

THEATRE APPRECIATION [Online]

THE2000 – Summer 2025

Instructor: Tom Zhang
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COURSE OUTCOMES

In this course, students will explore dramatic structure, techniques, and various organizational elements. The course provides an introduction to theatre as a collaborative art form through the critical analysis of its historical context, production, theory, and connections to theatrical literature, including the Western canon.

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon. 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 relevant factors that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. For this course, recorded lectures will provide the framework for understanding the theatrical arts and how they connect to human culture. Additional instruction will come through the reading of celebrated and award-winning American plays.

<https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>

GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline. This will be measured through quizzes, exams, and a final exam.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written forms appropriate to the discipline. This will be measured through short papers based on watching live performance which will offer opportunities for self-reflection in relationship to the material.

Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems. This will be measured through homework assignments.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will identify the basic principles of theatrical performance, design, technology, organization, and management.
- Students will assess the social significance and the human condition as expressed through the performing arts.
- Students will explore and interpret works of art utilizing creative and critical thinking skills.

- Students will demonstrate college-level writing.
- Students will define, compare and contrast theater as both an expressive art form and a commercial industry.

REQUIREMENTS

To succeed in this course, all students must participate fully in the activities listed below:

Close readings of assigned textbook chapters, plays, and posted material

- Watch video lectures and supplementary videos
- Every module (every 3-4 days), take a quiz on assigned readings and videos
- Every module, you must post a response to a prompt on the Discussions board
- Attend, or watch live recordings of two theatrical performances and write a critique about each one
- Produce a creative project based on a required play

Assignment due dates can be seen by choosing the Calendar button on the left-hand side of the screen. **Late submission will be allowed for one day after due date, but will result in a 20% deduction; submissions later than that won't be accepted,** unless there's accidental reasons, such as illness, technical malfunction, etc. In those situations, you should contact the course instructor and provide evidence, such as screenshot of an error message, or a doctor's note.

Note that for module 7-10, you're supposed to choose one to complete. You need to tell the instructor your decision by submitting a Google Form, which can be accessed on Canvas.

Due Date	Assignment/Quiz	Script reading due
Tue 7/1, 2025	Discussion Topic Performative Acts Quiz 1	
Sat 7/5, 2025	Discussion Topic Critique an Actor's Performance Quiz 2	Doubt
Wed 7/9, 2025	Discussion Topic Stage Pictures Quiz 3	The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity
Sat 7/12, 2025	Discussion Topic Reading a Set Quiz 4	
Wed 7/16, 2025	Assignment Course Paper 1	
Sun 7/20, 2025	Discussion Topic Honky and Satire Quiz 5; Module 7-10 selection Form	Honky
Wed 7/23, 2025	Discussion Topic Your Kind of Musical Quiz 6	
Sun 7/27, 2025	Assignment Course Paper 2	
Thu 7/31, 2025	Choose one module from module 7-10 to complete, each containing a quiz and a discussion post	One of four: Raisin in the Sun, Anna in the Tropics, M. Butterfly, Laramie Project
Tue 8/5, 2025	Assignment Creative Project	Machinal

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Theatrical Worlds, ed. Charlie Mitchell.

ISBN: 1616101660 - University Press of Florida

This book was developed in response to the high cost of theatre textbooks. A free pdf version is available at <https://opensourceoftheatretextbook.wordpress.com/>

REQUIRED PLAYS

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. There is no valid excuse for not locating a copy of the play, including waiting for third party vendors. In this course, we will cover material that you may find controversial or challenging. If you have had personal experiences or beliefs that might seriously affect your participation, I encourage you to read about the required plays and performances above before deciding to stay in the course. All of the following texts should be available in the bookstore:

All these four:

Doubt: A Parable by John Patrick Shanley
The Elaborate Entrance Chad Deity by Kristoffer Diaz
Machinal by Sophie Treadwell
Honky by Greg Kalleres

One of these four below:

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
M. Butterfly by David Henry Hwang
Anna in the Tropics by Nilo Cruz
The Laramie Project by Moises Kaufman

Some of these plays have epub versions available. Check the publisher's websites for details.

REQUIRED PERFORMANCES

For this class, you are required to see two live shows or recordings of live shows, which will be the basis for two short papers and may also be the topic of some quiz questions.

EXTRA-CREDIT OPPORTUNITY

For this course, there will be one extra-credit opportunity on Monday, 7/28. It will be organized as an in-person hands-on labs event hosted at the Nadine McGuire Building. You'll sign up to attend the full event from 1-5pm to receive extra credits of 5% of the total grade. More specifications of the event will be announced later.

SCALE

A	93-100	Superior Effort	C	73	Average Effort
A-	90		C-	70	
B+	87		D+	67	
B	83	Good Effort	D	63	Minimum Effort
B-	80		D-	60	
C+	77		E	0-59	

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found in the online catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

THE HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” **If you violate the Honor Code, you will automatically receive a failing grade in this class.** I understand getting behind and panicking when due dates arrive but you are better off telling me you screwed up and ask for help rather than risk your academic future.

The following are Honor Code violations:

- Cheating on a quiz
- Soliciting quiz answers from other students
- Writing a paper about a show you did not see
- Uploading anything from this course to an outside website
- Plagiarism (i.e., using someone else's words or ideas without attribution)
 - **Submitting AI generated material**
 - Cutting and pasting text from a website

Ignorance of the definition of plagiarism or the absence of intent to deceive does not constitute an acceptable defense in matters of scholarly dishonesty. College is not a system to beat. It is a space where, for four years, people like me want to know what you think.

So how do you avoid plagiarism? It is simple. Always cite your sources. It is fine to build upon the ideas of others or use them to support your own argument. All you have to do is give the original thinker credit. Think of yourself as joining a community of thinkers that's been debating since the beginning of time. It's ok to agree or disagree with the ideas of other thinkers and use them to make a point. You just need to tell me who said it first. This is why using AI is not permitted. Artificial intelligence pulls sources and synthesizes them into text but you have no idea where it got the information. Find reliable sources with some kind of institutional stamp -- a news organization or university entity, for example -- people who are invested in the accuracy of the material.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations need to register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565/ <https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. If you do not have a disability but feel you need help with your writing, contact <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>.

AVAILABILITY

If you have something you want to discuss with me, feel free to call me, email, or stop by during my office hours. You are never “bothering” me. During these times, I will be happy to go over

your work and suggest improvements. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, contact me and we will come up with another time to meet.

EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter the syllabus and course outline if necessary.

COLLEGE-LEVEL WRITING

One of the course objectives is to help you learn how to write paragraphs and papers in the college-level writing style.

The University Writing Studio has a series of videos explaining how to better write in this style at <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/video-resources/writing-videos/>.

The standards for this writing style are defined by the rubric below:

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
	may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.