



**THE 543 – DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN THEATRE
THE 489 – THEATRE HISTORY II
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2012
M 4:30 PM-7:10 PM
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER #112**

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 8, 2013

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Texts:

See the course calendar for required texts.

Plays marked (online) will be provided to you free of charge through the class site on Wiki Spaces, by invitation of the professor. It is your responsibility to notify the professor if you are having difficulty accessing this website.

You are required to obtain all other plays. You may purchase the plays in any edition that you like. The plays should all be available at the University bookstore.

Recommended text (graduate students):

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Seventh Edition)

Course Introduction:

We will study the development of American Theatre through its plays and playwrights, as we read and discuss, in-depth, two plays per week. Supplementary material will be presented by the instructor.

Undergraduates enrolled in THE 489 – Theatre History II will attend and participate in the class concurrently. The readings and many of the assignments for the undergraduates will be the same as for the graduate students.

Catalog Description (THE 543 – Development of American Theatre)

A study of the theatre as it reflects the social, artistic, and literary interests in America from the colonial period to the contemporary scene.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Identify and discuss major playwrights, trends, and themes in American theatre;
2. Formulate a research question, and develop a research paper around a thesis statement;
3. Identify and incorporate peer-reviewed sources into presentations and critical writing;
4. Develop and present well-organized and dynamic presentations using Prezi.com.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

CLASS PARTICIPATION. All students are expected to attend class regularly and should give notice if they cannot attend the session. Furthermore, all students are expected to participate actively in the discussion sections. Students who are active in discussion receive credit in this category.

PLAY QUESTIONS. Starting with the second class session, students will be required to submit a question that they have about each play being discussed that day. Questions must be posted to the class wiki on the appropriate page. This should be a genuine question that you have about the play. Questions may not be duplicated: in other words, if someone has already posted your original question, you must think of another one. Questions must be posted before the beginning of the class period, and your name must be listed in parentheses at the end of the question, in order to receive credit. These questions will be used to launch class discussion.

PRESENTATIONS. Each student will give two 15-20 minute class presentations using Prezi. Instructions will be provided separately.

FLASH MOB PRESENTATIONS. During selected, unannounced class periods, students will be divided into groups and given topics. Within a short time period, within that class session, each group will quickly research the topic ("swarm" over the material on the web and through the library website) and give a mini presentation on it to the class. Detailed instructions will be provided. This will count towards your preparation and participation grade. This is an exercise in assessing sources and condensing and presenting information.

SHORT PAPER. This is an exercise in "reading" a play through another play. Your target play, the one that you are analyzing primarily, must be one of the plays that we are discussing the day your paper is due. The "lens" play may be any play that we have read so far, including the other play due that day. This is an exercise in creative scholarship, and we will practice this during the first class session during discussion. No two students will write about the same class session, and sessions will be assigned at the beginning of class. You may not write about the same session as the one during which you give your presentation. You will give an informal presentation of your paper during the class at which it is due. Submit the paper electronically

through eCollege. Length: 5-6 pages.

Graduate students:

RESEARCH PAPER. Write a 15-20 page research paper, due at the end of the semester. A research paper proposal will be due around the middle of the term, on the date specified in the course calendar. The proposal will consist of a paragraph that poses your research question, and a bibliography of at least five sources that you have consulted. You will informally present your proposal in class. See course calendar for deadlines. Submit the proposal and the paper electronically through eCollege.

Undergraduate students:

RESEARCH PAPER. Write an 8-10 page research paper, due at the end of the semester. A research paper proposal will be due around the middle of the term, on the date specified in the course calendar. The proposal will consist of a paragraph that poses your research question, and a bibliography of at least five sources that you have consulted. You will informally present your proposal in class. See course calendar for deadlines. Submit the paper electronically through eCollege.

Grading:

Graduate students:

Class preparation and participation	20%
Play questions	5%
Presentations	25%
Short paper	10%
Research paper proposal	5%
Research paper	35%
Total:	100%

Undergraduate students:

Class preparation and participation	20%
Play questions	5%
Presentations	25%
Short paper	20%
Research paper proposal	5%
Research paper	25%
Total:	100%

All papers must be formatted according to MLA research paper guidelines. Citations and the list of references must conform to MLA guidelines.

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: In addition to the textbooks, materials will be distributed electronically through the class Wiki Spaces site.

eCOLLEGE: You are required to have working access to the course eCollege site, as provided by the University. The syllabus and some materials may 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.

LAPTOPS AND TABLETS: You are encouraged to bring laptops and tablets to class for notetaking and in-class exercises. See course policies below for information regarding use.

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 Policies and Procedures:

ATTENDANCE: This is a graduate seminar that meets once weekly, and therefore attendance is crucial. **Students are allowed one absence for any reason. After that, the student's course grade will be lowered by 5% for each absence. Two late arrivals and/or early departures count as one absence.** This policy applies to both graduates and undergraduates in the class. I expect you to contact me directly (preferably through e-mail) as soon as possible if you must miss class for any reason. Sending a message through another student does not qualify as direct contact.

LATE ARRIVALS: I take role at the beginning of every class period. If you arrive after I have taken role, then you are late. It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain. Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. **Two late arrivals or early departures (or any combination of the two) will be counted as one absence in the class.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY:

Cell phones, text message, social media, etc.

Use of cell phones, messaging devices, and other electronic devices (for example, recording devices, music players, PDAs, computers) is prohibited in class unless specifically permitted by the instructor, or if the device is being used as a component of class learning activities. Failure to abide by this electronic device policy may result in corrective action by the faculty instructor. This may include being marked absent on the day of the infraction. Computer use during class time is limited to course-relevant activity. Web-surfing, video watching, etc. are not allowed.

For this class specifically, you are encouraged to bring laptops and tablets to class for notetaking and for flash mob presentation research.

Class recording/image capture

The use of personal recording devices (tape, digital, video, web camera, etc.) requires instructor approval. Student should request permission to record class activity in writing.

LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED: Written assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. This means that if you have to be absent for some reason on the day a written assignment is due, you must give your assignment to one of your classmates to hand in for you, or you will receive a grading deduction. **Work will not be accepted by e-mail.**

EXTRA CREDIT: As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask. In the *rare* instance that an extra credit opportunity arises, that opportunity will be announced and equally available to all members of the class.

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.*

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

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

If designated (online), the material will be available through the course Wiki Spaces site.

Session 1

January 14

Come to class having read, and prepared to discuss, the following two plays:

Fashion (1845) by Mowatt (online)

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) by Aiken (online)

January 21

No Class – MLK Junior Day

Session 2

January 28

The Octoroon (1859) by Boucicault (online)

The Count of Monte Christo (1883) by Fechter (online)

Short paper:

Session 3

February 4

Trifles (1916) by Glaspell (online)

Machinal (1928) by Treadwell (online)

Short paper:

Session 4

February 11

Long Day's Journey into Night by O'Neill

A Streetcar Named Desire by Williams

Short paper:

Session 5

February 18

Death of a Salesman by Miller

Dutchman by Baraka/Jones

Short paper:

Note: February 19: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens

Session 6

February 25*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* by Albee*Buried Child* by Shepard

Short paper:

Session 7

March 4**Due: Research paper proposal** (submit through eCollege before beginning of class session, and bring a copy to class so that you may present it informally)*Los vendidos* by Valdez (online)*Fences* by August Wilson

Short paper:

March 11

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Session 8

March 18*M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang*American Buffalo* by Mamet*The America Play* by Suzan-Lori Parks

Short paper:

Session 9

March 25*Angels in America, Parts 1 and 2* by Kushner (combined presentation: two students, 30-40 min.)

Short paper:

Session 10

April 1*Fires in the Mirror* by Anna Deavere Smith*The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* by Moraga (online)

Short paper:

Session 11

April 8*The Baltimore Waltz* by Paula Vogel*Marisol* by José Rivera

Short paper:

Session 12

April 15

The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek by Naomi Wallace
Ruined (2008) by Lynn Nottage

Short paper:

Session 13

April 22

The Aliens by Annie Baker (online)
Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo by Rajiv Joseph

Short paper:

Note: April 23: One-Acts open

Session 14

April 29

Eurydice by Ruhl
In the Next Room or the vibrator play by Ruhl

Short paper:

Research paper due: Wednesday, May 8, before midnight, through eCollege.