

THEA 3335: History of Theatre I (Antiquity through Early Modern Era)
T/TH 10:00-11:30 Room TBA

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30-3:30pm or by appointment.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course is a survey of the history of theatrical theory and practice from Ancient Greece through the Early Modern Era. I've designed this course with the following goals in mind:

- You will acquire a solid working knowledge of past periods, styles, conventions, texts, events, and people that form a common vocabulary for present-day theatre practitioners. Lectures, class discussions, and exams work to make sure that you are absorbing this fundamental knowledge.
- You will encounter and grapple with the various ways in which past societies have defined and practiced what we call "theatre." The semi-weekly written study guides are focused on expanding your understanding of what theatre has meant in different societies and through different periods of time.
- You will apply, actively and critically, your growing awareness of the theatrical past to present practices and circumstances. Learning about how earlier imaginations have conceived of theatre helps to put our present-day definitions into perspective. The group performance project will prompt you to explore how theatre's past and present can interact.

I expect a considerable amount of effort from you in this course, both in terms of book work (reading and writing) 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

Edwin Wilson and Alvin Goldfarb, *Living Theatre: A History*, 5th Edition.

W.B. Worthen, ed., *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. 5th Edition.

Richard III (Oxford World's Classics edition preferred)

Handouts: *The Birds* (Aristophanes) *Medea* (Seneca), *The Menaechmi* (Plautus), *The Orphan of Chao* (Chi Chün-hsiang), *Mandragola* (Machiavelli).

Assignments, Activities, and Grading

In this course I assign three types of graded activities: Chapter Study Guides; Group Performance Projects; and Midterm/Final Examinations.

Chapter Study Guides

These are short, guided questionnaires that you will complete as you read each chapter. **They are due in class on the date listed.** Because they are intended as an aid to class discussion, I will not accept late study guides. If you know ahead of time that you will be missing a class in which a study guide is due, it is your responsibility to get me a hard copy of the completed assignment **before** the due date. This includes absences due to university activities. **Study guides should be typed.** Handwritten study guides will not be accepted.

Chapter study guides make up 40% of your grade (9 study guides worth 5 points apiece). Since the total point value of these assignments is 45 rather than 40, you have a “buffer zone” of 5 points built in. Thus:

- You may lose up to 5 points from study guide assignments before your final grade suffers any loss. These 5 points should serve you as a safety net in case you are absent on the day an assignment is due, if you don’t complete an assignment, or if you don’t score well on a few of them. Use this buffer zone sparingly. Don’t burn up your 5 points early on only to run into end-of-semester sickness/stress/tech weeks.
- Any buffer points you do not spend get added to your final grade as extra points. If you aren’t a great test-taker, for instance, putting effort into doing well on all the study guides is a good way to keep your grade up.

Midterm/Final Examinations

The exams test your ability to synthesize knowledge of the periods, styles, events, people, and texts we study. Both exams are essay format. The final exam covers only material from the midterm on. Each exam is worth 20 points out of the total 100 points for the course. **The midterm and final exams cover material from the book, from the plays, and from class lectures.** You should not expect to pass these tests simply by reading the text book (otherwise, why come to class at all?).

Group Performance Project

This is intended to engage you creatively with the theatrical past in ways not covered by the essay format of the exams (however, there will be some writing associated with the project). In groups of 5-6 students, you will address a particular question about the relationship between some aspect of the historical material we’ve covered and the present day. Working with your group, you will develop and stage a 15-minute response to that question. I will provide more details on this project as the semester progresses. Your work on your group’s performance project is worth 20 points.

Final Grade Breakdown:

Chapter Study Guides (9 guides @ 5 points apiece)	45
Group Performance Project	20
Midterm Exam	20
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20</u>
Total	100 (plus 5 extra)

Final Grading Scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

GPA Protocol:

To satisfy prerequisite and degree requirements, students must earn a minimum C (2.00) grade in each course attempted in theatre and dance (both required and elective) at the University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance. Students who receive a grade of C- or below in a School of Theatre & Dance major course must retake the course and complete it with a minimum of a C grade

Course Policies

Class Environment: In class I expect you to be attentive and respectful toward your classmates and toward any speakers or performers. Such respect involves **arriving on time to class**, **silencing cell phones**, refraining from side conversations, keeping outside reading material stored away, and generally staying alert.

Absence and Lateness: This course follows the UH School of Theatre & Dance policy regarding absence and lateness (see the department website for more details).

Three absences = one full letter grade deduction (i.e. a "B" becomes a "C").

Four absences = two full letters grade deduction.

Five absences = automatic "F" grade for the course.

Entering class after the roll has been called constitutes lateness. Lateness for two classes = one absence.

Course Outline

Week 1 INTRO/ORIGINS

Aug. 24 COURSE INTRODUCTION

Aug. 26 READ INTRODUCTION TO *LIVING THEATRE* (p. 10-23)

Week 2 ANCIENT GREECE

Aug. 31 READ CHAPTER I, PART ONE (p. 25-47) and ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS* (IN WORTHEN)

Sept. 2 READ *MEDEA* OF EURIPIDES

Week 3 ANCIENT GREECE

Sept. 7 READ CHAPTER I, PART TWO (p. 47-61); CHAPTER I STUDY GUIDE DUE

Sept. 9 READ *THE BIRDS**

Week 4 ANCIENT ROME

Sept. 14 CHAPTER II STUDY GUIDE DUE

Sept. 16 READ *MEDEA* OF SENECA*

Week 5 ROMAN COMEDY / CLASSICAL ASIA

Sept. 21 READ *THE MENAECHMI* *

Sept. 23 CHAPTER III STUDY GUIDE DUE

Week 6 CLASSICAL ASIA

Sept. 28 READ *THE ORPHAN OF CHAO**

Sept. 30 READ *MATSUKAZE* and "A MIRROR HELD TO THE FLOWER" (IN WORTHEN)

Week 7 MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Oct. 5 CHAPTER IV STUDY GUIDE DUE

Oct. 7 READ *SECOND SHEPHERDS' PAGEANT* and *EVERYMAN*

Week 8 MIDTERM

Oct. 12 MIDTERM REVIEW

Oct. 14 MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9 RENAISSANCE ITALY

Oct. 19 CHAPTER V STUDY GUIDE DUE

Oct. 21 READ *MANDRAGOLA**

Week 10 RENAISSANCE ENGLAND

Oct. 26 CHAPTER VI STUDY GUIDE DUE

Oct. 28 READ *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

Week 11 RENAISSANCE ENGLAND / SPANISH GOLDEN AGE

Nov. 2 READ *RICHARD III*

Nov. 4 CHAPTER VII STUDY GUIDE DUE

Week 12 SPANISH GOLDEN AGE / NEOCLASSICAL FRANCE

Nov. 9 READ *LIFE IS A DREAM*

Nov. 11 CHAPTER VIII STUDY GUIDE DUE

Week 13 NEOCLASSICAL FRANCE / RESTORATION ENGLAND

Nov. 16 READ *TARTUFFE*

Nov. 18 CHAPTER IX STUDY GUIDE DUE

Week 14 RESTORATION ENGLAND

Nov. 23 READ *THE ROVER*

Nov. 25 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Nov. 30 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS DAY I

Dec. 2 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS DAY 2

FINALS WEEK

FINAL EXAM—DEC. 16 from 2-5pm

* Handout