

Syllabus - Theater Appreciation [Online]

Syllabus

theatre
appreciation



Instructor

My name is **Dr. Charlie Mitchell** (<http://arts.ufl.edu/directory/profile/1669>). I can be reached at cmitchell@ufl.edu (<mailto:cmitchell@ufl.edu>) and at 352-273-0515. My office is located in McGuire Pavilion on the 2nd floor, room 229. This building is attached to the Reitz Union and is called Constans Theatre on some maps.

My office hours are Monday and Wednesday from 1 - 3 pm. This is the time I put aside to talk to any student who shows up for any reason. You do not have to make an appointment. If you can't make those hours and need to speak with me in person, email me and we will work something out. I have a lot of students so allow at least 24 hours for a response. I'm always happy to interact with students but please check the syllabus and FAQ page before you reach out.

Grading is done by my teaching assistants. Questions about specific grades should be directed to them. To find contact information for the TA assigned to you, click on "Home" and choose "How to Contact my TA." Questions about the class itself should be referred to me.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to expose you to live theatre so that you will better appreciate its complexities and cultural importance. Over the course of the semester, you will look behind the scenes in order to explore the collaborative processes that make it work. In addition to studying some of the literature, theories, history, forms, and styles of theatre, you will explore how influences such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and economic class shape the experience of theatre in the United States. You will also learn to write and speak critically about theatrical production. This course fulfills a general education and diversity requirement.

General Education Objectives

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. In-class lectures will provide the framework for understanding the theatrical arts and how they connect to the human experience. Additional instruction will come through textbook and play reading augmented by the watching of live theatre.

General Education Objectives for Diversity

Diversity courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that create cultural differences within the United States. These courses encourage students to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups in the United States. Students are expected to analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups. Lectures will emphasize the struggles and theatrical contributions of marginalized groups while the reading discussion of assigned plays by “hyphenated” Americans will provide a context for understanding how cultural differences have been negotiated in this country.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline.

Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Student learning outcomes will be assessed in various ways. Exams and quizzes on assigned readings will test mastery of content. Communication and critical thinking will be tested through the writing of papers that critique live performance and creative projects that interpret the symbology of theatrical texts.

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 left hand side of the screen.

Required Texts

All of the texts below are required and 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. Any additional readings will be available online.

TEXTBOOK:

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 \(http://opensource-theatre-textbook.wordpress.com/\)](http://opensource-theatre-textbook.wordpress.com/) to read online but most students find that a physical copy is easier to read and study.

REQUIRED PLAYS:

Fat Pig by Neil LaBute

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 by Moises Kaufman (Note: The bookstore may have ordered a version which includes an additional piece entitled *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*. You are only responsible for *The Laramie Project*.)

Honky by Greg Kalleres

This course is taught entirely online but there are also many sections of the live version of the class. Those sections use different texts. Only purchase the plays on the list above.

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, watch video lectures or listen to audio material.

You will do the following:

Take a Quiz: You will take multiple choice/true-false quizzes based on the material assigned. All quizzes are worth a total of 20 points. You may not take the quiz after the due date and time.

Post on the Discussion Board: 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 and use college-level writing will receive 10 points. If you get less than 10, it is usually 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 (ex. lol, omg, etc.)
- Plagiarism (*see below*)

Although the discussion post rubric assigns points for college-level writing, you will get no credit if your post has nothing to do with the prompt. You cannot get credit for simply using the English language. Therefore, read the directions carefully.

You will also do the following:

Write 3 Papers: You will see three live performances and write one paper for each performance. Specific directions for each paper will be posted in the Modules section under "Production Critiques."

Do a Creative Project: At the end of the semester, you will be responsible for a creative project based on your interpretation of a specific play. Instructions will be available in the last module.

Understand Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cutting and pasting text from a website without attribution is plagiarism. That includes plot summaries. Remember, my graders and I have the same access to web pages as you and we use software that checks your submissions against web sources and work submitted by past students. Your intent does not matter. If I find evidence of plagiarism, you will fail the class.

Put simply, everything you submit 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 is 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. And that's cheating.

You should 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 if you use material from someone else, it should be obvious where it originated (ex. This idea is supported by actor Lynn Fontanne (qtd. in *Actors on Acting*): "When I am on stage, I am the focus of a thousand eyes and it gives me strength. I feel that something, some energy, is flowing from the audience into me."

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." Plagiarism is an [Honor Code violation](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/%20sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code) (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/%20sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>) at this university.

Sharing your work for this class with others (quiz answers and papers for example) or uploading anything from this course to an outside website is also considered an Honor Code Violation.

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. And that's crazy.

For this class, you are required to see three shows. I will email you directions that tell you exactly what shows to see, when to see them, and how to get tickets.

If you are taking the course outside of the Gainesville area, you will need to make arrangements to see shows in your area. However, they must be either community theatre or professional (no high school or children's

theatre). If you are unsure about the show, clear your choice with me.

Make-ups

Make-ups can only be granted 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 can be emailed.

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> (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>).

Computer Problems

Computers crash and internet connections fail. If you are having computer problems, please contact the UF Helpdesk:

Walk-in: [HUB 132 \(http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/about/business-hours/\)](http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/about/business-hours/)

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/> (<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>).

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 \(mailto:accessuf@dso.ufl.edu\)](mailto:accessuf@dso.ufl.edu), or go to their office at 0001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall).

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-

For final grades, I round up your final score from .5 (ex. 89.5 = 90). This is a kindness. I will not adjust any score under .5.

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 the same day it is due. 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. If you feel an online class is not for you, take the live version of the class.

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 keep set hours. Also, online summaries of plays will not help you pass the quizzes. There are no shortcuts to doing the reading. Besides, these dramatic 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 you can see it on Canvas. If you don't see it, I won't see it.

Trust what you know

When it comes to the quizzes, I am not an evil mastermind bent on tricking 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 was turned sideways and cats were dogs, this choice might be true...").

[Click "Next" below to read the Frequently Asked Questions]