

MODERN & CONTEMPORARY THEATRE HISTORY

Course: THEA 452 (FALL 2017)

Meetings: T & R 3:00-4:15 in NFAC 290

Course Credit: 3 credits (GDR Hum 1; GEP Arts)

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey Stephens

Office: NFAC 211

Phone: 346-4706/email: jstephen@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: M & W 10:00-12:00; R 1-2:30; F 10:00-12:00; other times by appt.;
NO OFFICE HOURS ON TUESDAYS.

Required texts: Brockett, Oscar G. and Franklin J. Hildy. *History of the Theatre*. 10th ed.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2008. (Rental)

Caputi, Anthony. *Eight Modern Plays*. 2nd ed. Norton: NY, 1991. (Purchase)

Senior Capstone Course: BA students who have not already been approved for a lead design/tech assignment by Gary Olsen are required to complete their capstone requirement via this course. I will meet with you the first week of class to explain expectations.

BA Drama students will have completed coursework in THEA 351 Classical and Medieval Theatre History and THEA 352 Renaissance to Romanticism prior to enrollment in THEA 452 as their capstone. THEA 452 relies heavily on students' prior comprehension of classical, neoclassical, and Romantic theatre practices and theories. BA Drama students in 452 will read and evaluate a variety of theatrical theories and demonstrate the extent to which those theories have been attempted on the page and stage in recent stage history since the 19th century. This will require analysis and criticism of realist, naturalist, symbolist, absurdist, epic, and postmodern theory. (For those students who have a focus outside "theoretical inquiry," you may choose as your capstone—in consultation with me—a topic that is more "practical." For example, a student who is a BA who may have a focus area in stage management or lighting design may be allowed to write and present a historical overview of the field.) Students will read their paper in class (or compile and present a power point presentation). The paper and presentation will demonstrate the integration of skills and knowledge developed throughout the major. In most cases, the final product will take the form of an expository piece of writing.

THEA 452 is a designated **Communication in the Major** course.

Communication in the Major courses provide students with opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to communicate effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles. See the attachment to this syllabus.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Texts/Productions/Interviews on Reserve or Online: You are required to read the following texts on reserve or found online. Quizzes cover these readings. The first quiz in this class takes place on.

1. *Miss Julie* and *Preface to Miss Julie* by August Strindberg
<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/14347/pg14347-images.html> **Online.**
2. *Bertolt Brecht* http://fod.infobase.com/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=963&loid=53496&tScript=0#
Films on Demand via library's website.
3. *Broadway's Dreamers: The Legacy of the Group Theatre*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zd308_SiF1c **Online.**
3. *Dutchman* by Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka) in *Black Theater* ed. by Lindsay Patterson and in *Contemporary Black Drama* ed. by Clinton Oliver and Stephanie Sills on **E-RESERVE.**
4. *Sam Shepard: Stalking Himself* on **E-RESERVE.**
5. *Seven Jewish Children* by Caryl Churchill <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYAYnJ6HZ5M>
Online

6. Rimini Protokoll after Ibsen *An Enemy of the People* in Oslo (2012) http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_5757.html **Online**

7. *Frantic Assembly: A Guide to Devising* (2011)

http://fod.infobase.com/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=49817&loid=182108&tScript=0# Films on Demand via the library's website.

8. *Introduction to Performance Studies* by Richard Schechner, pgs. 123-132 & 141-166 on E-RESERVE.

Course Description and Overview:

This course is a survey of western theatre history and dramatic literature from the rise of realism (late 19th century) to the present. When discussing a play (or style or era), we are concerned with its historical context AND with the theatrical conventions dominant at the time. THEA 452 is a history of western dramatic and theatrical conventions, theory, and of the stage worthiness of certain dramas since Ibsen. The course is intended for theatre practitioners and a general knowledge of standard theatrical terms is expected. Nonetheless, all majors are welcome. We will discuss conceptualization of the play script, i.e., how a play moves from page to stage, as well as history of acting, major playhouses, commercial and art theatre, current trends in dramatic theory, reactions to the avant-garde, and directors and playwrights. ***This is not a literature class. We read plays in this class to better understand theatrical and dramatic conventions of the era.***

Certain of the plays we shall read contain vivid language and deal honestly with varying subjects. Dramatic works are not censored in this class.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the student will have improved and/or mastered his/her ability to:

- 1) **conduct** library and internet research in order to **find** and **synthesize** factual and theoretical materials of the modern era since Ibsen;
- 2) **articulate** verbally the differences and similarities among the above period of theatre history using assigned play scripts as well as readings on theatre architecture, acting, scenic design, and criticism;
- 3) **classify** and **evaluate** the legitimacy of types of evidence in the study of theatre history;
- 4) **identify** the artistic, philosophic, religious, and sociological bases of theatre production;
- 5) **formulate** incisive questions in the study of theatre history; and
- 6) **name** the chief "modern" and contemporary western theatre theorists and the aesthetic movements and trends with which each is associated.

GEP Program Outcomes:

The General Education Program (GEP) seeks to develop these qualities of global citizenship in four distinct ways. After completing the general education curriculum, students will:

- Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.
- Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.
- Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
- Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.

Attendance Policy: It is your responsibility to attend class. The following scale applies: 1-2 absences, no penalty; 3 absences, 30 points deducted from course point total; 4 or more absences, course grade dropped one letter. **CHECK YOUR UNIVERSITY EMAIL DAILY BEFORE CLASS.**

Style of Teaching: Lecture.

Assignments, Exams:

Exams = 5 @ 100 pts. each including final (multiple choice, true/false, identification *including passages from plays*, short essay). Final exam is **comprehensive**. Exam questions are based on a **close reading** of each required play, on handouts, on class notes, on videos, and on the required textbooks.

Communication in the Major Credit = A one-page outline plus works cited which will be communicated to the class. The outline is a 100-point assignment and must be grammatically correct and

properly cited. The outlines must address a topic/name/era listed on the syllabus. BA Capstone students will fulfill this course requirement through their capstone project unless they are not presenting a paper or presentation to the class. Students must choose their topic by Tuesday, Sept. 12.

Participation = 10 pts. possible extra credit. Points awarded based on my subjective response to your class participation—texting while I speak is an automatic deduction of 10 points after your points are totaled at the end of term. **DO NOT use your cellphones to take photographs of the screen. RAISE YOUR HAND to make a comment. If you need to leave the room, raise your hand and I will excuse you.**

Grading Scale: A total of 600 points is available in this course. SCALE: 540 - 600 points = A; 480 - 539 points = B; 420 - 479 points = C; 360 - 419 points = D; 0-359 points = F. UWSP uses + (plus) and – (minus) marks; therefore, within each 60 point range, final letter grades will include a “+” marking for the top third, no marking for the middle third, and a – (minus) marking for the bottom third. Example: 380 points total = D; 490 points total = B-; 545 points total = A-. Grades of A+ and F+ do not exist on this scale; therefore, if you receive 599 points, for example, you will receive an “A” for the course, not an “A+”.

Plagiarism: This course defines “plagiarism” as using undocumented source material as your own thought on any formal writing assignment. If I suspect plagiarism, you will receive zero points for that assignment and be referred to your advisor and/or academic dean for appropriate disciplinary action.

Disability Services and Assistive Technology: “Individuals with disabilities have a right to request accommodations, and individuals will receive appropriate accommodations they need to fully participate in or benefit from the University’s programs, services and activities in a non-discriminatory, integrated setting. Pursuant to the System policy, each institution maintains an Office of Disability Services and Assistive Technology (located on the sixth floor of the library Ph. 346-3365) as a resource for students, faculty, and staff. Students may document a disability and request auxiliary aids from this office.”

COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

“Text” refers to Brockett’s *History of Theatre*; “Plays Due” are listed in italics and are found in the Caputi anthology, *Eight Modern Plays*, unless otherwise noted in this syllabus.

DATE	TOPIC	DUE
T Sept. 5	Victorian Theatre & Drama Romanticism/Melodrama Overview of Theatrical Eras prior to the Modern	Text: 278-283; 286-288
R Sept. 7	Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 Kemble; Kean; Vestris & Macready; Irving & Terry	Text: 298-320; 343-347
T Sept. 12	Emerging American Theatre & Drama Daly; The Booths; Boucicault; Mowatt; Tom Shows	Text: 309-320
R Sept. 14	Ibsen & Ibsenism; Zola; Naturalism; Saxe-Meiningen; Comte	Text: 355-357; 369-375
T Sept. 19	Modern Realism I: Origins & Theory	<i>Wild Duck</i>
R Sept. 21	Modern Realism II: Strindberg; Antoine; Hauptmann; Royal Court; Tree	Text: 375-381; 397-398; <i>Miss Julie & Preface to Miss Julie</i> Online
T Sept. 26	FIRST EXAM	
R Sept. 28	Russian Realism & the MAT	Text: 351-353; 381-383 Caputi: 465-478; <i>Three Sisters</i>
T Oct. 3	Alternatives to Realism I: Wagner, Appia, Craig + Surrealism + Symbolism	Text: 390-402

R Oct. 5	Alternatives to Realism II: + Dada and Surrealism and Futurism + Irish Renaissance and the Abbey Theatre	Text: 402-405; 421-422; 427-429 <i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i>
T Oct. 10	Soviet Russian Theatre & Drama to WWII + German Expressionism	Text: 409-418
R Oct. 12	American Theatre & Drama to WWII Herne; Mackaye; Belasco Little Theatre Movement	Text: 384-388; 439-447
T Oct. 17	The Group Theatre in America; O'Neill	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>
R Oct. 19	SECOND EXAM	
T Oct. 24	Brecht, Piscator, Epic	Text: 418-421; <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i>
R Oct. 26	Continued + Cruelty http://www.dur.ac.uk/m.p.thompson/brecht.htm	Caputi: 559-569; Text: 422
T Oct. 31	French Absurdism + English "Angry Young Men"	Text: 451-466; <i>Happy Days</i>
R Nov. 2	Mid-Century British & American Theatre & Drama	Text: 472-488 Caputi: 601-608
T Nov. 7	"Contemporary" US Theatre & Drama Off- Broadway	Text: 591-599
R Nov. 9	African-American Protest Drama	<i>Dutchman</i> (E-Reserve)
T Nov. 14	Continued	
R Nov. 16	THIRD EXAM	
T Nov. 21	E-RESERVE ASSIGNMENT http://www.routledge.com/cw/schechner-9780415502313/ Performance Studies/Performance Art	<i>Intro to Performance Studies</i> (E-Reserve)
R Nov. 23	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NO CLASS	
T Nov. 28	Contemporary American Theatre Defining "Deconstruction"	Text: 538-548
R Nov. 30	Contemporary UK & Ireland The Old Vic, NT, Royal Court & Barbican British "In Yer Face" Theatre	Text: 511-518; 550-557; <i>Seven Jewish Children</i> (Online)
T Dec. 5	Broadway: Modern Commercial Theatre Musical Theatre	Text: 518-534
R Dec. 7	Continental Europe Continued/Devised Theatre	Text: 494-502
T Dec. 12	FOURTH EXAM	
R Dec. 14	Presentations if not completed/Review	

FINAL EXAM:

Thursday, Dec. 21, 8:00 am – 10:00 am

The final exam is **comprehensive**. It includes a comprehensive essay question
+ questions about the modern period from 1875 to the present.

ALL STUDENTS MUST TAKE THE FINAL ON THE DAY IT IS SCHEDULED.

Communication in the Major (Learning Outcomes)

Communication in the Major courses provide students with systematic opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to communicate effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Communication in the Major (Course & Instructor Criteria)

1. The Communication in the Major requirement addresses discipline-specific communication that builds on the Written and Oral Communication learning outcomes of the Foundation level.
2. Departments or units will designate a minimum of six credits at the 200-level or above within each major to meet the Communication in the Major requirement. Departments may distribute this requirement over any number of courses. These courses may, when appropriate, come from other departments but must be included as part of the major.
3. These courses must include a plan for how student achievement of the approved Communication in the Major learning outcomes will be assessed.
4. Both writing and speaking instruction should be integrated into course discussions and activities and include grading criteria, revision experiences, and opportunities for student peer review. Writing and speaking instruction can be taught together in a single course or divided among courses.