

Clemson University

Fall 2014

THEA 2100 Theatre Appreciation (Clemson Thinks – CT section)

Section 3, Brooks Room 206

Professor: Shannon Robert, office 209

Office Hours: MWF 8:00 – 9:00, 10:00 – 11:00 and 2:30 – 3:30 and by appointment

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Class Schedule:

Class meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:15 am – 12:05 pm. If you need to speak with me and I am not in my office, please 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.”

FERPA Rights for Students

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Undergraduate Studies is prohibited from disclosing the student's academic record to third parties, including parents. If the student wants access granted to a third party, then the student must contact the Office of Undergraduate Studies at 864-656-3022 to receive information on how to process a release form. NOTE: This waiver is for Undergraduate Studies' use and will not apply to other departments on campus. For more information on the FERPA law, please visit the [Office of the Registrar's website](#).

Title IX Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (amending the Higher Education Act of 1965) is a federal gender equity law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities that receive federal funding. **Sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence and other forms of nonconsensual sexual misconduct, is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited under this law.**

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal assistance. . . .” (20 U.S.C. section 1681)

Clemson University is committed to providing a higher education environment that is free from sexual discrimination. Therefore, if you believe you or someone else that is part of the Clemson University community has been discriminated against based on sex or if you have questions about Title IX, please contact the Clemson

University Title IX Coordinator, Mr. Jerry Knighton, who is also the Director of the Office of Access and Equity, at 110 Hotzendorff Hall, 864-656-3181 (voice) or 864-656-0899 (TDD). The Title IX Coordinator is the person(s) designated by Clemson University to oversee its Title IX compliance efforts.

Students with Disabilities Act

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

There is not a required textbook purchase, but I will use and do recommend:

Wilson, E., *The Theatre Experience*, 10th ed, McGraw-Hill Inc.

Course Goals:

1. The purpose of this course is to increase students' appreciation, understanding, and critical perceptions of theatre and theatrical events by discussing theatre and theatrical styles, by attending productions, by thinking, talking and writing about them, and by understanding how productions are developed.

This course will help students to:

- develop theater and arts literacy;
- appreciate the various components of the theatrical event;
- analyze and think about live productions critically;
- understand the significance and importance of theatre and art in society throughout history and today;
- make connections between stories and historical events;
- develop an understanding of the techniques of theater making; and
- understand how theatre artists collaborate.

As a course that satisfies a General Education elective requirement, class assignments provide students with artifacts to address critical thinking and arts/humanities competencies as required by SACS (ePortfolio is no longer a graduate requirement, but the competencies addressed by it are still a component of CU General Education).

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 changed or increased in number or length. The way you think about theatre, production and dramatic literature is addressed differently; the focus has shifted from historical fact and survey to relevance, applications and significance of practices. Your critical thinking ability will be assessed using the CAT test at the beginning and end of the semester. This assessment model will 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.

Writing assignments will provide students with potential artifacts for the Critical Thinking and/or Arts and Humanities competency (formerly part of the ePortfolio graduation requirement) with an emphasis on the historical/cultural significance of a play or production. It is required that your artifacts include citation of sources. Details on these assignments are provided under the Major Assignments (3).

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

- examine theatrical events as better informed critics;
- think and write critically about theatrical productions and literature;
- identify the various components and personnel of the theater world;
- discuss the "nuts and bolts" of the process of creating theater with an informed understanding;
- describe plays (both scripts and realized productions) using theatrical vocabulary;
- articulate opinions 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 global events, politics, religion, culture and history.

Major Assignments:

Each of these writing assignments should demonstrate clear critical thinking with fresh ideas that reflect in-depth engagement with the topic - conclusions should be based on evidence and ideas should be integrated into a coherent argument and supported. Students should consider and weigh 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, but are based on an

understanding of aesthetic, tradition and intention. Students must explain and support critique papers with specific reasons drawn from the production (“I liked it” is not adequate. WHY a moment had dramatic impact based on practical production value is what your goal).

1. Each student must attend *two productions* by The Clemson Players. This semester, those two productions are *Vincent in Brixton* and *Big Love*. Both shows will be produced in the Bellamy Theatre.

- a. **SHOW 1 (*Vincent in Brixton*): Each student will write a 2 – 3 page double-spaced paper about the cultural and historical significance of *Vincent in Brixton* using a minimum of two additional sources (aside from the script and any reviews).** These papers must cite two sources using MLA or APA format and are **due on Monday, October 6th**. You must refer to specifics from the performance in your paper. This paper is NOT a performance critique, but a paper to make you think critically about how art and artists might impact other art forms or practitioners and how stories from earlier periods can still be compelling and relevant today (or not, if that is the point you want to make and support).

- Please make your reservations in advance. 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 Center) between 1 pm and 5 pm to make reservations right away. Tickets are on sale now.
- **You must have a typed, printed and stapled copy with you in class on the due date.**
- This paper, if addressed properly, will provide you with a critical thinking artifact.
- This paper is worth 100 points.

- b. **SHOW 2 (*Big Love*): Each student will write a 2 – 3 page double-spaced paper exploring the student-directed production, *Big Love* by Charles Mee.** *Big Love*, a modern reimagining of Aeschylus’ *The Suppliants*, “is about refugees and gender wars and men and women trying to find what will get them through the rubble of dysfunctional relationships.” Students are expected to use one additional source outside of the script or any reviews when developing this paper. The focus of this paper is to explore themes developed in the play. These papers must cite two sources using MLA or APA format and are **due on Monday, November 24 (last day before Thanksgiving holiday)**. You must refer to the performance in your paper. This paper is NOT a performance critique, but a paper to make you think critically about gender issues, sexism and the relevance of these themes that were originally developed in ancient Greece.

- Please make your reservations in advance. 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 Center) between 1 pm and 5 pm to make reservations right away. Tickets are on sale now.
- **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.
- This paper is worth 100 points

2. Each student will write one performance critique for any production on the list that is playing this semester. For this critique, students may attend (either on or off campus) any regional, professional/touring 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. There have been times when I have tested people on show they claimed to see after it was obvious that they didn't see the production – please know that I reserve this option. **This critique is due on November 5th.**

You will write a 3 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 (idea) 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 – were you ever pulled out of the world? 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.
- **Critical thinking component** - 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 – how and why? 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 two sources using MLA or APA.**
- **This paper is due on November 5th at the beginning of class. It must be typed, printed and stapled.**
- **This assignment is worth 100 points.**
- This paper, if addressed properly, can provide you with an arts and humanities artifact.

3. The final writing assignment (which is the final examination) will be a 3 – 4 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

- OR;
- the historical and cultural significance of one of the productions/plays from the list that you watched (and may have included in other writing assignments), or plays you have read or studied in or out of 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 activist 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 during the Wednesday of exam week by 5 pm. They must be typed, printed and either turned in or emailed no later than 5 pm. Papers will be graded on content, grammar/spelling, critical and creative thinking ability and overall ideas. You must cite a minimum of three scholarly sources (you may use MLA or APA to cite your sources).**
- This paper, if addressed properly, will provide you with a critical thinking artifact or an artifact to satisfy the arts and humanities competency.

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 questions. You will be expected to support and defend your answers. There are two tests given in this course; a mid-term and a final (which is an outside writing assignment based on some of our discussions and research). We may have quizzes (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.
2. Students MAY complete 5 shop hours toward one of the Clemson Player's Theatre Productions during the term for extra credit (of up to 5 points) to make up for missed classes or to help with a low or failing 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 5 points). No student may get more than 10 bonus points for missed/late work or absences.

Method of Evaluation:

Breakdown:

a. Attendance/participation (all absences impact this grade)	200 points
b. Mid-term exam	100 points
c. <i>Vincent in Brixton</i> paper	100 points
d. <i>Big Love</i> paper	100 points
e. Production critique paper (you choose show)	100 points
f. In-class assignments (absences impact this grade)	100 points
g. Concept project and presentations	150 points
h. Final exam paper	150 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. **You will not pass the class if you miss more than 8 class meetings (for ANY reason).** There are points for each class period that we are scheduled to meet on the syllabus (there are 25 of these). 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**. Please note that not all of these productions occur before the due date of the written assignment. Included are productions throughout the semester in the event that a student desires to see another production.

Clemson University Brooks Center and Bellamy Theatre

864-656-7787 or www.clemson.edu/Brooks or M-F, 1 pm – 5 pm at Box Office

August 29.....*Nice Work if You Can Get It* (nat tour- \$15)
Sept 28 – Oct 5.....*Vincent in Brixton* (CP/required, \$6)
October 7.....*Smokey Joe’s Cafe* (tour, \$15)
October 9, 10.....*Spandex* (\$6)
October 21.....*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (\$10)
November 16 – 23.....*Big Love* (CP/required, \$6)

The Warehouse Theatre (864-235-6948 or www.warehousetheatre.com)

Oct 10 – Nov 1.....*Evil Dead: The Musical*

The Peace Center for the Performing Arts (864-467-3000 or www.peacecenter.org) 300 South Main St, Greenville SC

Sept 23 - 28*Once*
Nov 11 - 16.....*The Book of Mormon*

Centre Stage (864-233-6733 or www.centrestage.org)

Oct 13 – Nov 15.....*A Flea in Her Ear*

The Alliance Theatre in Atlanta (404-733-4650)

Sept 3 – Oct 5.....*Bull Durham, the Musical*
Oct 22 – Nov 9.....*Steel Magnolias*
Sept 26 – Oct 19.....*Native Guard*

Actor’s Express in Atlanta (404-607-7469)

Sept 4 – Oct 5.....*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*
Nov 6 – Dec 7.....*Murder Ballad*

Greenville Little Theatre (864-233-6238)

Sept 19 – Oct 4.....*Legally Blonde, the Musical*

The Blumenthal Center for the Performing Arts (704-372-1000)

Sept 26 – Oct 4.....*A Raisin in the Sun*
Nov 4 - 9.....*Cinderella*
Dec 1.....*Sister Act*

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 two required Clemson Players productions.

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 any assigned readings whether you have opted to purchase the book or not. Theatre tickets will range from \$5 a performance through \$75

for some of the big touring shows (in good seats). You can determine what your budget it – at minimum, you will spend \$12 - \$18 on theatre tickets during the semester. There are a few student preview nights at The Warehouse Theatre with cheap tickets and some “pay what you can” Sunday performances in Greenville. Some of the shows at Clemson have free “student rush” tickets if there are unsold tickets remaining the night of a performance.

2. In-Class Projects/Lecture Assignments

Students will complete in-class assignments on:

- (a) concept and design (collaborative group projects),
- (b) given circumstances assignment (rolled into the concept project)
- (c) production development project
- (d) 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 3 minutes (work on making this concise). You may present in any manner you like, but your presentation should be professional, articulate and factually correct. KNOW how to pronounce names and titles before your presentation. Clowning around and not taking this seriously is not amusing in the least- you can have fun with it – but be professional.

Bertolt Brecht	August Wilson	Suzan Lori Parks
Frederico Garcia Lorca	Maxim Gorky	Lillian Hellman
Henrik Ibsen	Anton Chekhov	Eugene O’Neill
Arthur Miller	Edward Albee	Tennessee Williams
Sarah Ruhl	Sam Shepherd	George Bernard Shaw
August Strindberg	Tom Stoppard	Harold Pinter
David Mamet	Neil LaBute	Caryl Churchill
Paula Vogel	Craig Lucas	Mary Zimmerman
Tracy Letts	Moises Kaufman	David Lindsay-Abaire
Samuel Beckett	John Patrick Shanley	Edmond Rostand
Tony Kushner	William Congreve	Oscar Wilde

*I am not including Shakespeare on this list – we will be covering some of his material by watching **Macbeth** (with Patrick Stewart) and/or doing a 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 sleep through a class, I will count you as absent for that class period. Yup! I can pretty much see you when you snooze.
2. If you are texting, playing on your computer or doing work for another class, I will also deduct points from your daily grade. Yes, I can see you when you are texting and flipping through your phone. Hint: it looks different than taking notes. I may or may not call you out. Sitting in the back does not make you invisible.
3. Do not speak while other students are presenting – it is rude. You actually can learn something from watching others.
4. Students are responsible for the details of each assignment we discuss in class. These are creative assignments and will not have step by step instructions – you will have to determine your own process. You must be in class to work with your group. **Attendance is assumed – you are penalized for missing class after the first absence.**
5. I will NOT necessarily 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.***
6. I will not hunt you down to “fill you in” or rehash discussions and “hit the high points” for you. That is right. Don't be surprised when this doesn't happen.
7. If you ever feel the need ask me “did we do anything in class today,” just don't. You should know that I find it annoying, as do most of your professors. Take some initiative and get your notes from someone who is responsible if you must miss. Assume that if we are doing it in class, we consider it important.
8. Ask questions. Don't be passive – if something isn't clear, don't get frustrated, just ask.
9. You are responsible for what is on this syllabus- if I change anything, you will get it in writing with a date on it.
10. **You WILL get deductions for improper grammar and spelling – text-based abbreviations are not something you should include in a paper...LOL.** Spelling is kind of important. I don't care if you took an English class once that wasn't as tough on spelling and grammar- I hope you can see that this doesn't make for a good defense for poor writing. Use spell check and proof.
11. **You do not get an A for just showing up and writing mediocre papers.** C is average- prove to me that you are above average. Do your work well and turn it in on time, and you will get the grade you want.

Rough calendar of important dates (this is subject to change):

Wednesday, August 20: introduction to class and review of syllabus/Podcast – theatre etiquette

Friday, August 22: tour of facility – limited due to NWIYCGI load-in/lecture – discussion of national tours and how they function/tech

Monday, August 25: CAT test (be on time)

Wednesday, August 27: lecture on playwrights – discussion of first assignment

Friday, August 29: library – research on playwrights in class /*Nice Work If You Can Get It* national tour performance this evening

Wednesday, September 3: playwright presentations begin

Friday, September 5: playwright presentations continue

Monday, September 8: playwright presentations continue

Wednesday, September 10: playwright presentations continue

Friday, September 12: professor at conference (at USITT – recorded podcast lecture - history)

Monday, September 15: theatre history

Wednesday, September 17: theatre history

Friday, September 19: theatre history

Monday, September 22: directing/acting

Wednesday, September 24: directing/acting

Friday, September 26: design

Monday, September 29: *Vincent in Brixton*/design – discussion with student designer

Wednesday, October 1: *Vincent in Brixton*

Friday, October 3: *Vincent in Brixton* discussion

Monday, October 6: *Vincent in Brixton* papers due

Wednesday, October 8: review for mid-term

Friday, October 10: Mid-term

Monday, October 13: concept

Wednesday, October 15: clips for concept

Friday, October 17: clips for concept/ discussion of concept project

Monday, October 20: select and read plays for concept projects/assemble teams

Tuesday October 21: Performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (student rush tickets)

Wednesday, October 22: work on concept projects

Friday, October 24: professor in NY (recorded podcast lecture)

Monday, October 27: concept projects presented

Wednesday, October 29: concept projects presented

Friday, October 31: concept projects presented

Wednesday, November 5 Critique papers are due/ concept projects presented

Friday, November 7: professor at SCTA conference with students (recorded podcast lecture)

Monday, November 10: discussion of style and forms

Wednesday, November 12: style and forms – clips

Friday, November 14: discussion with student director

Monday, November 17: *Big Love*

Wednesday, November 19: *Big Love*

Friday, November 21: *Big Love* discussion in class

Monday, November 24: **Big Love papers due**

Monday, December 1: discussion of final projects

Wednesday, December 3: discussion of and work on final projects

Friday, December 5: If you have opted to complete extra points by seeing one of the approved shows on the list, your paper is due on this date. **CAT test** – do not miss this date

Exams – your final paper is due by Wednesday of exam week at 5 pm