

## **Theatre 305 – Theatre History and Dramatic Literature, Ancients through the Renaissance**

**Spring 2010**

**Instructor: Dr. Terry Brino-Dean**

Section #01

MW 12:40 – 1:55 PM

FTC Classroom

(Stark Building 41 W. Otterman, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor)

3 credits

### **Course Description:**

Catalog description: Survey of the major theatrical and dramatic conventions, practices, theories, and traditions from ancient civilizations through the sixteenth century. Assignments and assessment measures based on students' progression of study in theatre history and the major. As best as one can do in fifteen weeks, this course will explore the forces that have shaped the art of theatre, the practice of dramatic writing, the evolution of theatre architecture, and the ever-changing ideas that have influenced styles of acting and performance. In addition, we will focus on various contemporary socio-political issues (feminism, postmodernism, multiculturalism, post-colonialism, etc.) and apply these to our studies. This reflects the point of view that our understanding of history is never static, but involves a fluid process of discovery that always reflects issues relevant to the present. While we will look at theatre from a world-wide perspective, there will be a stronger emphasis on performance traditions within our own hemisphere, the West, and forms of theatre that have particularly influenced the development of contemporary theatre in the United States.

### **Course Objectives:**

Students should leave the course with an enhanced understanding of and curiosity for theatre history and the ways that different movements, individuals, and cultures in the past have shaped contemporary theatre and drama. For students studying theatre history for the first time, special attention will be paid to ensuring an understanding of the role of the theatre historian and the value of theatre history to the theatre artist.

Students should achieve the following course objectives:

1. Gain knowledge of important movements and events in theatre history.
2. Develop skills for analyzing and contextualizing theatrical events and practices.
3. Understand theatre of this period from a variety of different cultural perspectives within the broader social, political, and economic conditions in history.
4. Recognize plays as artifacts of unique production circumstances and historical contexts.
5. Apply script analysis skills to the context of production.
6. Gain a better understanding of contemporary theatre and drama practices.
7. Learn to recognize the value of theatre history to the theatre artist.
8. Understand the fundamental challenges facing theatre historians and the basic historiographic issues unique to theatre history as a discipline.

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Wilson, Edwin and Alvin Goldfarb. *Living Theater: A History*. Fifth Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006.

Worthen, W.B. *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. Fifth Edition, New York: Wadsworth, 2007.

#### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983. ISBN: 0809311100

Ferguson, Marcia. *A Short Guide to Writing about Theatre*. New York: Longman, 2007. ISBN: 032113673X

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

- 1. Reader's Journals** – In lieu of quizzes on daily readings and plays, students will complete a Reader's Journal. There are two kinds of journal entries: *play responses* and *two-column journals*. For play reading assignments, the journal will involve responses to plays based on detailed instructions given prior to each reading. All other reading assignments require the use of a two column journal based on readings from the text that must be prepared for each class meeting. Reader's Journal assignments will be collected and checked on each class day when a play or reading is due and then returned soon after.

**THE ENTIRE JOURNAL WILL BE COLLECTED  
AND GRADED AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.**

*The grade on the journal is based on three factors: 1) the level and extent of comprehension, analysis, and reflection demonstrated in each journal; 2) The timeliness with which journals are submitted throughout the semester; and 3) The final product, which may include additions and revisions.*

One of the major tasks of the two-column journal format, and a skill that you must develop, is how to selectively choose the most important information from text readings to include in your journal. You must learn to find the most important information; it is not possible for the journal to be all-inclusive. You are developing a resource for yourself that you can use in the future that is more concise than a full textbook and more practical since it is written in your own words. Discover the four or five most important ideas on each page and elaborate on those concepts. For a person who writes in an average size font and leaves some room in between notes where things can be added later, you should plan on 5-7 letter-sized pages per chapter in your journal.

Journals can take either a hand-written or an electronic format. In other words, you could create your journal in the traditional way, by writing in a notebook or binder with removable/reinsertable paper (so that you can turn things in bit by bit as you go). Or you can use electronic formats such as web-logs, web-sites, or as Microsoft Word files in order to create the journal. Electronic formats will give you greater access to visuals and/or web-links that you might want to include in the right column of your journal. Any of these formats are acceptable for the journal, but I would recommend that you choose one format and stick with it for the whole semester. Switching formats creates a very messy product in the end that is less functional for you in the future. Journals are worth a total of 300 possible points.

- 2. Class Preparation, Participation, and Performance** – The class performance grade reflects the student's apparent level of preparation for each class meeting and the quality of her/his participation. Because of the interactive and experiential nature of the structure of this course, class attendance and participation are mandatory, as is punctuality. Students are expected to fully participate in class and small group discussions. Students have the chance to earn up to 10 points for each class meeting (29 total). In addition, the instructor will award up to 10 discretionary points at the end of the semester for a total of 300 possible points. Every three weeks (usually six class meetings totaling 60 points), students will be asked to fill out forms that provide a chance for them to self-evaluate their class participation. The instructor will then evaluate each student's participation, based on observation by the instructor and input from the student, and return the self-evaluation with a grade. A copy of the self-evaluation form is attached; please note the criteria for this assessment. Of course, being absent from class entails that the student fails to earn any points for that particular class. Showing up late to or unprepared for class will result in deductions from the daily grade. Obviously, sleeping or doing homework for this or any other class are signs of especially poor class performance. If a student misses a class (excused or unexcused), s/he can ask the instructor for the opportunity to complete an

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assignment to make up what was missed from the class meeting and thus earn (up to) 10 points. ***You must see the instructor if you desire a make-up assignment!***

- 3. Ancient Performance Development and Implementation** – Each student will be part of a group project that seeks to engage students in the theatre-making process in an imagined context similar to the one in which the performance originally took place. Students will use an existing play text for the project from a period related to Chapters One, Two, or Three in the text and will be assigned in groups to complete the assignment. Students are responsible for researching the period and the play such that they can make informed choices as to how to complete the project in a way that effectively represents the play’s original context. The results of the project will be presented to the class. For example, students might perform a scene in a large outdoor venue. Projects could also be done that involve model-making, scene design, costume design, or mask-making that will make use of the technology, style, and materials for production from each historical context. An accompanying paper explaining the analysis and research of the role, scene, or design is due at the time of the performance or presentation. This project will be worth 200 possible points.
- 4. Production Reconstruction Project** – For this project, each student will be assigned to a group, and each group will be assigned a production that has taken place sometime in the past. 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. Each group will be required to submit a 6-8 page paper and complete a 10-15 minute presentation to the class that details the history of that production. Work should be divided up equally among group members, as should portions of the paper and the presentation. 200 total points can be earned on the project.

**GRADING:**

Reader’s Journal	300 points = 30%
Ancient Performance Project	200 points = 20%
Production Reconstruction Project	200 points = 20%
Class Participation	300 points = 30%
Total Grade	1000 points = 100%

**GRADING SCALE:**

A	= 100% - 93%	Outstanding
A-	= 92% - 90%	
B+	= 89% - 87%	
B	= 86% - 83%	Very Good
B-	= 82% - 80%	
C+	= 79% - 77%	
C	= 76% - 73%	Satisfactory
C-	= 72% - 70%	
D+	= 69% - 67%	
D	= 66% - 63%	Unsatisfactory
D-	= 62% - 60%	
F	= Below 60%	Failure

**Comments:**

1. Attendance is required and will be taken at every class meeting. As outlined above, involvement in class meetings is a very important part of this course, and by missing class, students are missing the opportunity to earn points. Absence and tardiness are considered serious matters. ***If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered that day.*** If a student misses a class, s/he can ask the instructor for the opportunity to do a make-up assignment (written work or an oral presentation due at the very next class meeting) to have the chance to earn the points missed from class. If you are going to miss class, you must notify the instructor in advance. Failure to notify the instructor as soon as possible will result in any assignments due being considered turned-in late. ***You cannot miss more than two classes without your final grade being affected.*** All absences after the first two will result in a one-third deduction from your final grade (e.g., A- becomes a B+) ***regardless*** of make-up work completed. ***I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences.*** No matter what *causes* you to miss class, missing class means you’ve

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missed *work* that takes place in the classroom that is required for the course and that every other student is doing. So the only way to make it up is to make it up. Extraordinary circumstances should be discussed with the instructor as early as possible.

2. The instructor operates from the perspective that all good professional writing is done with the opportunity for review and comment by others. Therefore, project papers can be revised and re-submitted. I will return papers with a grade and my comments. Students can revise them and turn in a final draft at the following class meeting. If not re-submitted by the following class meeting, the original grade earned on the paper will stand. You must also re-submit the original draft of your paper upon submitting a re-written paper. *Re-writes do not guarantee an improved grade!!* However, experience shows that almost *all* students who work to revise papers improve their writing greatly and achieve higher grades.

3. It is your responsibility to ensure that all technology associated with any assignment or project on which you are working for the class functions correctly. For example, you are responsible for backing up computer documents and files and making sure your flash drive isn't corrupted and ensuring that the printer you are using is operating properly and that your printer cartridge still has ink, etc., etc., etc. I would suggest trying to print things out well in advance of when you have to run to make it to class on time. This ensures that you can trouble-shoot any problems that could occur when printing. ***Any assignment not handed-in on time due to a technology problem will be considered late and will be graded accordingly.***

4. In fairness to students who meet deadlines, assignments handed in late will be reduced by ***one full grade for each session the assignment is late.*** One full letter grade is the equivalent of 10 points out of 100.

5. Cell phones: Please turn your cell phone off during class meetings, or at the very least adjust your phone's features (by using mute) so that it does not ring or vibrate audibly during class. And whatever you do, never answer your phone in class or walk out of class so that you can answer it. If there is some reason, such as an emergency situation, that you feel might require you to answer your phone during our class time, don't come to class. Additionally, text messaging during class is not acceptable. Answering your phone or texting during class will, to say the least, negatively affect your class participation grade.

6. **Communication between the students and the instructor is important and encouraged.** Please feel free to make an appointment to meet with me outside of class-time if you have any questions or problems during the semester.

7. This class will rely on the active participation of each and every class member. You are responsible for coming to each class prepared for discussion, debate, and activities related to readings and assignments. I strongly suggest that you prepare yourself for class by utilizing your Reader's Journal. Just breezing through a chapter in the text and blindly highlighting things does not prepare you for class; you actually have to think about the issues at hand and consider how they relate overall to the course. Taking some short notes makes this happen. Helpful notes can be those that help you to decipher, comprehend, and remember the material, but they should also consist of questions, challenges, and ideas that you found particularly interesting and that you'd like to develop further through class discussion. The Journal is an excellent place to record these notes. If you are not prepared on a given day, consider staying home. If you are not prepared you will score poorly on your class participation grade.

8. If you have a disability that may require consideration by the instructor, you should contact Terri Bassi, the Director of Disability Services at 724-838-4295 or [bassi@setonhill.edu](mailto:bassi@setonhill.edu) as soon as possible to develop a plan of accommodation. You should provide the instructor with a copy of your accommodation plan and schedule a meeting so that you can be supported in an informed manner. It is not necessary to disclose to

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your instructor the nature of your disability. If you need accommodations for successful participation in class activities prior to your appointment at the Disability Services Office, you should offer information in writing to your instructor which includes suggestions for assistance in participating in and completing class assignments.

9. Seton Hill University expects that all its students will practice academic honesty and ethical conduct. The University regards plagiarism, cheating on examinations, falsification of papers, non-sanctioned collaboration, and misuse of library material, computer material, or any other material, published or unpublished, as violations of academic honesty. Violations of the Seton Hill University Code of Academic Conduct and could be grounds for expulsion from the university. Please familiarize yourself with Seton Hill's Code of Academic Conduct in the University Catalog, pages 25-27. If there is any question in your mind about what this policy entails or what might constitute plagiarism, please see me or your academic advisor immediately. All work submitted in the course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. Do not turn in work you have written in the past and do not turn in other people's writing as if it were your own. The use of all sources (other people's ideas, quotations and paraphrases from published work, including that of textbooks and the Internet) must be properly documented with accurate and consistent use of an official documentation style (for this course, MLA.). To help yourself avoid plagiarism, START WITH A BLANK PAGE and compose everything in your own words, quoting from sources only as necessary and documenting sources from which you obtain information and/or paraphrase. NEVER start by cutting and pasting ANYTHING. ***Submission of any work as your own that was not written and appropriately cited by you will result in automatic failure for this course.***

10. Incompletes require the approval of the Division Chair and will be granted in only the most serious of circumstances.

11. A concerted effort has been made to ensure that this syllabus will actually reflect the workings of the course. However, due to practical reality, all things in this syllabus are subject to change. Students will be notified of any necessary changes in a timely manner.

### **Principle of Studying Theatre History:**

**“By definition, a history is a chronicle – a recapitulation of events from the past. It cannot, therefore, be a contemporary, spontaneous occurrence. And yet, that is precisely what theatre is – a theatre event exists not in the past but in the present. In fact, it exists only at the moment when it occurs. The essence of theatre is an immediate exchange between the audience and what unfolds onstage: performances, words of a text, and visual effects of sets, lights, and costumes. *The first challenge in [studying] theatre history, therefore, is to bring theatre from the past to life today.*”**

**-- Wilson and Goldfarb, p. vii**

### **Principle of Class Discussion:**

**“I may not agree with what is being said,  
but I will try to understand *why* it is being said.”**

**Principle of Theatre Creation:**

***Dare to Fail Gloriously!!***



**Course Schedule**

**ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE DAY WITH WHICH THEY ARE LISTED!!!  
READER'S JOURNALS ARE DUE ON THE DAY ON WHICH EACH READING IS DUE!!!**

- M 1/25 Introduction to the course. Studying theatre history.  
W 1/27 Studying Theatre History. Wilson and Goldfarb Introduction, 1-23.
- M 2/1 Ancient Greek Theatre – emergence. Wilson and Goldfarb introduction to Part One, 25;  
Chapter 1, 26-38. Assign Ancient Performance Projects.  
W 2/3 Selection from Plato's *Republic* (hand-out).
- M 2/8 Ancient Greek Theatre – tragic form and comedy. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 1, 38-47.  
Selection from Aristotle's *Poetics*, Worthen pp. 123-131.  
W 2/10 Ancient Greek Theatre – theatre production; Hellenistic theatre. Wilson and Goldfarb  
Chapter 1, 47-59.
- M 2/15 Drama in context. Worthen, "Introduction: Drama, Theater, and Culture," pp. 1-8.  
Review dramatic structure.  
W 2/17 *Agamemnon*, by Aeschylus.
- M 2/24 *Medea*, by Euripides.  
W 2/26 *Lysistrata*, by Aristophanes.
- F 2/26 *Red Herring* opening night, 8:00 PM performance.**
- M 3/1 Roman Theatre – development; drama; theory. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 2, 62-74.  
W 3/3 Roman Theatre – theatre production; popular entertainment. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter  
2, 74-81. (*Red Herring* 10:30 AM Matinee performance. We *will* have class.)
- M 3/8 ***Spring Break – No class.***  
W 3/10 ***Spring Break – No class.***
- M 3/15 **Ancient Performance Project Performances/Presentations**  
W 3/17 **Ancient Performance Project Performances/Presentations**
- M 3/22 Early Asian Theatre – Indian; Chinese. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 3, 84-96  
W 3/24 Early Asian Theatre – Japanese; Southeast Asia. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 3, 96-110.
- M 3/29 *Matsukaze*, by Kan'ami Kiyotsugu.  
W 3/31 Medieval Theatre – liturgical to vernacular. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 4, 114-125.
- M 4/5 ***Easter Break – No class.***  
W 4/7 Medieval Theatre – cycle and morality plays. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 4, 125-139.

- M 4/12      *The Wakefield Second Shepherd's Pageant*  
W 4/14      *Everyman*
- M 4/19      The Theatre of the Italian Renaissance – development; drama; opera; commedia. Wilson and Goldfarb introduction to Part Two, 143; Chapter 5, 144-156. Read Commedia scenario  
W 4/21      The Theatre of the Italian Renaissance – architecture; design and technology; theory. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 5, 156-173.
- M 4/26      The Theatre of the English Renaissance – development; drama. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 6, 176-187.  
W 4/28      *Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe.
- F 4/30      *Macbeth* opening night, 8:00 PM performance.**
- M 5/3      The Theatre of the English Renaissance – theatre production. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 6, 187-206.  
W 5/5      *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare.  
(*Macbeth* 10:30 AM Matinee performance. We will have class.)
- M 5/10      The Theatre of the English Renaissance – Jacobean and Caroline. Wilson and Goldfarb Chapter 6, 206-213.

**Wednesday, May 12, 8:00-10:00 AM. Final Exam Period.**

**Production Reconstruction Project Presentations. Reader's Journals Collected. Closure.**



**Theatre History and Dramatic Literature**  
**Two Column Reader's Journal**  
**Required Format**

**Column A**

**Column B**

**Notes from the Text**

Main concepts

Important vocabulary

The central ideas of the authors

Facts

Specific details that particularly interest you

MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING IS  
LEGIBLE!

LEAVE PLENTY OF SPACE IN BETWEEN  
ITEMS SO THAT THE JOURNAL IS NEAT  
AND SO THAT YOU CAN FILL IN THINGS  
LATER AS YOU SEE NECESSARY AFTER  
CLASS MEETINGS.

**Your Responses to the Text**

Feelings evoked

Memories spurred

Experiences you've had that you can connect  
to the reading

Any context for your understanding of the text

Anything from other fields of study  
(skills/concepts) that you can relate to the  
reading

Challenges to issues raised by the authors

Words

Phrases

Pictures (cut and pasted or drawn)

Feel free to be creative

**REQUIRED:**

Questions – you must write at least three  
questions for each chapter. This requires that  
you *read the text critically!* Questions could  
relate to ideas from the reading that you'd like  
to have clarified, concepts that you'd like to  
see discussed in class, or issues that you would  
like to debate. Questions can appear anywhere  
in Column B, but please mark questions with a  
circled Q, like this: (Q)

## Individual Class Performance Evaluation

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendance:** (Rate yourself from 1-low to 5-high.)

1. Attended classes and was on-time and prepared      1      2      3      4      5

**Group Involvement:** (Rate yourself from 1-low to 5-high. Circle one number for each item.)

2. Applied knowledge gained from assignments  
to group activities      1      2      3      4      5

3. Showed interest in group discussions  
and activities      1      2      3      4      5

4. Was open-minded and listened to the  
comments of others      1      2      3      4      5

5. Helped facilitate group discussions      1      2      3      4      5

6. Asked questions of others      1      2      3      4      5

7. Helped group stay focused on tasks      1      2      3      4      5

8. Encouraged the participation of other  
group members      1      2      3      4      5

**Class Involvement:** (Rate yourself from 1-low to 5-high. Circle one number for each item.)

9. Began classes with a positive and  
constructive attitude      1      2      3      4      5

10. Asked pertinent questions in class      1      2      3      4      5

11. Came prepared for class discussions      1      2      3      4      5

12. Brought assignments prepared for class      1      2      3      4      5

13. Articulated an understanding of class materials      1      2      3      4      5

14. Was able to respond effectively to questions  
posed by others      1      2      3      4      5

15. Took risks to stretch myself      1      2      3      4      5

**Question of the Day:** Please answer on the back of this page.