

Theatre History

Learning history by doing history.

Course Information:
Mon, Wed, & Fri: 10-11am
Room: CSPAC 3747

Instructor: Dr. Nadja Masura
Office: CSPAC 2824
Office hours: 3-4:00pm Tues, Thurs
Email: nmasura@umd.edu (subj:The310)

TA1 ta1@umd.edu

TA2 ta2@umd.edu

“I hear...I forget
I see...and I remember
I do...and I understand.”
~K'ung-fu-tzu (Confucius)

Course Objectives/Goals

The theatre we practice is based in approximately 30,000 years of human experience. The course will survey the most widely taught theories, histories, practices, and practitioners of theatre from prehistory through the early 18th century CE, with special emphasis on Western theatres that have had the most significant impact on the development of theatre in the United States. Formalized theatre and the drama developed for it will be the major focus.

Required Texts

Brockett, Oscar G., and Franklin J. Hildy. *History of the Theatre*. 9th Edition.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003. (B/H)

Worthen, W.B. *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. 5th Edition. Belmont, CA:
Wadsworth Publishing, 2006. (W)

Expectations

- All written work (including drafts) must be word-processed and proof-read before submission.
- Assignments will be handed in on or before the assigned date.
- There will be no food in class, although feel free to bring a beverage.
- Turn off all cell phones.

Attendance and Participation Grade

Students must come to class, sign in on the attendance sheet and participate in all demonstrations and in class exercises. Students should come to class with the reading for the week done on Tuesdays and written work ready to be turned in on Thursdays. Attendance and participation will be partially determined by in class written learning

exercises (quizzes). The policy on attitude to participate and willingness to learn listed under policies will be strictly adhered to. Students missing classes (without properly authorized notes) will not receive points for that day.

Calendar

M Introduction to course.

W Origins of theatre. Reading for today: B/H 1-8; 468-474.

F Discussion: Before and outside of formalized theatre.

M Discussion: classical Greece and the City Dionysia. Reading for today: B/H ch. 2; W 1-10, 9-20.

W Discussion: classical Greece, con't.

F Groups meet to finalize first class presentation. Each class member is assigned to read all of the plays being presented.

M Labor Day Holiday.

W Class presentations: 1) *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus(W); 2) *Oedipus* by Sophocles (W).

F Class presentations: 3) *Medea* by Euripides (W); 4) *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes (W)

M Class presentations: 5) Aristotle's *Poetics* (W)

W Discussion: Hellenistic and Roman Theatre. Reading for today: B/H ch. 3;

F First test: origins and classical Greece (in class).

M Hellenistic and Roman theatre, con't.

W Discussion: Horace and *Ars Poetica*; roots of the neoclassical ideal.

F Groups meet to finalize presentations.

M Group presentations: 1) *The Grouch* by Menander; 2) *The Menaechmus Twins (The Menaechmi)* by Plautus.

W Group presentations: 3) *The Self-Tormentor* by Terence; 4) *Medea* by Seneca.

F Asian, Byzantine, and Early Western European Theatre. Reading for today: B/H ch. 4 and ch. 10.

M Discussion: Byzantium

W Discussion: Classical theatre of India.

F Discussion: Classical theatre of China.

M Discussion: Classical theatre of Japan.

W Discussion: Other contemporary theatre traditions. Mid-term point.

F Second test: Hellenistic and Roman theatres (in class).

M Groups meet to finalize presentations.

W Group presentations: 1) *The Little Clay Cart*; 2) *The Chalk Circle*.

F Group presentations: 3) *Matsukaze* (W); 4) *The Forty-Seven Samurai* (W).

M European theatre of the late Middle Ages. Reading for today; B/H ch. 5.
W Formalized theatre returns.
F Mystery plays. Discussion: *The Second Shepherd's Pageant* (W).

M Morality plays. Discussion: *Everyman* (W).
W The transition to the Renaissance: overview of Europe.
F Fall Break.

M The English theatre: Renaissance and Restoration. Reading for today: B/H chs. 6 and 11.

W Discussion: four eras: Elizabethan, Jacobean Caroline., Restoration.

F Groups meet to finalize presentations.

M Presentations : 1) *Dr. Faustus* (W); 2) *The Rover* (W).

W Spain and New Spain to 1700. Reading for today: B/H ch. 7.

F Third test. Theatres of Asia and Medieval Europe (in class).

M Discussion: Spain: from religious to secular performance.

W Discussion: In the New World: Mezoamerican drama and Sor Juana.

F Presentations: 1) *Fuente Ovejuna* by Lope de Vega; 2) *Life is a Dream* by Calderon (W).

M Discussion: Italy and France. Reading for today: B/H chpts. 8 and 9.

W From commedia dell' arte to the camerata and the neoclassical ideal.

F French classicism.

M Presentations: 1) *Tartuffe* by Moliere (W); *Phaedra* by Racine (W).

W Evaluations and wrap-up discussion.

F Hand in research paper. Fourth test: European Renaissance and post-Renaissance theatres.

Summary of assignments

Four tests (15% each, 60% total). Objective questions based on class lectures, discussions, and reading assignments.

Three group presentations (10% each, 30% total). Each presentation is based on an assigned play. The group will stage a 2-3 minute reading of an excerpt from the play, and describe how that excerpt might have looked in the space it was written for, what the set may have looked like and how the actors would have been costumed in the play's original period. An outline and bibliography of sources used for the report are due upon delivery of the presentation. A minimum of three print sources (other than those used in class) must be included, along with good web sources. The presentation should last approximately 15 minutes. Remaining time will be used for class questions and discussion.

One research paper (10%). Four to six typed, double-spaced pages. Please follow either MLA or Chicago Manual of Style formatting instructions. Select one play from the list below (other than one used for a class presentation) and conduct research on the historical background and theatrical context for the play. It would be best to focus on one area of particular interest and explore it in some detail rather than try to cover too much ground within a limited space.

Policies: Attendance, Participation/Attitude, Preparation, and Prerequisites

Students signing up for this class should be able to write at a college sophomore level (and should have taken one previous writing seminar). Much of the work in the class will be related to assimilation and reflection on the presented and student researched material. Poor writing skills can impede your ability to communicate and get the grade you deserve.

Likewise students should give their best effort on any visual or performance work, poor or mediocre effort will be reflected in your grade. This course encourages students to identify their strengths and weakness and find new ways of expressing themselves in various mediums. Students are encouraged to find creative solutions such as using computer drafting or collage to compensate for poor drawing skills. All students should have access to a computer and be able to use the internet.

This class is built on an understanding of mutual respect between teacher and student, between students, and between student and the material. Previous theatrical experience or skill is not need to participate, only a willingness to learn and invest yourself in the class process. Only students willing to give 100% of their energy, intellect, and enthusiasm to the exploration of technology and theatre should register. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared with reading and work in hand. Approximately one to two thirds of each class will be spent as a lab requiring student participation. Students who come unprepared or who refuse to participate in any class movement, staging or other practical exercises/demonstrations or discussions with the appropriate attitude of willingness will be asked to leave and loose credit for participation for that day. Attendance is mandatory and will affect your grade.

This course conforms to school policies found at www.shc.umd.edu/code.html on matters of gender/sexual preference, racial, and religious tolerance and equity as well as issues of disability and scholastic honesty.