

THAR 170: The Theatrical Experience, Section 102

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THAR 170 102, #14873, Spring 2012, 4 Credits
M/W/F 11:10am-Noon, Bentley Hall 306

OFFICE: Alden Library, 3rd Fl. Faculty Commons
HOURS: M/W/F 10:00-11:00am, **by appt only.**

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: What is Theatre? And why is it important? This course explores the roles of various theatre artists: the playwright, actor, director, designer and critic and how they collaborate with the audience to create the theatrical experience. The instructor and guest artists will lecture on these different aspects of theatre and students will be responsible for reading the assigned texts and information received in class lectures. Students will be required to attend live theatre performances outside of class time.

SHOW REQUIREMENTS: Students must attend the School of Theater's Spring 2012 main stage show "War is F**king Awesome" (May 9-19) and must attend one additional production to be announced.

Students will turn in three (3) two-page papers: one response paper for each of the two performances and a personal bio. There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. Six (6) quizzes will be given and may cover any aspect of course contents to date. Extra credit will be available to encourage students to attend/experience additional theatrical productions.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- ▲ Downs/Wright/Ramsey. *The Art of Theatre: Then and Now*. Edition: 3rd.
Publisher: Cengage Wadsworth. [ISBN: 9781111348304].
- ▲ "Free Man of Color" by Charles Smith (available at *Little Professor*)

Students are required to read each week's assigned chapters/text **before** coming to class and be ready to discuss.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance will be taken every class period. The class is "Theatrical Experience" and a substantial portion of that experience is the class lecture. You are required to come to class. You may have THREE absences, no questions asked. However, **you are not allowed to make up a quiz or hand in a paper late because you were absent***. **After three absences**, your grade will drop one-half letter for every class missed. For instance, if you have an "A" in the class, on your fourth absence, your "A" will drop to an "A-." On your fifth absence, your "A-" will drop to a "B+," etc. **If you acquire six unexcused absences you will automatically fail the course.** Two tardies count as one absence. If you have taken your three free absences and are tardy two times, your "A" will drop to an "A-," etc.

***There are no make-ups or extensions on written response papers, quizzes, or exams for unexcused absences.** If you are absent from class and miss an assignment, quiz or exam due to a family emergency, illness, jury duty, or school-sanctioned event, you must present me with a written excuse such as a printed obituary, doctor's note, letter from the Athletic Office, etc. Only after a written excuse is received, will you be allowed to retake the quiz, or turn in the assignment. (If you know you'll be absent, let me know.)

OTHER INFORMATION OF NOTE:

ALL papers must be typed. No Papers that are hand written will be accepted. Period. All papers must be stapled. All work that is not stapled will be marked off ten percent. All Papers and Assignments are due at the **beginning of class**.

Absolutely no cell phone, texting or smart phone use during class periods.

This is "Theatrical Experience" and, in any theater, using your phone, texting, or doing anything that creates light or noise during a performance is disrespectful to both your fellow audience members and to the actors and crew working to put on a show. In the theater, they'll ask you to leave. In this class, ignoring this rule will lower your final attendance grade 10 points at a time.

GRADING (points available):

Play Response Papers and bio (3 @ 50)	150
Quizzes (6 @ 20 / drop lowest score)	100
Attendance	50
Midterm	100
Final	<u>100</u>
Total	500

GRADE SCALE (percentages):

A	93-100 / A-	90-92		
B+	87-89 / B	83-86 / B-	80-82	
C+	77-79 / C	73-76 / C-	70-72	
D+	67-69 / D	63-66 / D-	60-62 / F	0-59

Example: $465/500 = 0.93$ or $93\% = A$

PRELIMINARY CLASS SCHEDULE: This schedule may change (much like a rehearsal process, we'll be flexible to make sure we've got the material down). This is to give you an idea of the order in which we will address the material, and how long we may spend on each area. You'll notice, it's not all-inclusive. Future quiz dates and information about the second response paper will be shared in class.

Week 1 – Mar. 26, 28, and 30: Introductions & Chapter 1:

Art | Entertainment: Why do we draw the line?

Wednesday, Mar. 28: Quiz #1 (Take Home) due.

Week 2 – Apr. 2, 4, and 6: Chapters 2-3:

Stage vs. Screen: Why Tony and Oscar Don't See Eye to Eye;

Theatre and Cultural Diversity: Does Theatre Tell Us Who We Are?

Friday, Apr. 6: Bio due.

Week 3 – Apr. 9, 11, and 13: Chapter 4-5:

Experience and Analyzing: How Do We Watch a Play?;

The Theatre Ensemble: What Kind of Day Has it Been?

Week 4 – Apr. 16, 18, and 20: Chapter 6:

The Playwright and the Script: What is a Primary Artist and How is a Play Born?

Week 5 – Apr. 23, 25, and 27: “Free Man of Color” & MIDTERM:

Education vs. Training: Let's Talk about John Newton Templeton

Monday, Apr. 23: Must have read “Free Man of Color” and be ready to discuss.

FRIDAY, Apr. 27th: MIDTERM EXAM (will include “Free Man of Color”)

Week 6 – Apr. 30, May 2 and 4: Chapter 7:

The Art of Acting: Not Just Playing Pretend

Week 7 – May 7, 9, and 11: Chapter 8 & 9:

The Art of Directing: Who's Driving the Ship?

The Art of Design: How do you tell a Proscenium Arch from a Thrust? (By the size of its lip.)

May 9-12: “War is F**king Awesome” @ Elizabeth Baker Theater, Kantner Hall, Wed-Sat. nights at 8pm / Free.

Week 8 – May 14, 16, and 18: Chapter 9 & 10:

The Art of Design, Part Deux: Lighting the Costumes so We Can Hear them Better

Creating Creativity: What is Talent and Can it be Taught?

May 16-19: “War is F**king Awesome” @ Elizabeth Baker Theater, Kantner Hall, Wed-Sat. nights at 8pm / Free.

Week 9 – May 21, 23, and 25: Chapters 11-13:

Theatre History. And Now for Something Completely Different: Ritual, Romans, Religion, & Renaissance. The Short Version.

Monday, May 21: “War is F**king Awesome” Response Paper due in class.

Week 10 – May 30 and June 1: To Be Determined / Review & Wrap (Remember, no class on Monday May 28 for Memorial Day)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6: 10:10am – 12:10pm FINAL EXAM

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Cheating on examinations, submitting work of other students as your own, or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an F on the assignment to expulsion from the university, depending on the seriousness of the offense. According to OU's Student Handbook, academic dishonesty is described as cheating or plagiarism. Cheating is defined as any attempt by a student to answer questions on a quiz, test or assignments through means other than his/her own knowledge. Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of someone else's knowledge or writing as one's own.

In this class there will be no discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or physical handicap.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Mr. Sony, js342210@ohio.edu

GUIDELINES FOR PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS PAPERS:

The German romantic playwright, philosopher, and critic **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832) offered a simple formula for play analysis that has been used for hundreds of years. These questions will help you determine the direction of your analysis.

What is the artist trying to do?

If you understand the intention of the artist, you will understand the reasons for his or her choices. Put aside your opinion of the play and identify the artist's purpose. What is the artist trying to say? What is the artist's goal? Can you explain why the artist chose to bring this particular work into being?

How well has the artist done it?

By answering this question, you judge the degree of success the artist has achieved in achieving the goal you identified in answer to the first question. How do the artist's techniques, methods, and talents help to achieve the goal? How effective is the production in fulfilling the artist's intention?

Is it worth doing?

The final question is whether the finished work of art was worth the artist's and the audience's time and effort. Does the play have new, interesting ideas? Will it help us understand the world, or understand human nature in a new way? If it didn't communicate to you, did it communicate to anyone else?

Things to remember:

Do be on time. Once the show begins, they may close the house and you will miss the play even if you have a ticket.
Do stay until the end. The company putting on the show went to a lot of effort; staying through curtain call is good form.
Do use both Conceptual Ideas and Tactile Elements from the play to convey your experience of the play. Make sure they are tied together (unlike the fires and ice cream sales... that will be explained in class.)
Do reference the specific artists (Playwright, Director, Actors, Designers) by name. **HINT: Keep a playbill for reference.**
Do spell and fact check your paper.

Do *NOT* take notes during the performance. Just watch it and jot down your thoughts at intermission or after the show.
Do *NOT* use your laptop, phone, iPad, camera, etc., during the performance. It's rude and they'll tell me about it.
Do *NOT* record the play — it's illegal and disruptive.

Ways to Approach Your Response Papers

4 paragraphs, 500-800 words total. The questions below are guidelines; not every play fits this breakdown. Think about the play you saw and how you respond to it. This is not a "book report" --- don't tell me what happened; respond to what the artists did using language and terms you've learned in class (in regards to playwrighting, acting, directing, and design).

Paragraph One. The playwright

1. What is the playwright trying to say?

What MDQ are you asking yourself? "Once upon a time... And then one day..."

What was the climax of the play? The denouement? What did these look like? What does the juxtaposition of these images tell you about the author's intent?

What is your take away message? What led you to this conclusion?

Paragraph One. The Playwright (Cont'd)

2. How well is the playwright doing it?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. What moments/events/images added to your impression of the play at the end? Which detracted?

3. Was it worth doing?

Give specific examples of moments in the play.

Paragraph Two. The actors

1. What are the actors trying to do?

What choices are being made by the artists to portray the characters of the script? What actors (for better or worse) stood out to you? Why?

2. How well are they doing it?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. How appropriate are these choices? Do they build or detract from the work laid out by the playwright?

3. Was it worth doing?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. Did the choices made by the actor feed into the overall work of the playwright? If not, did it save or destroy the playwright's intent? What would've made for a better approach?

Paragraph Three. The director

1. What is the director trying to do?

Give Tactile examples of choices that aren't based in the text/dialogue. Some thoughts to consider:

What's the tone/mood? How did the director set that?

What does the director want you to think about and feel?

How are transitions handled?

How is the spacing/focus/stage pictures working? Do they add to the playwright's intent or detract?

Is the director approaching the play as a Creative or Interpretive Director? What choices does the director make to give you this impression. Were these wise choices?

2. How well is the director doing it?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. Did the choices made by the director add to the work of the playwright or detract for you (think of the playwright's intent in paragraph one, did the director achieve this)?

3. Was it worth doing?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. Was this project worth undertaking? Was the investment of the directors time put to good use?

Paragraph Four. The design

1. What are the designers trying to do? What are the intentions of the:

Set Designer, Prop Designer, Costume Designer

Light Designer, & Sound Designer

What choices do they make? Are the costumes Period? Is the light motivated or unmotivated? Can you think of the primary concerns of the Sound Designer?

What's the most influential design element and why?

What's the tone/mood created by the design elements? Or what do the designers want you to think about and feel?

2. How well are they doing it?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. Consider the designers choices. How do they add or detract from the work of the Playwright, Director, and Actors? What constraints are they working on (e.g.: what theatrical space is the theatre?)

3. Was it worth doing?

Give specific examples of moments in the play. Do these choices add to the overall work of the Playwright, Director, and Actors? Which choices add? Which choices detract?

STUDENT BIO: Have fun answering these questions. Leaving questions unanswered will cost you points. If you don't know or don't have an answer, make something up. Be creative. "I don't know" or leaving something blank isn't an answer. In theatre, we all have to write bios. Welcome to the theatrical experience.

Current Photo

Name:

Hometown:

Major:

Year at OU:

Why OU:

Favorite thing about Athens:

Favorite books/movies/TV/music:

Song lyric or movie quote that best explains your outlook on life:

Best vacation ever:

The place you dream about going to:

Where do you see yourself at 25/45/85?

What plays or musicals have you seen?

What do you know about theater?

Why are you taking this class?