

Fall 2023

THTR-310 (001): Theatre History I

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THTR 310-01 Theatre History 1
M/W 10:00a-11:20a
Kupfrian Hall, Rm 110

Prof. Emily Edwards

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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 1-2pm or by appt.

Office: Kupfrian Hall (NJIT Campus), Rm. 113

Description

Study of Euro-American and Asian theater history with an emphasis on production and dramatic literature. First Term: ancient Greece and Rome through early post-Renaissance Europe.

Course Objective

This class explores theater history using dramatic texts. We will examine the impact theater has in shaping society and vice versa. This is a Writing Across the Curriculum Class for Rutgers, so a strong emphasis is placed on organizing and writing papers.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to

- articulate the various conventions of plays written before the 19th century.
- to identify the intentions of various theater artists and how they relate to the historical context that surrounds their work.
- explain the timeline of the theatrical movements and general world history studied in class.
- develop an empathetic understanding to the characters in the plays and understand the character's intentions.
- analyze and critique a performance by acknowledging the influences that shaped it.
- research and write coherently about a theatrical history subject using the the knowledge gained in the class.

Prerequisites

HUM 102 and one from among HUM 211, HUM 212 and Hist 213 or their equivalents, all with a grade of C or better.

Class Policies

Attendance: Attendance is important for this course as most of the coursework will be discussions happening in class. Lateness and unexcused absences will be reflected in your grade. To get absences excused, a note is needed from the Dean of Students. If there are mitigating circumstances, contact me before the class you will miss. If you are running late, please text me to let me know. If you are feeling sick, please do not attend class in-person. Email me 2 hours before class for a zoom link, and you can attend remotely. You cannot attend remotely for any reason other than being sick.

Consent and Respect: I actively cultivate a room that is welcome for everyone and is grounded in consent. Consent may be given and revoked at any time. Disrespect towards your peers will not be tolerated. If a misstep or action has occurred that makes you feel unsafe or disrespected, please let me know and I will address it.

Anti-Racism: I acknowledge that racism is systemically a part of our culture and am doing my best to dismantle these practices where I find them. Note that we will be discussing some sensitive topics in this class regarding race and marginalized communities. I welcome any and all feedback about ways I can be more effective in this process. If you have concerns about these particular days of class when we address these topics, please reach out to me and I will do my best to accommodate your needs.

Land Acknowledgment: We acknowledge that NJIT and Rutgers University are located on stolen land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, specifically the Lenni-Lenape. While many Lenni-Lenape people were forcibly removed from their homelands, they are still an active part of New Jersey culture and society. To learn more about the Lenni-Lenape people, visit nanticoke-lenape.info

Questions/Concerns: If you have a question or concern you are not comfortable communicating to me directly, please use the “Anonymous Question Form” in Canvas and I will respond to question or concern at the next class for everyone.

Missing or Late Assignments: Missing or late assignments will not be accepted without communication. If you have mitigating circumstances that prevented you from completing an assignment, please reach out to me so we can discuss options.

Honor Code: Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>. Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. *This includes using AI to write papers.* This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

Costs and Texts

The Norton Anthology of Drama Vol. 1 (2nd Edition)

Aristotle's Poetics (Available on Canvas)

Additional Plays (Available on Canvas)

Approximately \$25-60 for theater tickets

Assignments

Quizzes: There will be a group quiz at the start of class once a week. The quizzes will cover the reading material. You will work in groups of 4 or 5 to complete the quiz. Quizzes that are missed due to excused absences (with note from Dean of Students) may be made up. You may also make up 1 additional missed quiz due to an unexcused absence or lateness.

Research Paper: You will choose a topic within the range of the subject matter for this class that you wish to explore further. An example could be “Is Sophocles Still Relevant Today?” Or “How Shakespeare Influenced Modern Playwrights”. The paper will be 8-10 pages long and require 5 outside sources, which will be shown in a bibliography at the end of the paper. MLA format.

Group Presentation: You will team up in a group to create a 5-8 minute presentation about one specific play within the subject course matter relating to what we are covering that week. These presentations should have visual components. You will also hand in a copy of your presentation with an explanation of everyone’s role in putting together the project.

Performances: You are required to see 2 live performances and write a 2-3 page reflection paper for each one. This paper should not be a summary of the show, but rather a critical analysis about the show from a historical viewpoint. Were there elements or themes you recognized from the plays we have read? If you have a cost/time/accessibility barrier with this, please talk to me so I can accommodate you.

Exams: There will be a midterm and final exam on the materials we have learned. You are allowed one 8.5” x 11” handwritten sheet of notes for each of these exams.

Course Grading Breakdown

Attendance/Participation 20%
Group Presentation - 15%
Quizzes - 10%
Performance Reviews - 10%
Final Paper - 15%
Mid-Term -15%
Final - 15%

Grade Distribution

A : 90%<
B+ : 88% - 89%
B: 80% - 88%
C+: 78% - 79%
C: 70% - 78%
D: 60% - 70%
F: > 60%

Schedule

Syllabus subject to change.

9/6: Intro to class, Why is Theater History important?

9/11: Oral, Ritual, and Shamanic Performance **Reading Due:** Norton pg 1-12

9/13: Greek Drama **Reading Due:** Aristotle, The Poetics (Canvas)

9/18: Greek Drama, **Reading Due:** *Lysistrata*

9/20: Roman Drama, **Reading Due:** *Thyestes*

9/25: Indian Theater: Indian Epics **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 16-19

9/27: Indian Theater **Reading Due:** *The Little Clay Cart*

10/2: Chinese Theater: Zaju **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 19-22

10/4: Chinese Theater: **Reading Due:** *Snow in Midsummer*

10/9: Japanese Theater: Kabuki Theater **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 22-25, *Atsumori*

10/11: Japanese Theater: Bunraku **Video:** Bunraku Performance

10/16: Review for Midterm

10/18: Midterm Exam

10/23: Medieval Theater **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 25-31, **Research Paper Thesis Due**

10/25: Medieval Theater **Reading Due:** *The Second Shepherds' Play*

10/30: Morality Plays **Reading Due:** *Everyman*, **First Performance Paper Due**

11/1: Commedia dell'arte **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 36-37

11/6: Commedia dell'arte **Reading Due:** *The Disguised Servants* (Canvas)

11/8: English Renaissance **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 31-36, **Research Paper Sources Due**

Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play, Nov 8th-12th, Black Box Theater at 110 Warren, \$15

11/13: English Renaissance **Reading Due:** *The Spanish Tragedy*

11/15: Shakespeare **Reading Due:** *Twelfth Night*

11/20: Shakespeare, cont.

11/22: NO CLASS

11/27: Spanish Golden Age **Reading Due:** Norton pgs 42-45, **First Draft Research Paper Due**

11/29: Spanish Golden Age **Reading Due:** *Life Is a Dream*

12/4: Aphra Behn **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 1373-1378, *The Rover*, **Peer Review of Research Paper Due**

12/6: French Theater **Reading Due:** Norton pgs. 45-48

12/11: French Theater **Reading Due:** *Tartuffe*

12/13: Review for Final, **Final Draft Research Paper Due**

Final Exam Date TBD

12/20: (NO CLASS) - **Final Performance Paper Due**