



**THE 1310: US-Introduction to Theatre
 COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2013
 TR 11:00 AM-12:15 PM
 PERFORMING ARTS CENTER #126**

Instructor: Dr. Jim Al-Shamma, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #130
Office Hours: M 11:00 AM-12:00 PM; T, H 12:30 PM-1:30 PM; W 11:00 AM-1:00 PM
 (and by appointment)
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The information presented in this syllabus is subject to change with adequate notification.

Last revised: January 11, 2013

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks:

The Creative Spirit, 5th edition, by Stephanie Arnold (ISBN 9780073382173)

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare (Any edition; it is available at the University bookstore. You can find it on the web free of charge, although without annotations, for example at: <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/midsummer/full.html>. It is also available at the University library.)

Required Viewing:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare
 produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce
 Tuesday, February 19 through Saturday, February 23 @ 8 p.m. and
 Sunday, February 24 @ 3 p.m.

An Evening of Original One Acts

produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce
 Studio Theatre
 Tuesday, April 23 through Saturday, April 27 @ 8 p.m. and Sunday, April 28 @ 3 p.m.

You may make reservations by coming by the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900 or by email at playhouseboxoffice@cp.tamuc.edu.

Ticket Prices:

TAMU-C Students (with Valid Student ID) and Children under 18 - \$3.00

Senior Citizens (ages 60+) - \$8.00

Adults - \$10.00

To document your attendance, you must turn in a copy of your program which has been signed by the house manager; you must also staple your ticket stub to the front of the program and print your name clearly on the front of the program.

**Note: Please understand that viewing a performance of both of the University Playhouse shows listed above is an absolute requirement of the course. Clear your schedule now! If you cannot attend both of these events, for whatever reason, you must consult with the instructor in advance in order to receive an alternate written assignment for this portion of the participation grade in the course.*

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to *examine* and *experience* the art of theatre – how it is created, what it expresses, what it communicates, and the resulting ideas and emotions. Relevant theatre concepts and terms, as well as historical and artistic contexts, will be studied. In addition to analyzing formal dramatic texts, students will gain a theatrical awareness of the world by learning how theatre exists in everyday life.

Catalog description:

A survey of the fields of theatre activity designed to provide introductory knowledge of all phases of drama, literature, performance, theatre plants and equipment, and production procedures.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. View a play production, and knowledgeably discuss and critique its elements, including acting, directing, playwriting, and design;
2. Analyze a play script, and identify major elements such as theme, plot, character, and setting;
3. Engage creatively with any play script, and develop original directorial and production concepts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:**

1. *Explore the elements of theater, and the creating of theater, through personal narrative.* Theater is a form of storytelling, and so we will use stories from each student's life to explore theatrical concepts. Each student will bring a story from his or her life to the third class meeting; through exploration of these stories, we will develop an understanding of the elements of theater.
2. *Create a design project based on your personal narrative.* Develop a production concept for your personal narrative and implement it as a specific design. The *essence metaphor* assignment will be a step towards formulating the concept.

3. *Staging treatment.* You will submit a treatment of how you might stage your personal narrative.
4. *Group discussion of assigned reading material.* Come prepared to discuss the assigned reading material. Quizzes will test your comprehension of the plays that we read.
5. *View, and write response papers about, various plays in performance.* Students will be required to view the University Playhouse productions listed above. In response to viewing each production you will be asked to write a two-page paper. Or, the student may choose the Service Learning Option in place of the two papers.
6. *Quizzes.* There will be a quiz on each of the plays read for class.
7. *Play questions.* You will be required to bring in a question about each of the plays read.
8. *Assessment tests.* There will be two tests during the semester.
9. *Global Shakespeares Project.* You will be assigned a project that involves the site globalshakespeares.org. Instructions will be distributed separately.
10. *Group Project.* You will be assigned to a group of approximately five students. Each group will meet both in class AND independently outside of class to write, develop, and perform before the class a short script (of approximately five to ten minutes in length). You will also present a design concept for this project. The project will involve peer evaluation.

SERVICE LEARNING OPTION: Rather than writing the two performance reviews, for this portion of your grade, students possessing carpentry or sewing skills (or have a strong desire to learn such things) may request to participate in the Service Learning Option (SLO). Individuals desiring to participate in the SLO must request and engage in an interview with either the faculty Technical Director (to work in the scene shop for a minimum of 20 hours over the course of the semester) or the Costume Shop Supervisor (to work in the costume shop for a minimum of 20 hours over the course of the semester). The SLO is only granted on a case by case basis, and regular hours must be agreed upon with the faculty shop supervisor in advance. Under normal circumstances, SLO hours in the shops must be arranged sometime between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday. A student who applies, interviews, and is ultimately selected for the SLO will complete a short journal entry (2-5 sentences per) for each day's work and receive an evaluation from the appropriate faculty, staff, and/or shop supervisor in question regarding the quality of commitment, dependability, work, and contribution that was displayed. Both the journal and the supervisor's evaluation will contribute to the grading process.

SLO hours must be acquired in addition to any scheduled Practicum hours or paid work hours that students may have in the department. *Please note: If you sign a contract to undertake a Service Learning Option, you **MAY NOT** back out of it during the semester (you will receive an automatic zero for this portion of your grade – i.e. it's "all or nothing" – you must work ALL of the hours required or you will receive a zero). You must make your decision regarding if you would like to apply for the SLO in one of the shops by Tuesday, January 29.* Additional description and specific requirements for SLO's will be discussed in class.

Positive, respectful and helpful attitudes are mandatory. *I would like to make this very clear: I will make every effort to treat you with the respect that I believe you deserve. You are also expected to treat your peers and myself with that same respectful attitude.* If I believe that a student is disrespectful, I will ask that person to leave the classroom. In this event, the student will receive a zero for any activities conducted that day in class and receive a zero for his/her participation grade for the day (no matter how long you have been in class). Disrespect, rudeness, or negative attitudes will *substantially* lower the student's participation grade. The following are other reasons you would be asked to leave the class and receive a zero for the day's activities: sleeping in class, reading the newspaper, working on other assignments,

coming to class under the influence of . . . anything, or otherwise causing disruption or distraction during class (this includes cell phones going off and texting in class – turn them off when you come into the classroom and don't turn them on again until you leave). Finally, it should go without saying that refusal to participate in any activity or part of an activity during class will result in a substantial and appropriate loss of participation points for the student.

Grading:

Assignment	Points
Preparation and participation	100
Personal Narrative	50
Personal Narrative Design Concept Project	200
Essence Metaphor	50
Staging Treatment	100
Two quizzes @ 50 each	100
Two play questions @ 10 each	20
Unit 1 Exam	200
Unit 3 Exam	200
Two play reviews @100 each OR SLO	200
Global Shakespeares Project	200
Final Group Project	300
Total	1720

GRADING SCALE: The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

A	90%-100%	(Exceptional Quality Work)
B	80%-89%	(Above Average Quality Work)
C	70%-79%	(Average Quality Work)
D	60%-69%	(Below Average Quality Work)
F	0%-59%	(Fails to Meet Acceptable Expectations in Quality of Work)

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

WORKING EMAIL REQUIREMENT: It is a course expectation that you have a working email address that you check daily. If you have not already acquired an email address through the university or otherwise, please make arrangements to do so before the next class meeting. There may be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so. If I do need to send you an e-mail, it will be through the e-mail address that you have registered with the University.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS: The syllabus and assignments will be distributed electronically through eCollege.

eCOLLEGE: You are required to have working access to the course eCollege site, as provided by the University. The syllabus and some materials will be distributed through eCollege. I use the gradebook in eCollege, where I will post grades for individual assignments. The gradebook

conveniently provides your current percentage in the class, although be aware that it may not necessarily include an attendance deduction, which might be deducted from your point total.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting the instructor:

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. It is not an imposition. If something is occurring that is presenting you with difficulties with this class, let me know. Don't be intimidated. Talk to me! The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is via email. I check it fairly frequently. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Student Resources:

Department of Mass Media, Communication and Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/massMediaCommunicationTheatre/welcome.aspx>

Writing Center

Hall of Languages #103

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

ATTENDANCE: You should realize the vital importance of daily student attendance for developing new skills and understanding new material. The classes will involve lectures, discussions, large and small group daily activities, written assignments, quizzes, etc. *Missed classes cannot be tolerated.* In other words, attend, participate, and learn! *You are expected to attend every class meeting.* I am very strict about this. Your participation will be calculated each day. If you are absent, your participation grade will be lowered accordingly. In other words, if you do not attend, you cannot participate. You must come to class prepared to participate! I expect you to be familiar with assigned readings (as well as any handouts you may receive) and to actively engage in classroom discussions and activities. *If you are absent, you are making that choice, and I expect you to accept the consequences graciously and in a mature manner.* It is your responsibility to remain informed of class activities if you are absent for any reason.

Under normal circumstances, the formal attendance policy for the class is as follows: You are allowed two *emergency* absences during this semester without overall grading penalty – please use them wisely (and please remember that *any* absences – including these two emergency absences – will affect your participation grade). Upon the third absence, 3 points will be deducted from the student's final grade in the course; upon each additional absence the student's final grade will be deducted 3 more points. Due to the daily interactive nature of the

course, upon the sixth absence (no matter the circumstances) the student may be automatically: 1) dropped from the course or 2) fail the course (depending on the point in the semester). Please keep up with your absences in this course – this is your responsibility.

For more information on the university attendance policy please go to the following link: <http://www7.tamuc.edu/registrar/attendance.asp>.

LATE ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES: Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. If you are late for class, your participation grade will reflect this. The class will begin promptly at 11:00 AM! If you arrive after 11:10 AM, please do not enter the classroom (you will be marked absent regardless). If you arrive within the ten-minute grace period, you will be marked “tardy”. Late arrivals: you are expected to enter the classroom discretely within the ten-minute grace period in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and sign-in for the day. Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. Both late arrivals and early departures will significantly reduce your participation grade. *Two documented “tardies” or early departures will be counted as one absence in the class.*

LATE WORK: *Late written work/projects will be deducted a full letter grade each weekday after the assigned due date.* This means that if you have to be absent for some reason on the day a written assignment or project is due, you must give your assignment to one of your classmates to hand in for you, or you will receive grading deductions. All assignments are due within the first ten minutes of the class period unless I specify otherwise. At 11:10 AM on the day that the assignment is due, your assignment will receive one letter grade reduction in credit; at 11:00 AM the following day another letter grade will be reduced, and so on. *No late assignments will be accepted after one week past the original due date. Please be advised that under normal circumstances, late final group performances will not be accepted.*

EXTRA CREDIT: As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask. In the circumstance that an opportunity for extra credit arises, this will be announced to the entire class.

ADAPTATION OF ASSIGNMENTS: Due to the fluid nature of this class, some assignments/scheduling may need to be adapted. All changes will be announced prior to implementation.

FOOD, DRINK, AND GUM: Please do not bring food or drinks into the classroom at any time (exception: you may bring bottled water with you to class). Chewing gum is not allowed during any performance activities.

INCOMPLETES: Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will not be given as a final grade in this course.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: This course adheres strictly to the college’s guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the *Student’s Guide Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another’s work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas

A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the Head of the Department. (*You should be aware that this could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester.*)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
James G. Gee Library
Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

**Note: Please be aware that under no circumstances can I implement any disability accommodations without official documentation from the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services at Texas A&M University - Commerce.*

STUDENT CONDUCT: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Student's Guide Handbook*, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Tentative Schedule: (subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

Unit 1: Staging Your Narrative

Week 1

Tuesday, January 15

Introduction to course

Thursday, January 17

Why theatre? – Ch. 1 (3-12)

Week 2

Tuesday, January 22

In-Class Storytelling

Personal Narratives Due

Thursday, January 24

Audiences and Theatre Spaces – Ch. 6 (161-169)

Week 3Tuesday, January 29

Text Analysis – Ch. 12

Thursday, January 31

Directing (Text) – Ch. 5

Week 4Tuesday, February 5

Directing (Space) – Ch. 5

Thursday, February 7

Acting – Ch. 4

Week 5Tuesday, February 12

TBA

Thursday, February 14**Staging Treatment Due**

Presentation of staging treatments

Week 6Tuesday, February 19

Review audience protocol

Have read *A Midsummer Night's Dream***Quiz on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*****Due: one question about the play (typed, in hard copy)**Thursday, February 21**Unit 1 Exam**Discussion of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (continued)**Week 7**Tuesday, February 26Due: Review of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*Discuss production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream***Unit 2: Designing Your Narrative**Thursday, February 28

Theatre and Metaphor

Essence Metaphor Assigned

Week 8Tuesday, March 5**Essence Metaphor Due**Thursday, March 7

NO CLASS – OAP

March 12 and 14: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 9

Tuesday, March 19

Scenic Design – Ch. 6 (169-177)

Thursday, March 21

Costume Design – Ch. 6 (177-183)

Week 10

Tuesday, March 26

Lighting Design – Ch. 6 (183- 188)

Thursday, March 28

Sound Design – Ch. 6 (188-191)

Week 11

Tuesday, April 2

Due: Design Presentations

Unit 3: Realism and Non-Realism

Thursday, April 4

Global Shakespeares Project Assigned

Week 12

Tuesday, April 9

Realism and Non-Realism – A Style Spectrum

Thursday, April 11

Global Shakespeares Project Due

Week 13

Tuesday, April 16

Joe Turner's Come and Gone Quiz and Discussion – Ch. 3 (59-95)

Due: one question about the play (typed, in hard copy)

Thursday, April 18

Unit 3 Exam

Joe Turner and Realism – Ch. 3 (45-58)

Unit 4: Group Project

Week 14

Tuesday, April 23

In class: work on group project

Thursday, April 25

In class: work on group project

Week 15

Tuesday, April 30

Due: Review of *Original One Acts*

Discuss *Original One Acts*

Thursday, May 2

In class: work on group project

Due: group project script

FINAL EXAM

Tuesday, May 7, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM

Presentation of Group Projects