THEATRE 161: Theatre Appreciation (Fall 2017)

Instructor: Seth Wilson
THR 161-4
Miller Science Building 139, TR 11:00-12:15

Office: Fine Arts 225, LAN 342
Office hours: Monday 1PM-3PM (LAN), Thursday 9:30AM-10:30AM (Fine Arts)
Email: wilsons3@sfasu.edu

Catalog Description: This course is intended primarily for non-majors. Credits: 3

This syllabus serves as a contract between the instructor and the students as to expectations for the course. It defines course requirements and grading structure. In addition to the requirements outlined by the syllabus, students are expected to participate in class exercises, complete assigned work, and maintain an atmosphere of professionalism within the classroom. You are responsible for adhering to all guidelines in this document, even if you choose not to read it.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will expose students to the art of the theatre and theatrical works through reading, discussion, lecture, labs, and required attendance at play productions. A variety of dramatic literature will be read. Students will synthesize and interpret these works through written assignments, group projects, and discussion that will encourage critical thought and the development of intellectually defensible, conscientiously expressed personal opinion.

Core Objectives

- Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared goal or purpose.
- Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Theatre 161 Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop basic understanding of dramatic literature, dramatic theory and criticism, and performance from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking);
- Develop their abilities to analyze, write about, and discuss performance, both informally and through formal presentation (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills);
• Learn functions of the various theatrical sub-disciplines and how they relate to each other in production, and the value and purpose of professional artistic collaboration (Teamwork);
• Learn a broad history of the theatre from ancient to modern, including non-traditional theatrical forms, theatre produced in non-Western cultures, and theatre for specific audiences (Social Responsibility).

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play, Anne Washburn.
Tartuffe, Moliere. Note: There are numerous translations of this play, and for the purposes of reading it, any one will suffice. Richard Wilbur’s is perhaps the most famous.
Macbeth, William Shakespeare.
Death and the King’s Horseman, Wole Soyinka.
M. Butterfly, David Henry Hwang.
A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry.
Other Readings as Assigned.

You may obtain these books however you like (campus bookstore, library, Amazon, sharing, etc.) but you are responsible for having the reading done before each class period.

PRODUCTION DATES

Students in Theatre 161-04 MUST SEE BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING:

Tartuffe by Moliere, W.M. Turner Auditorium, October 3-7, 7:30 PM

Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play by Anne Washburn, W.M. Turner Auditorium, November 7-11, 7:30 PM

Students in Theatre 161-04 MUST SEE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Pitching to the Star by Donald Margulies, Downstage Theatre, Friday, September 22, 7:30 PM, Saturday, September 23 at 2:00 PM and 7:30 PM

Thank You for Protesting by Paul Adam Levy, Downstage Theatre, Friday, October 13, 7:30 PM, Saturday, October 14 at 2:00 PM and 7:30 PM

Baby with the Bathwater by Christopher Durang, Downstage Theatre, Friday, October 27 at 7:30 PM, Saturday, October 28 at 2:00 PM and 7:30 PM

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Please Note: All assignments not completed in class should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. Margins should be standard. You will be required to turn in an electronic version of every assignment. Failure to meet these guidelines will result in a letter grade penalty.
1. Production Critiques (2 written assignments worth 30%)
As a part of this course, you are required to see both SFA Mainstage productions and one additional student production in the Downstage Theatre. Dates for these productions are listed in the syllabus and I will announce them again in class. You will be required to write critiques for two of the productions. Details about the length and content of the critiques will be discussed in class, and you will be given a detailed assignment sheet with guidelines. Critiques are graded both for content and for mechanics, so make sure you begin work early to give yourself time to revise. Each student will also receive a card to obtain tickets well in advance of the productions. A student who loses this card will be required to purchase tickets at the student rate. You are required to turn in one production critique before mid-semester. The first production critique also MUST be submitted via LiveText as well. Failure to do so will result in grade penalties.

2. Exams (2 exams worth 40%)
The bulk of your grade in this course will come from a midterm and a final exam, each worth 20%. I will discuss the exams in more detail in class as we approach them, but they will combine multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. In the event that you miss an exam, I will give a make-up at the end of the semester ONLY with written documentation of a legitimate, excused absence. Make-up exams will be significantly more difficult than the in-class variety, and will consist predominantly of essay questions. During an exam, students are not permitted to leave the room for any reason. Once you leave, you’re done with the test. Additionally, use of a cell phone during an exam will result in failure.

3. Quizzes (5 quizzes worth 15%)
I do not like giving quizzes, but the reality I have discovered is that without them, no one does any of the reading assignments. You are expected to come to class having read all of the material assigned for that given day. If you’ve read, then the quizzes will be easy. We will have a total of six quizzes over the course of the semester, and I will drop your lowest grade. Quizzes cannot be made up if missed.

4. Class Participation and Lab Activities (15%)
Theatre is an interactive art form, and so many parts of this class will be interactive. You’ll be asked to participate in group discussions, present ideas, perform, and direct at various points during the class. Students who do not take in-class activities seriously, or who are disruptive or fail to participate will lose points. See Attendance and Course Citizenship below for more information.

Extra Credit
I will offer three possible extra credit assignments, and you may choose any ONE of them for up to five extra points on your final grade. You may not do more than one extra credit assignment. The three choices are: 1) You may see an additional play presented by a theatre outside of the SFA community, and write a production critique; 2) You may participate in one of the department’s productions as an actor or technician and write an analysis of your contribution to the piece; 3) You may undertake an additional creative project in one of the areas we learn about (design, acting, directing, playwriting, history and criticism) and give a short (7-10 minute) presentation to the class on your work. Students wishing to undertake an extra credit assignment should notify me BEFORE midterm that they intend to do so.

COURSE POLICIES
**Attendance, Participation, and Tardiness:** Regular attendance in class is essential to understanding the material. In accordance with School policy, **SEVEN ABSENCES IN A T/TR COURSE RESULTS IN AUTOMATIC FAILURE. THIS IS NON-NEGOTIABLE AND INCLUDES EXCUSED ABSENCES AS WELL AS UNEXCUSED.** I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You do not need to tell me why you’re missing a class, and do not need to provide documentation if you miss one. If you miss an exam, it can be made up ONLY if you missed due to illness, family emergency, or university business. You will be required to provide proper documentation of any absences.

I take attendance at the beginning of class; arriving more than ten minutes after class begins will result in your being marked absent. Additionally, if you arrive after I have taken attendance, it is your responsibility to check in with me after class.

The quizzes and exams require that you attend regularly in order to do well. In other words, if you miss class, expect to fail the exams. While seven absences will result in failure, I do not otherwise (overtly) penalize you for missing class. I will not, however, meet with you to discuss what you missed. If you’re not in class, you should find a reliable classmate who is willing to bring you up to speed. Additionally, it is your responsibility to keep up with your absences.

Finally, a note on tardiness. I understand that occasionally emergencies may result in your being late to class. A pattern of chronic tardiness, however, is disrespectful and disruptive both to me and your fellow classmates. If you are habitually late for class, your participation grade will be docked. Additionally, if we are taking a quiz or an exam and you enter the classroom after I have already started handing them out, you will not be allowed to take it.

**Course Citizenship:** Eating, sleeping, or reading other materials during class are not acceptable. You may bring drinks in containers that have a lid. All cell phones must be turned to silent prior to coming to class, and no text messaging or web surfing will be tolerated. If I see you look at a cell phone for any reason during class, I reserve the right to 1) play a game on my phone any time you want to meet with me about the course, and 2) dismiss you for the day and give you an absence, no matter how much class time is left. Also, if your phone rings during class, you may be similarly penalized.

I understand that many of you take notes on your laptop or tablet, and if you wish to do so you need to sit in the first two rows of the room. If I see that you’re using your computer for anything not directly related to class, you will be dismissed and given an absence, and you will not be allowed to continue using your computer for note-taking.

Please do not put your head down during class. If you’re so tired or sick that you need an in-class power nap, you shouldn’t be in class that day. Students putting their heads down, including during film showings, will be dismissed and given an absence.

Although students with disciplinary problems tend to be few and far between at the college level, if behavioral disruptions persist within a single class meeting (or, for that matter, across multiple meetings), the student in question will be asked to leave the class with an absence for the day.

**Theatre Etiquette:** As a part of this course, you are required to attend productions by the Stephen F. Austin State University Theatre Department. When attending these events, you are expected to follow proper theatre etiquette. This means that you must arrive on time and dressed appropriately. Additionally,
students who are using a cell phone during the production, sleeping, or engaging in distracting behavior will not pass the course.

**Succeeding in the Class:** All written work will be submitted electronically via D2L. Additionally, the first production critique must be submitted via LiveText as well. Assignments are due by class time on their due date. All files must be formatted in either .doc or .docx (compatible with Microsoft Word). I will not accept Rich Text Format, Word Perfect, or a PDF, for example.

**TECHNOLOGY DISCLAIMER: TECHNOLOGY OFTEN FAILS. PREPARE YOUR WORK WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE DUE DATE, AS “MY COMPUTER CRASHED” OR “MY INTERNET STOPPED WORKING” ARE NOT VALID EXCUSES FOR AN ASSIGNMENT BEING LATE.**

I realize there is a lot of information here, but you can boil it down to two things: 1) come to class and 2) take notes in class and when you read. PowerPoints are used only to enhance and structure lecture, so merely copying down what’s on the slide won’t be sufficient. Learning to take good notes is an essential skill for college and life, so practice now. I am happy to offer advice if you have questions.

Throughout the semester, you may meet with me at any time to discuss your work in the class. Please avail yourself of my office hours or set up an appointment with me. Email is also an easy way to receive an answer to a quick question. If you’re having trouble keeping up with the workload, with some concept we discuss, or any other aspect of the course, please let me know as soon as the trouble arises. It is much easier for me to help you in October than it is in December after most of the graded material is already past.

**Class lectures may not be recorded or videoed without my express, written permission. Students violating this policy will face severe grade consequences.**

**Academic Integrity:** Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp) and [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf).
Any instances of cheating/plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the assignment and may, at the instructor’s discretion, result in failure of the course.

**Course Evaluations:** Course evaluations will be available online near the end of the semester. I highly encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to give feedback about how effective this class and my teaching was, particularly because I read evaluations to help make decisions about future classes. In other words, your feedback can help my future students have a good class experience.

**Discrimination/Sexual Harassment:** At Stephen F. Austin State University, no faculty, staff, or student may discriminate against another on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability or disabled veteran status, and such acts will not be permitted in this class. For additional information, consult Human Resources Policy E-46.

**The Academic Assistance and Resource Center:** The AARC offer free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. They also offer online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to [http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/](http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/), visit them on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call them at 936-468-4108.

**Withheld Grades Policy (A-54):** At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Accommodations:** To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservice](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservice)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
*** This schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to change its contents and will post changes to D2L. ***

**UNIT ONE: Aesthetics, Art, and Theatre**

**Week One: August 28—September 1: Course Introduction and Aesthetics**
   - Tuesday, August 29: Introduction to course, overview of D2L
   - Thursday, August 31: Introduction to Art and Aesthetics: Some Views and Theories

**Week Two: September 4—September 8: Drama versus Theatre**
   - Tuesday, September 5: Aristotle and the Elements of Drama
     Read “Visit to a Small Planet” by Elinor Fuchs (D2L)
   - Thursday, September 7: Drama or Theatre?
     Read *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, QUIZ 1
Week Three: September 11—September 15: Theatre Spaces and Audiences  
Tuesday, September 12: LiveText orientation; Theatre Spaces and Stage Types  
Thursday, September 14: Audiences

UNIT TWO: Making a Play Today

Week Four: September 18—September 22: Theatre Companies  
Tuesday, September 19: NO CLASS, professor at conference  
Thursday, September 21: Theatre Companies: Academic, Professional, For-Profit, Non-Profit.  
Read *M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang, QUIZ 2

*Pitching to the Star* plays Sept. 22-23 in the Downstage

Week Five: September 25—September 29: Acting  
Tuesday, September 26: The Actor’s Art  
Thursday, September 28: Acting Lab  
Read *Tartuffe* by Moliere, QUIZ 3

Week Six: October 2—October 6: Directing  
Tuesday, October 3: The Director’s Art  
Thursday, October 5: Directing Lab  
Read excerpt from *A Sense of Direction* by William Ball (D2L)

*Tartuffe* plays Oct. 3-7 in the Turner Auditorium

Week Seven: October 9—October 13: Design  
Tuesday, October 10: Elements of Design: Costume, Lights, Sound, Set, SFX  
Thursday, October 12: Design Lab  
Read excerpt from *The Dramatic Imagination* by Robert Edmond Jones (D2L)

Week Eight: October 16—October 20: Technical Production and Practical Roles  
Tuesday, October 17: Technical Theatre, Front of House  
**PRODUCTION CRITIQUE #1 DUE**  
Thursday, October 19: MIDTERM EXAM  
**LAST DAY TO DECLARE FOR EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT**

UNIT THREE: Theatre Histories and Futures

Week Nine: October 23—October 28: Origins of Western Theatre  
Tuesday, October 24: Greek Theatre  
Thursday, October 26: Roman Theatre and Entertainment
Week Ten: October 30—November 3: Medieval, Renaissance, and Neoclassical Theatres
Tuesday, October 31: Medieval Theatre, Shakespeare part I
Thursday, November 2: Shakespeare part II, Neoclassical Theatre
   Read *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, QUIZ 4

Week Eleven: November 6—November 10: Melodrama and Modernity
Tuesday, November 7: The 19th Century, the 20th Century
Thursday, November 9: 20th Century continued, The American Musical
   Read *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* by Anne Washburn, QUIZ 5
   *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* plays in the Turner Auditorum, Nov. 7-11

Week Twelve: November 13—November 17: Non-Western Theatre
Tuesday, November 14: Non-Western Theatre
Thursday, November 16: Theatre Futures
   Read *Death and the King’s Horseman* by Wole Soyinka, QUIZ 6

THANKSGIVING WEEK, NO CLASS: November 20—November 24

UNIT FOUR: Performance Beyond the Stage

Week Thirteen: November 27—December 1: Film and Television
Tuesday, November 28: Film versus Theatre
Thursday, November 30: Television versus Film Versus Theatre

Week Fourteen: December 4—December 8: Performance Studies
Tuesday, December 5: Performance Studies: An Introduction
Thursday, December 7: Class Wrap-up
   PERFORMANCE CRITIQUE #2 DUE
   EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS DUE

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 14, 10:30 A.M.—12:30 P.M.
I, _______________________________, certify that I have read and understand this entire syllabus and all of the course requirements and policies contained herein. Ignorance of information contained in the syllabus does not constitute a reasonable excuse for failure to comply with course policies.

Print name: ____________________________________________________________

Sign: __________________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________________