

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

- A. Department Information:
Division: Humanities and Social Science
Department: Speech and Performing Arts
Course ID: THART 100
Course Title: Introduction to the Theatre
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Laboratory: None
Prerequisite: None
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description:
An introduction to the art of theatre to include the nature of the theatrical presentation, elements of dramatic structure, and the contributions of the playwright, actor, director, designer, technician and audience.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of the course the student should be able to:

- A. Identify the structure of a play, including theme, plot, characterization, dialogue, setting, and atmosphere;
- B. Describe the types of drama and the various styles in which they are written;
- C. Distinguish between the major periods of theatrical history, from the Greeks to the present day;
- D. Compare and contrast the contributions of great dramatists of each era;
- E. Analyze the spiritual, moral, and intellectual issues of humanity as they are reflected in theater and drama;
- F. Develop a sense of appreciation of drama and the theater as an art form and understand its function in society;
- G. Distinguish between the major roles and responsibilities of various designers (lighting, set, sound, costume, and makeup);
- H. Identify and explain the roles of producer, director, casting director, and actor;
- I. Develop the ability to critically evaluate theatrical productions.

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

- A. The nature of theater
 1. Basic elements of theater
 2. Theater as a form of art
- B. Performance, audience, and critic
 1. Watching a performance
 2. The audience and critical perspective
 3. The problems of criticism
 4. Qualities needed by the critic
- C. The playscript
 1. Reading a play
 2. Dramatic action
 3. Organizing dramatic action
 4. Plot
 5. Character and characterization
 6. Thought
 7. Diction
 8. Music
 9. Spectacle

- D. Festival theater
 - 1. Ancient Greece
 - a) Dionysus
 - b) Greek Comedy
 - 2. Roman Theater
 - a) Roman theatrical context
 - b) Roman drama and theater
 - 3. Drama in the Middle Ages
 - 4. Conventions of Medieval Theater
- E. Creating a professional theater
 - 1. Shakespeare and the Globe Theater
 - 2. Theater experience in Renaissance Italy
 - 3. The French background (Moliere)
- F. Melodrama and realism
 - 1. Emergency of melodrama
 - 2. Advent of Realism
 - 3. Realism and Naturalism
 - 4. Zola and Naturalism
- G. Modernist tradition
 - 1. Symbolism
 - 2. Appia, Craig, and Reinhardt
 - 3. New Artistic Movements
 - 4. The Postwar era
 - 5. The Federal Theater Project and the Group Theater
 - 6. Epic Theater
- H. Reevaluation, decentralization, and subsidization
 - 1. Postwar American theatre
 - 2. Postwar Europe
 - 3. Absurdism
 - 4. Postwar British theatre
 - 5. Off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway
- I. Contemporary diversity
 - 1. Alternative theatre groups
 - 2. Poor and environmental theatres
 - 3. Multimedia, happenings, and performance art
 - 4. Postmodernism
 - 5. Trends in directing
 - 6. African-American theatre
 - 7. Latino theatre
 - 8. Asian-American theatre
 - 9. Native American theatre
 - 10. Women's theatre
 - 11. Gay and lesbian theatre
- J. Theatrical space and production design
 - 1. Influence of theatrical space
 - 2. Proscenium arch theatre
 - 3. The thrust stage
 - 4. The arena stage
 - 5. Auxiliary spaces
 - 6. Production design
 - 7. Elements of visual design
 - 8. Principles of design
 - 9. Sound in design
 - 10. Integrated production design

- K. Playwriting and dramaturgy
 - 1. The playwright
 - 2. The dramaturgy
 - 3. Dramaturgy and literary management
 - 4. Production dramaturgy
- L. Directing and producing
 - 1. The producer
 - 2. The director
 - 3. Analyzing and studying the script
 - 4. Approaches to directing
 - 5. Casting
 - 6. Working with the actors
 - 7. Movement, gesture, and business
 - 8. Voice and speech
 - 9. Rehearsing the play
 - 10. The director's assistants
- M. Acting
 - 1. The actor's training and means
 - 2. Body, voice, and inner impulse
 - 3. Observation and imagination
 - 4. Control and discipline
 - 5. Stage conventions
 - 6. Creating a role
 - 7. Psychological and emotional preparation
 - 8. Vocal characterization
 - 9. Memorization and line readings
 - 10. Refining the role
 - 11. Dress rehearsals and performance
- N. Scenic design
 - 1. The designer's skills
 - 2. Functions of stage design
 - 3. Working plans and procedures
 - 4. Basic scenic elements
 - 5. Soft-scenery units
 - 6. Framed units
 - 7. Three-dimensional units
 - 8. Innovative materials and methods
 - 9. Assembling scenery
 - 10. Painting scenery
 - 11. Assembling and shifting scenery onstage
 - 12. Set decoration and properties
 - 13. technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performances
 - 14. The designer's assistants and coworkers
- O. Costume design and makeup
 - 1. The costume designer's skills
 - 2. Functions of costume design
 - 3. Working plans and procedures
 - 4. Realizing the designs
 - 5. The costume parade, dress rehearsals, and performances
 - 6. The function of makeup
 - 7. The makeup plot
 - 8. Types of makeup
- P. Lighting design, sound, and multimedia
 - 1. The lighting designer's skills
 - 2. Controllable qualities of light

3. Functions of stage lighting
4. Lighting plot and instrument schedule
5. Lighting instruments, accessories, and control boards
6. Setting the lights, rehearsals, and performances
7. Sound
8. Mixed-media productions

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Lecture
- B. Small group discussion
- C. Small group projects
- D. Critical analysis of videotapes and films
- E. Field trips
- F. Observations
- G. Journaling

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading: After reading the chapter on lighting and sound design, discuss in small groups the elements of lighting and sound. Relate your discussion to recent theatrical productions you have experienced.
- B. Writing: Select two plays to read, each from a different historical period. Compare and contrast the major elements (e.g., plot, characterization, music, spectacle, etc.). Be sure to highlight both the similarities and the dissimilarities. Prepare a 4-6 paper which details your analysis.
- C. Performance: With the other members of your group, select a play in which you are interested. Assign roles to each group member (e.g., director, casting director, set designer, costume designer, etc.). Work through the play by identifying and analyzing the responsibilities of each person's role. Prepare a written report of your roles and responsibilities. Prepare a 20-minute presentation in which you detail your conclusions for the entire class.

VII. EVALUATION(S):

- A. Methods of evaluation:
 1. Objective and subjective examination designed to test students' comprehension of course material. Sample test questions: Compare and contrast the Greek and Roman theatrical traditions.
 2. Subjective evaluation of student writing and/or presentations. Students are evaluated on their ability to apply course concepts to theatrical productions observed either in class, on video, or in the community.
- B. Frequency of evaluation:
 1. At least two examinations
 2. At least two analysis papers/projects

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

Brockett, Oscar G. History of the theatre (9th edition). Allyn & Bacon, 2002
Brown, John Russell. The Oxford illustrated history of the theatre. Oxford University Press, 2001.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None