



COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number
THR101

Course Title
Introduction to Theatre

Credits
3

Hours:
lecture/Lab/Other
3 Lecture

Co- or Pre-requisite

None

Implementation
sem/year
Spring 2017

Catalog description: Beginning study of the theatre as an art form, examines how a dramatic text is transformed into a stage production. Students read and analyze plays to understand theatre production practices -- historical as well as current -- and dramatic theory. Requires attending current theatre productions. *3 lecture hours*

Is course New, Revised, or Modified? Modified

Required texts/other materials: *Norton Anthology of Drama* Vol 1 (2nd Edition)
by J. Ellen Gainor and Stanton B. Garner Jr.

Revision date: Spring
2019

Course coordinator: Jody P. Gazenbeek-Person

Information resources: *Norton Anthology of Drama* contains plays that are part of the traditional canon as well as background information on the plays/playwrights and critical/historical contexts.

Other learning resources: Our library and the county system contain a collection of relevant books, videos, recordings, and electronic databases to supplement the students' learning and research projects. These are all well-known works of recognized quality, including: *The Idea of Theater* by Francis Fergusson; *Black Theatre, Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora* edited by Paul Carter Harrison; *Twentieth Century Theatre, a sourcebook* edited by Richard Drain; *Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Greeks to Grotowski* by Bernard F. Dukore; *The Theatre of Revolt, Studies in Modern Drama from Ibsen to Genet* by Robert Brustein; *Restoration Theatre* edited by John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris; and *The Theory of the Modern Stage* edited by Eric Bentley.

Student Learning Outcomes/Course Goals:

The student will be able to:

1. Analyze and describe dramatic conventions vs. theatrical conventions
2. Identify tragic, comic, and tragicomic genres
3. Distinguish between realistic, naturalistic, representational, and presentational styles
4. Describe and discuss theatre spaces: proscenium, arena, thrust, black box, and site-specific spaces
5. Evaluate and describe principles of dramatic structure and principles of theatre criticism
6. Describe and discuss the contribution of specific theatre artists -- playwright, director, designer (set, costume, sound, lighting), actors and theatre audience
7. Describe social, political, and cultural events that have had an impact on the various stages of theatre's development
8. Analyze and discuss the social impact of theatre
9. Employ fundamental principles of play reading to selected scripts.

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 4. Technology. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Goal E. Computer Literacy. Students will use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.

Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Units of study in detail.

Unit I: Basic Theatre History: Greek, Medieval, Renaissance, Modern Europe, Modern U.S.A and one Non-Western Theatre Tradition (Asia or Africa)

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe social, political, and cultural events that have had effects on the various stages of theatre's development. **(Course Competencies 7, 8 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 5, 6 & 7; Core Skill A, B & D)**
- Describe how theatre reflects the cultural values of society and how drama played a part in each age's enhancement of its culture's growth. **(Course Competencies 7, 8 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 5, 6 & 7; Core Skill A, B & D)**
- Explain the impact of major historical and cultural/philosophical shifts (including Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Karl Marx) on Modern European Drama. **(Course Competencies 7, 8 & 9;**

Gen Ed Goals 5, 6 & 7; Core Skill A, B & D)

- Explain the impact of an emerging U.S. national identity on the themes, plots, characters, and aesthetics of recognized U.S. playwrights. **(Course Competencies 7, 8 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 5, 6 & 7; Core Skill A, B & D)**
- Discuss the political ramifications of race, class, and gender in Non-Western Drama and Modern U. S. Drama. **(Course Competencies 7, 8 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 5, 6,7 & 8; Core Skill A, B, D & G)**
- Analyze and compare contemporary productions of theatrical texts from the periods being studied with their original productions. **(Course Competencies 7, 8 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 5, 6 & 7; Core Skill A, B & D)**

Unit II: Dramatic Criticism and Basic Script Analysis

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Apply Aristotelian criteria to analysis of texts from each stage of theatre's development and assess its influence on the development of the structure of plays. **(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 5 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 1 & 6; Core Skill A, B & D)**
- Compare and contrast plots, characters, and themes from tragedy, comedy, drama, and tragicomedy. **(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 5 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 1 & 6; Core Skill A & D)**
- Discuss key characteristics of Realism, Naturalism, Expressionism, Poetic Realism, Epic Theatre, and Symbolism. **(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 5 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 1 & 6; Core Skill A & D)**
- Develop a processes for breaking scenes into playable beats and actions and apply character analysis from textual information, themes, and larger ideas. **(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 & 9; Gen Ed Goals 1 & 6; Core Skill A, B, D & F)**

Unit III Roles in the Theatre

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Develop understanding and communication abilities concerning the various roles people play in the production of a play: director, playwright, actor, designer, producer, etc. **(Course Competencies 6; Gen Ed Goals 1 & 6; Core Skill A, & D)**
- Describe the evolution of the various roles in theatrical process: (actor, director, playwright, etc.). **(Course Competencies 6 & 7; Gen Ed Goals 1, 4, 6 & 7; Core Skill A, & D)**
- Engage in several short and introductory hands-on exercises to develop a greater understanding of the various roles in the production of a play. **(Course Competencies 6; Gen Ed Goals 1 & 6; Core Skill A, B, D & F)**

Unit IV The Performance Space

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe the evolution of various design elements in theatrical process: (set, costume, sound, lighting). **(Course Competencies 4, 6 & 7; Gen Ed Goals 1, 4, 6 & 7; Core Skill A & D)**
- Develop understanding and communication abilities concerning varying performance spaces. **(Course Competencies 4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 4, & 6; Core Skill A & D)**
- Apply a working knowledge of basic stage movement through a small in-class project (stage right, stage left, center, etc.). **(Course Competencies 4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 4, & 6; Core Skill A & F)**

Evaluation of student learning:

1. Assigned reading of plays representative of each time period.
2. Assessment of comprehension through participation in classroom discussions and performances of representative plays.
3. Quizzes on readings and lectures utilizing a variety of testing strategies: multiple choice, fill-in the blank, short answer, identifications, etc
4. Attendance at two professional or semi-professional theatre productions (Equity or Academic Productions) from a list approved and provided by the instructor. Students must write a reaction paper for each production.

5. Research Paper and Oral Presentation on an approved topic by the instructor related to class content.
6. Midterm and Final Examination covering architecture, performance styles, design, and dramatic structure, as well as social, political, and cultural effects during Ancient Greece, Medieval Times, Renaissance, Modern Europe, Modern United States, and one Non-Western Tradition (Asia or Africa)—each exam must have an essay component and a variety of testing strategies: multiple choice, fill-in the blank, short answer, identifications, etc.

Academic Integrity Statement: Students are expected to comply with the college-wide requirements for academic integrity. Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic Integrity—the honest, fair, and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work. Presenting another individual's work as one's own and receiving excessive help from another individual will qualify as a violation of Academic Integrity. The entire policy on Academic Integrity is located in the Student Handbook and is found on the college website (http://www.mccc.edu/admissions_policies_integrity.shtml).