



**THE 1310 Section 3 US - INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2013
M/W/F 9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m. Performing Arts Center #100**

Instructor: MS. Robin Billings, Ad Interim Instructor
Office Location: Performing Arts Center # 134
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday from 2-4 pm
 (and by appointment)
Phone: 903-563-5697 (No text messages or calls after 9pm)
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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

Downs/Wright/Ramsey. *The Art of Theatre: A Concise Introduction.*

Required Supplemental Readings:

Sophocles. *Oedipus Rex.*

This play is in the public domain and can be found online at a number of different sites. One link to the play is: http://www.ancient-mythology.com/greek/oedipus_rex.php. This play is also available in the TAMU-C Library.

Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

This play is in the public domain and can be found online at a number of different sites. One link to the play is: <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/midsummer/full.html>. This play is also available in the TAMU-C Library.

Required Viewing:

A Midsummer Night's Dream.

by William Shakespeare
 directed by Dr. Jim Al-Shamma
 produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce
 February 18-23 at 8:00 p.m. and February 24 at 3 p.m.

An Evening of Originals

2 separate one act plays written by theatre students
 directed by theatre students
 produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce
 April 22-27 at 8:00 p.m. and April 28 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available for a nominal fee from the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900.

Ticket Prices:

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

Senior Citizens (ages 60+) - \$8.00

Adults - \$10.00

**Note: Please understand that viewing a performance of the show listed above is an absolute requirement of the course and integral for the successful completion of assignments. Clear your schedule now! If you cannot attend one of these performances, for whatever reason, drop this class and re-enroll during a semester when your schedule will permit you to fully meet the course requirements.*

Course 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:

1. To understand dramatic works (i.e. the variety of works in the arts and humanities) as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
2. To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
3. To engage in the creative process or interpretive performance and comprehend the physical and intellectual demands required of the author or visual or performing artists.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

QUIZZES (30%): There will be six short quizzes given over the course of the semester. Each quiz will count as 5% of your overall grade in the course. My best suggestion is to keep up with your reading, attend class, and take good notes. Make-up quizzes are not normally given and will only be approved in extraordinary situations. In cases of *extreme* emergency (such as hospitalization or a death in the family), you are required to contact me *before* the class you must miss in order to negotiate any arrangements, etc. (I highly suggest utilizing both email and phone for this task). In such a case, you will be expected to provide official documentation for your absence. Please note that contacting me does not necessarily mean that you will be able to make alternate quiz arrangements. It has to be a “legit” emergency like the instances mentioned above. Quizzes will consist of approximately 10-20 multiple choice, matching, true or false, and/or short answer questions and will focus on readings, lectures, classroom activities, handouts, and/or viewed performances, etc. *Note: Late arrivals beware... after the first quiz is handed in, no other quizzes will be distributed in class. In other words, if you are late on a quiz day – you may acquire a zero on your quiz!*

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 1.*

EXAM #1 (15%) &

EXAM #2 (15%): The exams in this course will be based on materials covered in lectures, readings from the texts, class activities, prior quizzes, and plays we read and see. These will utilize an objective (multiple choice, matching, true/false) and/or short answer/essay question format. Make-up exams are not normally given and will only be approved in extraordinary situations. In cases of *extreme* emergency (such as hospitalization or a death in the family), you are required to contact me *before* the class you must miss in order to negotiate any arrangements, etc. (I highly suggest utilizing both email and phone for this task). In such a case, you will be expected to provide official documentation for your absence. Please note that contacting me does not necessarily mean that you will be able to make alternate testing arrangements. It has to be a “legit” emergency like the instances mentioned above. *Note: Late arrivals beware... after the first exam is handed in, no other exams will be distributed in class. In other words, if you are late on an exam day – you may acquire a zero on your exam!*

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 1.*

LEARNED AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (5%): As mentioned above, each student in this class is required to view the University Playhouse’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *An Evening of Originals* reflecting the qualities of a play-goer’s appropriate audience etiquette as covered in this course. 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. *Please note that exams and/or quizzes may also contain questions regarding the University Playhouse production.*

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 2.*

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE ESSAY (10%): For this portion of your grade, you may attend the University Playhouse’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, February 18-23 at 8 p.m. or on Sunday, February 24 at 3 p.m. and write a scholarly Performance Response Essay over the production. You must use the appropriate guidelines for content and format provided to you by the instructor and use appropriate vocabulary as learned in this course. The Performance Review Essays should be approximately 3-5 pages in length (double spaced) and graded on both content (70%) and construction (30%). Additional description and specific requirements for this assignment will be given at a later date.

**Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.*

-OR-

SERVICE LEARNING OPTION (10%): Rather than writing a Performance Review Essay, 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 total of 16 hours over the course of the semester) or the Costume Shop Supervisor (to work in the costume shop for a total of 16 hours over the course of the semester). The SLO is only granted on a case by case basis. Students must attend all 4 Strike Days during this semester completing a total of 16 hours. The Strike Days are February 25 & 26 and April 29 & 30 in the shops or on main stage

between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. A student who applies, interviews, and is ultimately selected for the SLO will complete a short journal entry for each show they helped strike (1 page double spaced for each show) 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.

You may also participate in the SLO by getting cast as an actor and successfully completing the rehearsal/performance process for *An Evening of Originals* at the University Playhouse. The journal does not apply in this SLO option; grading will be determined by information garnered from the faculty director of the production (the same criteria used in the shops – see above). Please know that if you choose the acting SLO option, far more than sixteen hours of commitment will be required.

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 Wednesday, January 30; deadlines for declaring acting SLO's will be arranged on a case by case basis immediately after the audition/casting process for the shows (also in January).* Additional description and specific requirements for all SLO's will be discussed in class.

**Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.*

GROUP PROJECT (15%): You will be assigned to a small group of 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 minutes in length) that will be adapted from the plot and characters of one of the plays the class reads. The grade will be determined by the level of commitment, professionalism, inventiveness, and timeliness displayed by each group. Grades will consider overall effectiveness of the group script/performance, etc. as well as the student's individual performance/contribution. The script is to be a scene that might be added to the play – one that does not appear in the read script (a different ending, a different beginning, a new scene in the middle, etc.) – and can be funny, sad, tragic, etc. Merely writing, developing and doing this performance, turning in completed elements of the project on time, having your lines perfectly memorized, and being brave enough to stand up in front of everyone gives you a minimum grade of 80%.

Each student will complete and submit written evaluation forms for all fellow group members in his/her Group Project. The evaluation forms will be provided to you by the instruction and will focus on the degree of each group member's contribution and attitude regarding the project. The student will be graded on completeness and depth of reflection in his/her submitted evaluations as well as on determined individual effort/contribution to the group project via fellow group member evaluations and the instructor's learned knowledge. Additional description of this assignment will be given in class at a later date.

**Measures Course Learning Outcome 3.*

PARTICIPATION (10%): *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.* Participation is vital in this class! This is an interactive environment and students must not only

attend, but must also actively contribute to each class. Furthermore, the completion of any miscellaneous homework assignments will also be considered part of your participation grade. There may be quite a few of these short assignments; they are all important to your success in this course. So, please make sure you understand what is expected of you.

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 in class and text messaging – 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 (including evidence of reading through active discussion) will result in a substantial and appropriate loss of participation points for the student.

Participation grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation and Growth grade of an 80.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

**Measures Course Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.*

Grading:

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)

GRADING RUBRIC:

**Please do not ask me what your grade is during the semester – I keep grades on a spreadsheet at home and may not have that information readily available. Fill in the following chart as you receive these grades, do the math, and keep up with your own grades throughout the semester.*

**Please also note that cheating on an assignment means you will automatically fail that assignment.*

Assignment	Grade
Quiz #1 (5%)	
Quiz #2 (5%)	
Quiz #3 (5%)	
Quiz #4 (5%)	
Quiz #5 (5%)	
Quiz #6 (5%)	
Exam #1 (15%)	
Exam #2 (15%)	
Learned Audience Participation (5%)	
Performance Review Essay – OR –Service Learning Option (10%)	
Group Project (15%)	
Participation (10%)	
Semester Grade	

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.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a disc or thumb drive, etc. Do not depend on your paper staying on the hard drive of any university computer, as it will be deleted, altered, or worse – turned in by someone else as their work! Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your graded and originally developed assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Ms. Billings:

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. I am usually in my office a great deal. Communicate, communicate, communicate! If something is occurring that is presenting you with difficulties with this class, let me know. Don't be intimidated. I am here to assist you in success

and will do my best to help you achieve it. 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/mmct/default.asp>

Communication Skills Center

Hall of Languages #103
<http://www.tamuc.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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Course Specific Policies and 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. There will be a sign-in sheet available each day in order to aid me in calculating your participation grade and tracking your attendance. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the sign-in sheet – otherwise, you will be marked absent. 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. Do not ask me how many absences you have during the semester; I may not have that information readily available when you need it.

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 9:00 a.m.! If you arrive after 9:10 a.m., 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 may 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 9:10 a.m. on the day that the assignment is due, your assignment will receive one letter grade reduction in credit; at 9:00 a.m. 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@tamuc.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)

Monday, January 14

Introduction to and Expectations of the Course

Wednesday, January 16

Tour of Theatre Facilities

Friday, January 18

NO CLASS

Monday, January 21

NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

Wednesday, January 23

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – Theatre, Art, and Entertainment
 Have Read: Ch. 1

Friday, January 25

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – Stage versus Screen
 Have Read: Ch. 2

Monday, January 28

SLO Overview
 QUIZ 1 (covering chapters 1, 2 and Tour of Facilities)

Wednesday, January 30

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Art of Acting
 Have Read: Ch. 7
SLO Decision Deadline

Friday, February 1

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Art of Acting

Monday, February 4

QUIZ 2 (covering chapter 7)

Wednesday, February 6

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Art of Directing

Have Read: Ch. 8

Friday, February 8

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Art of Directing

Monday, February 11

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Art of Design

Have Read: Ch. 9

Wednesday, February 13

Guest Lecture – The Work of the Designers

Friday, February 15

QUIZ 3 (covering chapters 8, 9 and Guest Lecture)

Overview of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Performance Response Essays

Monday, February 18

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – Experiencing and Analyzing Plays & Audience Etiquette

Have Read: Ch. 4

Wednesday, February 20

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – William Shakespeare and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*

Have Read: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Friday, February 22

NO FORMAL CLASS MEETING – University Playhouse Required Outside Viewing of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* February 18-24

Monday, February 25

EXAM 1 (covering all material studied thus far)

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Response

Wednesday, February 27

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – A Day in the Life of a Theatre

Have Read: Ch. 5

DUE: Performance Response Essay

Friday, March 1

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Many Types of Theatre

Have Read: Ch. 11

Monday, March 4

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Musical
Have Read: Ch. 12

Wednesday, March 6

QUIZ 4 (covering chapters 5, 11 and 12)

Friday, March 8

No Class

March 11-15

Spring Break

Monday, March 18

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – *Oedipus Rex*
Have Read: *Oedipus Rex*

Wednesday, March 20

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – A Creative Life
Have Read: Ch. 10

Friday, March 22

QUIZ 5 (covering chapter 10 & *Oedipus Rex*)

Monday, March 25

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – Theatre and Cultural Diversity
Have Read: Ch. 3

Wednesday, March 27

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Playwright and the Script
Have Read: Ch. 6

Friday, March 29

Lecture/Discussion/Activities – The Playwright and the Script

Monday, April 1

Guest Lecture – The Work of the Playwright

Wednesday, April 3

QUIZ 6 (covering chapters 3, 6 and Guest Lecture)

Friday, April 5

Overview of Group Project
Groups Assigned/Beginning of Group Script Development

Monday, April 8

EXAM 2 (covering all material studied since EXAM 1)

Wednesday, April 10

Group Script Development

Friday, April 12

Lecture/Activity/Discussion – Group Project
Group Script Development/Rehearsals

Monday, April 15

NO CLASS – Independent Script Development/Rehearsals

Wednesday, April 17

Lecture/Activity/Discussion – Group Project
Group Presentation Development/Rehearsals
DUE: GROUP PRESENTATION SCRIPTS

Friday, April 19

Lecture/Activity/Discussion – Group Project
Group Presentation Rehearsals

Monday, April 22

Lecture/Activity/Discussion – Group Project
Group Presentation Rehearsals

Wednesday, April 24

Lecture/Activity/Discussion – Group Projects
Group Presentation Rehearsals
DUE: SLO JOURNALS

Friday, April 26

NO FORMAL CLASS MEETING – University Playhouse Required Outside Viewing of *An Evening of Originals* April 22-28

Monday, April 29

Lecture/Activity/Discussion – Group Projects
Group Presentation Rehearsals
DUE: Learned Audience Participation

Wednesday, May 1

FINAL GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
Note: No late work accepted on this project!

Friday, May 3

NO FORMAL CLASS MEETING

Final Exam – Group Project Evaluations due by Monday, May 6 at 3:15 p.m. Please hand-in or place in Ms. Billings mailbox in the main department office (PAC 101). *Note: No late work accepted on this project!*