

Syllabus - Theater Appreciation

[Online]

Instructor

Mrs. Couturier can be reached at acouturier@ufl.edu. Allow at least 24 hours for a response to emails. I do not have an office or an office phone number, so email is always the best way to reach me. To find contact information for your TA, choose "How to Contact my TA" under the course modules. To make sure you get all announcements concerning the course, go to "Settings" in the upper right hand corner of the screen, click "Notifications" on the left and under "Announcement" you should see "ASAP." If you need to see me in person, please schedule an appointment via email.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to give you a well-rounded, introductory level knowledge of theatre. This includes learning about playwrights, history, and production design, reading plays and criticisms, and experiencing performances first-hand.

Course Requirements

In order to be successful in this course, all students must participate fully in the activities listed below:

- Do close readings of assigned textbook chapters, plays, and posted material
- Watch video lectures and supplementary videos
- Take weekly quizzes on assigned readings and lectures
- Make a post on the class' Discussions board
- See live theatrical performances and write a critique about each one
- Produce a creative project based on a required play

A full schedule of assignment due dates can be seen by choosing the calendar button on the right hand side of the screen.

Required Texts

Theatrical Worlds - Beta Version (University Press of Florida, 2014). This book was developed in response to the high cost of theatre textbooks which commonly retail between \$90 and \$120 for new editions. I receive no royalties from the sale of this book. [A free pdf version is available \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to read online but most students find that a physical copy is easier to read and study.

The following plays are required reading:

Doubt by John Patrick Shanley

Fences by August Wilson

M. Butterfly by David Henry Hwang

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity by Kristoffer Diaz

Machinal by Sophie Treadwell

The Laramie Project and The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later by Moises Kaufman (Note: The bookstore may have ordered a version which includes *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Late* but you are only responsible for *The Laramie Project*.)

Honky by Greg Kalleres

All of these plays should be available in the bookstore. You can purchase *any* edition of these plays from any source but get them *at the beginning of the semester*. After a few weeks, unsold books in the campus bookstore are returned to the publishers. No exceptions will be made for students who have ordered from third parties and are waiting for delivery. Questions regarding these plays will be included in weekly quizzes. Any additional readings will be available online.

How the Class is Conducted

There is no live component to this course -- it will be conducted entirely online. Instead of going to a classroom, you will do the assigned reading and watch video lectures and other video/audio material. This information will be the basis for weekly multiple choice/true-false quizzes. All quizzes are worth a total of 20 points. You may not take the quiz after the due date and time.

Each week you will also be asked to find information or offer ideas and post it for the rest of the class. Meaningful posts that fulfill the requirements of the topic and use college-level writing will receive 10 points. Points are usually lost for the following reasons:

- Lack of depth in your answer
- Opinions that are not supported by details
- Bad proofreading, i.e. improper spelling, grammar, punctuation and capitalization.
- Using slang or instant message language (see [Netiquette Guidelines](#))
- Plagiarism (*see below*)

You will write two papers based on live performances (*see below*).

At the end of the semester, you will be responsible for a creative project based on your interpretation of a play. You have the choice of taking on the role of the director OR the designer of a hypothetical production of the play. You will find fifteen (15) images and provide a thoughtful narrative for each one. It should be obvious from your comments that you have read and understood the text. Instructions will be available under "Assignments."

There is NO extra credit for this course.

Understand Plagiarism

Plagiarism is serious business. Everything you post in this course must be in your own words. If you use the ideas of others, they must be properly cited. Attending college is entering a community of thinkers, past and present. It's like entering a conversation that has been going on since the beginning of written communication. You can come up with new ideas or build on the ideas of others. There is nothing wrong with using other people's ideas to support your argument or point of view but you must give the original thinker credit. Otherwise, you are claiming those ideas as your own. That is no different than cheating on a test. The worst form of plagiarism is cutting and pasting text from a website without attribution (including plot summaries). That will not be tolerated in this class. Remember, my graders and I have the same access to web pages as you. Don't risk failing this course by cutting corners.

Also, be particular about sources. Wikipedia can be a starting point but it is a website where any ill-informed person can change the text. Entries are filled with inaccuracies. Look to sources with some kind of institutional stamp -- a news organization or university entity for example. You want a source that is heavily invested in the accuracy of the material. I don't expect formal citations in MLA format but it should be obvious from your posts where the information originated. The papers are based on your opinions and should not require citations.

Seeing Live Theatre

You are studying theatre so you need to see theatre. Taking a theatre class and *not* going to see live theatre is like taking an art history class where you only read descriptions of paintings or an architecture class where you only look at blueprints.

For this class, you are required to see the following shows which will be the basis for three short papers: *Sketchy People*, and *Swamp Dance or Yellow Face* (video). Your student fees have been used to purchase tickets for *Sketchy People* and *Swamp Dance*. Here's how it works. It's a little confusing - stay with me:

First step - you need to pick up a coupon. To get a coupon, go to the second floor of McGuire Pavilion between 9 and 5 (Monday-Friday). [McGuire Pavilion](#) is the building connected to the Reitz Union in the quad. When you get to the top floor, tell someone you are in THE2000 online, show them your ID, and sign for the coupon.

Second step - trade the coupon for a ticket. Take your coupon to the box office located at the Stadium (while the O Dome is under construction), tell them what day you are going and get a ticket.

I'm sorry this is so complicated but I'm not in charge of the ticketing system. Don't buy tickets online - use the coupon. If you look under Calendar in Canvas, you'll see the deadlines for all of the papers.

You will write a paper about each performance. Do not wait until the last minute to get your tickets. Performances are limited and often sell out in advance. It is your responsibility to make sure you secure a seat to the performance. If you are taking the course outside of the Gainesville area, you will need to make arrangements to see two live theatre productions in your area. However, they must be either community theatre or professional. You will submit these papers as if they were for the *Sketchy People* and *Swamp Dance* papers, simply making a note that you are taking the course from a distance. If unsure, clear your choice with your TA.

Performance Etiquette

Attending a live theatre event can be exciting, thought-provoking, even transformative. This is an event that you share with an entire audience. It is much different from watching a video or going to a concert. Please honor the time, energy, creativity, and risk

it took to create the work of art you are viewing. In other words, [you are not in your living room](#) (Links to an external site.).

Arrive early. You'll want to have time to find your seat and peruse the program. Some theatres will not seat you until intermission if you arrive after the first act has begun.

TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE COMPLETELY. Vibrating phones make plenty of noise and draw attention away from the show. Texting has also become a major problem during live shows. The light from the screen annoys the people around you and it is very disrespectful to the actors who have rehearsed long hours for weeks. You will enjoy yourself a great deal more if you allow yourself to be immersed in the action instead of being distracted. What is so important that you can't allow yourself a couple of hours to forget the outside world?

Do not talk during the performance.

Once the performance begins, do not exit the auditorium unless it is an emergency. If you have an emergency, try to wait until a scene change to leave the theatre.

Do not bring food or drink into the theatre. Unwrap candy or cough drops before the show.

Photography and video recording is strictly prohibited. You are watching copyrighted material.

After the performance, do not leave your seat until the cast has taken their curtain call. At the end of the show, don't forget to show your appreciation by clapping.

Make-ups

Discussion posts, quizzes, and/or papers may only be made up under the following circumstances: medical illness documented by a physician; family emergency documented through the Dean of Students office (392-1261); religious holiday; official University of Florida conflict documented by faculty sponsor or pre-arrangement with me. Documentation MUST be provided by the student.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>."

Computer Problems

Computers crash and internet connections fail. It is in your best interest NOT to wait until the last minute so you have time to locate a computer lab. If you are having computer problems, please contact the UF Helpdesk:

Walk-in: [HUB 132](#) (Links to an external site.)

Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357)

They will give you a ticket number. If you request an extension from me, you must provide me with this number. If the ticket indicates a date/time AFTER the assignment date/time, the request for a make-up will be automatically rejected.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/> (Links to an external site.).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that is documented with the Disability Resource Center and wish to discuss accommodations, contact your instructor as soon as possible so they can arrange longer times for quizzes. If you have a learning disability that has NOT been documented, contact the DRC at 352.392.8565, email accessuf@dso.ufl.edu, or go to their office at 0001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall).

Academic Honesty

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Grade Scale

Grading is based upon the scale listed below.

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

How to Succeed in an Online Course

Schedule class times for yourself

Students need to be aware that online learning can present significant challenges, particularly to individuals who are not self-starters or do not have good time management skills. This course is not self-paced -- there are hard deadlines that you can find on the class calendar. The students who do poorly attempt to do a week's work right before the deadline. The students who succeed schedule study hours during the week. If you do, you will learn more and your stress level will be greatly reduced. Also

note that many of the modules are unlocked on the first day so that you can work ahead if you know you will be out of town, etc.

Read everything twice

Slow down and read directions twice. Many points have been lost because students quickly scanned instructions and ignored key elements of an assignment. Again, scheduling class times for yourself will help. If you don't understand an assignment, feel free to email me but I can't help you hours before an assignment is due. The coursework may be available 24 hours a day but I am not. Also, online summaries of plays will not help you pass the quizzes. There are no shortcuts to doing the reading. Besides, these dramatics works are highly acclaimed and very enjoyable to read!

Take notes on videos

As you watch the videos, make notes on paper or in some kind of word processor in a separate window. That helps you do better on quizzes.

Back up your work

Computers can fail at any time so back up your discussion posts, production critiques, and creative project to an external hard drive, thumb drive or a cloud service. When you post something to Canvas, double check to make sure you uploaded it correctly and it exists on the system. Every semester, I get students who insist they posted work that does not appear. I can't give credit for work I can't see.

Trust what you know

When it comes to the quizzes, I am not an evil mastermind bent on destroying you. I promise you that each multiple choice question has one correct answer and three answers that are nonsense. There are no "degrees of true." Study carefully and trust your knowledge of the material. Don't go to the land of "what if" (ex. Well if the universe were turned sideways and cats were dogs, this choice might be true...").