4. To develop and expand the analytical and inspirational skills necessary to engage in advanced efforts in all aspects of theatre: production, criticism, scholarship, and enjoyment.
5. To become acquainted with a body of historical plays from which new explorations can be made.
6. To develop high-level research and writing abilities using extensive scholarly sources and comprehensive argumentative organization.

#### Textbooks:

- Michael Greenwald, Roger Schultz, and Roberto D. Pomo. *The Longman Anthology of Drama and Theater: A Global Perspective*. Revised 1st Edition, Boston: Allyn & Bacon/Longman, 2001.
- Oscar Brockett and Franklin Hildy, *History of the Theatre*, 10th Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon/Longman, 2007.

## Assignments and Grading

Overview: Your grade for this class will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Quizzes (19@10 points each)	190	<b>Grade Breakdown:</b>	
Midterm Exam	120	925-1000	A
Final Exam (Comprehensive)	180	900-924	A-
Small Group Project	100	875-899	B+
Large Group Performance	100	825-874	B
Large Group Paper	125	800-824	B-
Research Summary	85	775-799	C+
Participation	100	725-774	C
		700-724	C-
TOTAL:	1000	675-699	D+
		625-674	D
		600-624	D-
		000-599	F

Quizzes: There will be twenty-two objective quizzes covering the assigned reading material. Each will consist of objective questions (true/false, multiple choice, matching, etc.) and will be worth ten points. At the end of the semester, the three lowest quiz grades will be dropped, and the nineteen remaining quizzes will be counted.

All quizzes will be administered using InQsit. Each quiz must be completed before class on the date indicated in the syllabus. Quizzes will be made available no later than the end of the class previous to the due date, and will usually be available one full week in advance. You can take the quizzes from any computer at any location. Once you start taking a quiz, you will have ten minutes to complete it, and you are allowed two attempts per quiz. Go to <http://inqsit.bsu.edu/>, select my username (smith15), click “Students and Responders” and follow the prompts to the appropriate quiz.

Exams: Your two exams will also be given using InQsit. They will consist of objective questions, short answer questions, and an essay. The final exam IS comprehensive. Exams will only be given in assigned InQsit labs, and will be available only during the times listed on the course calendar. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING A RESERVATION DURING THIS TIME.** I will not change the availability of the exam because you didn’t make a reservation early enough.

Small Group Project: Along with a few of your classmates, you will be required to foster and direct the discussion of one of the plays that we read this semester. Dates for the Small Group Projects can be found in the course calendar, and a full outline of this assignment is available on Blackboard.

Large Group Project: The small groups will also be combined into three larger groups that will collaborate to undertake a major creative and scholarly project to be presented to the class on the days indicated in the course calendar. This project will consist of a theatrical production, a research presentation, and a group-authored research paper that supports the production and presentation. A full outline of this assignment is posted on Blackboard.

**Research Summary:** To prepare you for the research you will do in your large and small group projects, you will undertake a brief research project in which you will summarize your findings from a book chapter or journal article on a theatre history topic (pre-1800) of your choice. A full outline of this assignment is posted on Blackboard.

**Class participation:** This is an upper-level academic course, and you are required to come to class prepared to contribute to discussion in a thoughtful manner. Your input, perspectives, arguments, and insights not only make the class richer for everyone else, they also demonstrate to me that you are engaging the material at hand. Long story short: Walk in the door every day with something interesting and useful to say. I will assess half of your participation grade at midterm and the other half at the end of the semester.

Also, just because you're in class and on time doesn't mean you are fully present. Laptops are welcome in my class for note-taking purposes, but only for that use. I will not tolerate texting, IMing, Facebooking, or any other means of electronic communication or distraction during class. If you engage in these behaviors you will be asked to leave, and that will count as an unexcused absence. A second offense will result in a 10% deduction in your grade for the semester.

## **Policies**

### **Minimum Grade Policy:**

IF YOU ENTERED THE DEPARTMENT (Transferred to Ball State or declared a Theatre major/minor) ON OR AFTER FALL 2010: The lowest acceptable grade in a course for credit toward a major or minor in Theatre or Dance is C. Any student receiving a C- or lower must retake the course in order to receive credit towards a major or minor in the department.

IF YOU ENTERED THE DEPARTMENT BEFORE FALL 2010: The lowest acceptable grade in a course for credit toward a major or minor in Theatre or Dance is D. Any student receiving a D- or lower must retake the course in order to receive credit towards a major or minor in the department.

Please keep in mind that I grade each assignment *purely on its own merits*. When grading, I do not take into consideration an individual's semester point total, and as such your final grade for the semester is exactly that: final.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty – both intentional and unintentional – is an offense that the university takes very seriously, as do I. For a link to the Student Academic Ethics Policy, which defines the parameters of academic dishonesty and plagiarism, see the External Links section of the Blackboard site for this course. The penalties for academic dishonesty in this course will begin at a minimum of a deduction of 100 points (with no points awarded for the assignment in question) and can be as severe as suspension or expulsion from the university. The simple answer is this: If you are wondering whether what you're doing qualifies as academic dishonesty, talk to me about it. If you find yourself unwilling to talk to me about it, then you already know the answer.

**Attendance:** The Department of Theatre Arts & Dance has an official attendance policy to which this course subscribes. Regular attendance is required and you are responsible for any information discussed during class. For this class that meets on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, you may miss up to THREE classes with no penalty. More than three unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Absences are excused for official university business (accompanied by an official letter from the sponsoring agency), extreme illness (accompanied by

a dated doctor's note – no prescriptions) and family emergency (documented by a meeting with me). All family emergencies need to be discussed with me in a private meeting, preferably before the necessary absence. In addition to just being in class, I need for you to be on time. Three instances of lateness will add up to one unexcused absence.

Late Work: All work is due at the beginning of class on the days indicated in the course calendar. Quizzes cannot be made up. Once the InQsit availability period has ended, you have missed your chance. Other assignments may be turned in late, but you will be penalized ten percent per day. By "day" I mean "twenty-four-hour period." If an assignment is due in class on Friday and you e-mail it to me at 9:01 a.m. on Friday, it is one day late. If I receive it Saturday at 9:01 a.m., it is two days late.

Course Websited: All quizzes will be hosted on InQsit. All grades will be kept on Gradebook. All other relevant online course materials, announcements, and weblinks will be maintained on the Blackboard website for this course. Go to <https://blackboard.bsu.edu/webapps/login/> and log in to get to the course site.

Communication: I will make frequent use of e-mail to send out course updates and announcements. You are required to check your Ball State e-mail at least once a day during the week to stay current. Aside from stopping by my office, e-mail is the best way to contact me regarding any questions or concerns. However, be aware that I only check and respond to work e-mail Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. A last-second question does not guarantee an immediate answer.

E-mail Attachments: All assignments other than quizzes and exams are to be e-mailed to me as Microsoft Word documents and ONLY Microsoft Word document. If the file as a .doc or .docx extension, I will accept it. Otherwise, I won't.

Disability and Other Accommodations: If you need course adaptations or 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 make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office hours and location are listed at the top of the syllabus. For further information, contact the Disabled Student Development Student Center at 285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

Diversity Statement: As a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds including those influenced by ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, we will strive to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. The use of offensive language or terms regarding these various backgrounds damages such an atmosphere, and its use will not go unchallenged. I stress that this policy does not discourage the contribution of *any and all opinions* to the classroom environment, but rather is designed to encourage an environment of civility and mutual respect.