Clemson University
Fall 2013
THEA 2100 Theatre Appreciation (Clemson Thinks – CT section pilot)
Section 5, Brooks Room 206

Professor: Shannon Robert, office 209

Office Hours: W 9:30 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 2:00 and T/TH 8:30 – 9:30 or by appointment
srobertwcc@yahoo.com or shanrob@clemson.edu and 864-382-6861

Class Schedule:
Class meets Tuesday/Thursday 9:30 – 10:45. If you need me and I am not in my office, you should try the theatre and scene shop.

Clemson University Policies and Academic Integrity Statement:

“As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of this institution as a ‘high seminary of learning.’ Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.”

“When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge.”

Students with disabilities needing accommodations should contact the Office of Student Disability Services in G20 Redfern Health Center, 656-6848

Suggested Textbook (not required):

Course Goals:

1. The purpose of this course is to increase students’ appreciation, understanding, and critical perceptions of theatre and theatrical events by encouraging students to attend a variety of productions, think and write about them, and work on productions when possible.

   This course will help students to:
   
   • build theater and arts literacy;
   • appreciate the various components of the theatrical event;
   • critically analyze and think about live productions;
   • understand the significance and importance of theatre and art in society;
   • make connections between stories and historical events;
   • develop an understanding of the techniques of theater making; and
   • understand how theatre artists work together to collaborate.
2. Readings, lectures and assignments will focus on the elements of theatrical practice; the significance of artists and innovators of theatre throughout history; on theatre’s development as an art form; and on theatre’s impact and influence on society (and society’s impact on theatre). These topics will be developed in terms of their importance to the individual audience member’s understanding of and appreciation for theatre and the theatrical experience.

3. This course is participating in the Clemson Thinks Quality Enhancement Plan by incorporating critical thinking into the structure and content of the course. One of the most important benefits that a university education affords students is the ability to think critically. Clemson Thinks2, Clemson University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), is an ambitious experiment in critical thinking that aspires to transform student learning and faculty teaching across the curriculum and in the disciplines.

**What does this mean for you?** The assignments, tests and requirements have not increased in number or length. The way you think about theatre, production and dramatic literature is being addressed differently; the focus has shifted. Your critical thinking ability will be assessed using the CAT test at the beginning and end of the semester. This assessment model with provide the university with information about student development in critical thinking throughout their college career. Our discussions and lectures are not focused on memorizing facts and dates, but on their application and impact.

One writing assignment will provide students with potential ePortfolio artifacts for the Critical Thinking or Arts and Humanities competency with an emphasis on the historical/cultural significance of a play or production. It is required that this paper include a minimum of three sources. Details on that assignment are provided under the Major Assignments (3),

4. Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

1. examine theatrical events as better informed critics;
2. think and write critically about theatrical productions and literature;
3. identify the various components and personnel of the theater world;
4. discuss the "nuts and bolts" of the process of creating theater with an informed understanding;
5. describe plays (both scripts and realized productions) critically using theatrical vocabulary;
6. express opinion about live performances in scholarly writing drawn from relevant sources.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Explore dramatic literature, theatre production and understand the connection between the art forms.
- Analyze dramatic text for historical and cultural context and develop conceptual approach to story-telling and analyze productions for their artistic value.
• Synthesize concepts, production ideas and values with your ideas, period research and other artistic projects to develop papers that make connections between theatre art, history and the world today.

• Apply themes and ideas developed in theatrical work into discussions about world events, politics, religion and history.

Major Assignments:

Each of these writing assignments should be developed for inclusion in your college writing portfolio – these papers should all demonstrate clear critical thinking with fresh ideas that reflect in-depth student engagement with the topic, conclusions should be based on evidence, ideas should be integrated into a coherent argument and supported. Students should consider different points of view if using published criticism to help support a point. Value judgments related to theatre and art are not just a matter of taste or whim, Students must explain and support critiques with reasons (“I like it” is not adequate. WHY it worked based on practical production value is what I am looking for in these papers).

1. Each student must attend *The Laramie Project* produced by The Clemson Players, November 18 – 24 in the Bellamy Theatre. In addition to this performance, students must attend the lecture by playwright Moises Kaufman on Monday, November 18th at 5:30 pm in the Brooks Theatre. **Each student will write a paper about the significance and importance of *The Laramie Project* using a minimum of three additional sources (aside from script and lecture). These papers must be between 4 and 5 double-spaced pages with sources cited in MLA or APA format.** You must draw from the performance and the lecture. This paper is NOT a performance critique, but a paper to make you think critically about an historical event as seen through the eyes of a community and shaped by a group of theatre artists. Your approach might include how art can shape awareness, policy or can advocate for a cause.

   • Please make your reservations in advance – this show WILL sell out. Do not wait until the last minute. I encourage you to call 656-7787 or walk to the box office (in the lobby of The Brooks) between 1 pm and 5 pm to make reservations right away. Tickets are on sale now.
   • Mark the lecture on your calendar (Monday, November 18 at 5:30 pm)– there is only one opportunity to hear this important lecture. Be prepared to take notes.
   • **This paper is due on Tuesday, December 3 at the beginning of class. You must have a typed, printed and stapled copy with you in class.**
   • This paper, if addressed properly, will provide you with a critical thinking artifact.

2. Each student will write one performance critique. For this critique, students may attend (either on or off campus) any regional, professional/touring productions OR another Clemson Players production - please note that these must be approved in advance if they are not included on the approved list of plays provided in this syllabus. If asked, students must provide ticket and program from production with the written critiques.
You will write a 3 – 3 ½ page critique (double spaced) of the production covering the following areas:

- **Production design** - include scenery, costumes, lights, sound, props – how did the overall design help to create environment and tell the story, what did the design tell you about the show, what do you think the concept was and why?
- **Directing** – how did the director shape the story…how did specific choices work? Make sure you understand the difference between what the director does and what the playwright does.
- **Acting** – was the storytelling believable? What worked and what didn’t and why? Did the style work in the world? Could you understand/hear?
- **Overall experience** – what did you leave with…what do you think the play was trying to communicate…do you think the production captured the playwright’s intent? Why? Please base your response on something from your reading, lecture or from an article. Cite your source.
- **Why or why isn’t this play relevant to you or in our society today?** Did you take anything from it? Was the purpose to educate, to entertain, to ask questions about our society…? Think critically – make connections. Research the play, the idea, the playwright, the event the play is centered around…anything that will give you some insight on what the play is communicating. Cite your sources.
- **Give specific examples from the play to support your ideas.**
- **This paper is due on October 22 at the beginning of class. It must be typed, printed and stapled.**

This paper, if addressed properly, can provide you with a critical thinking or arts and humanities artifact.

Some of the shows that will be produced prior to this assignment are as follows (you must plan NOW to see one of these for your critique):
- LATE: a cowboy song @ CU: Sept 9 – 15
- Laughter on the 23rd Floor @ WHT: Aug 23 – Sept 14
- Mamma Mia @ CU (tour): Sept 30 – Oct 1
- The Tempest @ WHT: Oct 18 opening
- War Horse @ TPC: October 17 – 20 (great show)
- Lend Me A Tenor @CS: Sept 21 – Oct 6

3. The final writing assignment will be a 3 – 3 ½ page paper on one of the following areas:

- the historical and cultural significance of an art movement (performance based) or theatrical movement, genre, playwright and the impact it(they) had on society (this project, if done properly, should satisfy the arts and humanities competency of the ePortfolio requirement. Go
to: http://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/eportfolio/competency/ to read more about this requirement,*

OR;

- the historical and cultural significance of one of the productions/plays from the list that you watched (and have included in other writing assignments), or plays you have read or studied in class (you should make connections to other works or to events that have happened/are happening). This paper requires demonstrated critical thinking (active and skillful conceptualization by applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from your observation of, experience from or reflection on the production), OR;

- the historical and cultural significance of arts groups like the Belarus Free Theatre (using theatre art to speak out in an oppressed society and risking the danger of imprisonment, assassination or abduction of family members) or Syrian puppeteers speaking out against the Assad regime through their YouTube show, Top Goon, or the significance and importance of artists like Vaclav Havel, the playwright and imprisoned activist who became president of The Czech Republic, or the reason for the timeless appeal for stories like Victor Hugo’s Les Miserables that continues to be recreated in various art forms (how is that society similar/dissimilar to our own?). I encourage you to create a topic like one of these and explore it, think about it, research it and develop it.

- These papers are due on November 14 the beginning of class. They must be typed, printed and stapled. Papers will be graded on content, grammar/spelling, critical and creative thinking ability and overall ideas. You must cite a minimum of three sources (you may use MLA or APA to cite your sources).

- This paper, is addressed properly, will provide you with a critical thinking artifact or an artifact to satisfy the arts and humanities competency for ePortfolio.

* There are also occasions when productions will give students material to complete the cross-cultural awareness competency requirements.

I encourage students requiring writing assistance to seek help from the Writing Center. Go to: http://www.clemson.edu/caah/english/fyc/writingcenter.html for more information.

Tests, Assessment and Additional assignments:

1. Examinations are based on lectures, discussions and assigned readings and will consist of essay type questions and short answers – no matching, fill-in-the-blank, or multiple choice. There are two tests given in this course; a mid-term and a final. There may be quizzing (based on students’ participation in discussion). Reading assignments may be accompanied by a comprehension quiz (especially if there is no participation in discussion or it seems like students have not read the material). There will be a Critical Thinking assessment test (CAT) at the beginning and end of the term 8/29 and 12/3.
2. Students MAY complete 6 shop hours toward one of the Clemson Player’s Theatre Productions during the term for extra credit (of up to 10 points) to make up for missed classes or to help with a low grade – details will be discussed during the first full week of class. This work must be completed before the closing of the final Clemson Players production or it will not count (strikes are included in these calls). Students must wear proper closed-toe shoes, shop attire and observe all shop safety rules during these work hours.

Students may opt to watch an additional theatre production and turn in a mini-critique (one – 1 ½ pages) focused on overall production for bonus credit (of up to 10 points). No student may get more than 20 bonus points for missed/late work or absences.

Method of Evaluation:

Breakdown:

a. Attendance/participation (all absences impact this grade) 175 points
b. Exams 100 points
c. *Laramie Project* Paper 150 points
d. Attendance at Moises Kaufman lecture 25 points
e. Production critique 125 points
f. In-class assignments (absences impact this grade) 150 points
g. Concept project and presentations 100 points
h. Synthesis paper 150 points
i. Critical Thinking Portfolio (with 3 artifacts) 25 points

Total: 1000 points

*Absence Policy:* Each late counts as 1/3 of an absence. If you are more than 20 minutes late, that will count as half an absence (4 point deduction). **You will not pass the class if you miss more than 7 class meetings (for ANY reason).** There are 8 points for each class period that we are scheduled to meet on the syllabus (there are 25 of these – there are 4 days that I will be out due to travel – you will have outside assignments). Students will NOT receive credit for attendance/participation or assignments if they are not in class. In-class assignments will **NOT** be allowed to be made-up unless the absence is excused. **PLEASE NOTE THAT EVEN IF YOU ARE EXCUSED, YOU ARE STILL ABSENT IF NOT IN CLASS (and will not get your points). AN EXCUSED ABSENCE MEANS YOU ARE ALLOWED TO MAKE UP ANY WORK MISSED.**

*Late Work Policy:* If work is not turned in by the due date in class, ten points will be deducted for every day that work is late. I am not going to remind you when your work has not been turned in. You are responsible for knowing the dates. All major assignment due dates are listed on this syllabus. I will not accept work that is over 10 days late.
Grading Scale:  
92 – 100  A  (920- 1000 points)  
82 – 91  B  (820 – 910 points)  
72 – 81  C  (720 – 810 points)  
62 – 71  D  (620 – 710 points)  
0 - 61  F  (0- 610 points)

Major Assignments Additional Details and Information

1. **Written critiques for productions/approved theatres and shows:**

   The following theatres and shows are on the approved list for productions you may see for your written critique this semester. If you wish to stray from this list, you must get approval **PRIOR** to attending the production. Please note that contact information for reservations is provided. If you opt to see a show that is not approved in advance, you may not receive credit for it.

   **Clemson University Brooks Center and Bellamy Theatre**
   
   864-656-7787 or [www.clemson.edu/Brooks](http://www.clemson.edu/Brooks) or M-F, 1 pm – 5 pm at Box Office
   
   Sept 9 – 15………………………………….….*LATE: a cowboy song* (CP)
   Sept 30 and Oct 1………………………………………………..*Mamma Mia* (tour)
   November 18 – 24………………..**The Laramie Project** (CP)

   **The Warehouse Theatre**
   
   (864-235-6948 or [www.warehousetheatre.com](http://www.warehousetheatre.com) for reservations)
   37 Augusta Street, Greenville, SC 29601
   
   Aug 23 – Sept 14………………………………….*Laughter on the 23rd Floor*
   Oct 18 – Nov 2……………………………………………………….*The Tempest*
   Dec 5 – 13………………………………………………………..*Avenue Q*

   **The Peace Center for the Performing Arts** (864-467-3000 or [www.peacecenter.org](http://www.peacecenter.org)) 300 South Main St, Greenville SC
   
   Oct 17 - 20……………………………………………………….*War Horse*
   Nov 12 - 17……………………………………………………….*Anything Goes*
Students are responsible for making reservations for the selected performance. DO NOT wait until the last minute – plan ahead as many of these shows will sell out. I am telling you this now so that you won’t tell me that all the shows were sold out when you tried to buy last minute tickets…tickets are available to each and every one of these if you plan ahead. You are NOT required to go out of town or off-campus to see a production, but you may choose to do so if you like. The productions you see are entirely up to you, but you MUST see The Laramie Project, which WILL sell out.

The reason the textbook is optional is because I want you to see plays and I know some of you are on a tight budget and can manage to share a book to do the reading assignments. You are responsible for assigned readings. Theatre tickets will range from $5 a performance through $100 for some of the big touring shows (in good seats). You can determine what your budget it – at minimum, you will spend $10 - $15 on theatre tickets.

2. In-Class Projects/Lecture Assignments

Students will complete class assignments on (a) concept and design (collaborative group project) and (b) an acting scene (with up to two other students). Students are responsible for details of each assignment we discuss in class. Attendance is assumed. I will NOT post all of your assignments on BlackBoard – the whole point of an arts class in a collaborative discipline is for you to interact with others and to become engaged with performances and
discussions of them. You can’t do that if you are not in class – I will not hunt you down to “fill you in” or rehash discussions and “hit the high points” for you.

(c) Playwright assignment: Each student will be assigned one of the following playwrights to introduce to the class by sharing background/historical information, the era in which they wrote/produced and a list of most important works (two source minimum). These will be presented to the class- maximum presentation time is 2 ½ minutes (work on making this concise).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bertolt Brecht</th>
<th>August Wilson</th>
<th>Suzan Lori Parks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frederico Garcia Lorca</td>
<td>Maxim Gorky</td>
<td>Lillian Hellman</td>
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<td>Henrik Ibsen</td>
<td>Anton Chekhov</td>
<td>Eugene O’Neill</td>
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<td>Arthur Miller</td>
<td>Edward Albee</td>
<td>Tennessee Williams</td>
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<td>Sarah Ruhl</td>
<td>Sam Shepherd</td>
<td>George Bernard Shaw</td>
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<td>August Strindberg</td>
<td>Tom Stoppard</td>
<td>Harold Pinter</td>
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<td>David Mamet</td>
<td>Neil LaBute</td>
<td>Caryl Churchill</td>
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<td>Paula Vogel</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
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<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Richard Brinsley Sheridan</td>
<td>Moliere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel Beckett</td>
<td>John Patrick Shanley</td>
<td>Edmond Rostand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Kushner</td>
<td>William Congreve</td>
<td>Oscar Wilde</td>
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*I am not including Shakespeare on this list – we will be covering some of his material by watching *Macbeth* (with Patrick Stewart) and doing side by side compare/contrast of two versions of Romeo and Juliet (so that students can see by model how text comes to life and how concept can shape the way the story is told.*

*Please note that I have provided the list of playwrights so that you might familiarize yourselves with their significant works in advance. Most of these playwrights have works that you may consider for your projects that will provide you with material for your papers or other projects.*

**General Policies on Assignments and Decorum:**

1. If you are kicked out of shop hours for inappropriate or unsafe behavior or for not wearing shop clothing, your hours will not count.
2. You may only sign up for times that the shop foreman lists- you cannot just write in your own hours. You sheet must be signed in the lab hour log for it to count. It is your responsibility to make sure it is signed by one of the Clemson shop staff.
3. If you sleep through a class, I will count you as absent for that class period. If you are texting, playing on your computer or doing work for another class, I will also deduct points from your daily grade.
4. Do not speak while others are presenting – it is rude. You can learn from watching others.

**Rough calendar of important dates (this is subject to change):**
Week 1 (8/22): Introductions, syllabus review, assignments and expectations review

Week 2 (8/27, 8/29): Lecture/Discussion – Theatre spaces, general terms, tour of spaces, CAT test

Week 3 (9/3, 9/5): Discussion of assignments for next two weeks (playwrights assigned, play selection)
Discussion of structure of production teams

Week 4 (9/10, 9/12): Meet in groups or at library; (Wales, WSD)
*LATE: a cowboy song* runs this week
Professor will be available by email this week – work on playwright assignment and watch Macbeth with Patrick Stewart on Netflix – if you don’t have access to Netflix, it will be shown during class time.

Week 5 (9/17, 9/19): Begin scene work with partners (Wales, WSD/London West End)
Professor will be available by email this week – students will rehearse acting scenes during class times

Week 6 (9/24, 9/26): Present playwright papers (2 ½ min. per student). Acting presentations prep outside of class, begin discussion of Macbeth and concept

Week 7 (10/1, 10/3): Acting assignment presentations

Week 8 (10/8, 10/10): Concept lecture/discussion/ Mid-term on 10/10

Week 9 (10/17): First concept meetings – find and read plays/start research – watch scenes

Week 10 (10/22, 10/24): Watch scenes, design demos. Critique Paper due today.

Week 11 (10/29, 10/31): Concept projects

Week 12 (11/5, 11/7): Present concept projects, lecture and discussion

Week 13 (11/12, 11/14): Present concept projects, lecture and discussion. Paper due today.

Week 14 (11/19, 11/21): *Laramie Project* runs, work on styles, forms and genres

Week 15 (11/26): styles/forms discussion: watch clips and discuss

Week 16 (12/3, 12/5): *Laramie Project paper due*. Lecture wrap and finals prep/CAT post test

Finals week – Final exams due December 11 by 5 pm.