

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

DRA 20: Introduction to Dramatic Art

Winter 2019

Monday/Wednesday 12:10-1:30, Wright Hall 101

Associate Instructor: Tom Burmester

tburmester@ucdavis.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30, Della Davidson
and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Slater Penny
spenney@ucdavis.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Class Objectives:

1. Introduction to predominantly western theatre, examining primary texts from varied historical periods and theatrical styles, understanding of their role in culture.
2. Experience reading texts out loud, analyzing them for their themes and meaning, and envisioning them as fully realized productions through basic understanding of theatrical design and production roles (set, lighting, costume, sound, stage manager, director, playwright).
3. Experience memorizing and performing text, and active exploration of production roles.
3. Appreciation for and ability to analyze live performance..

Course work:

1. Readings: You are not expected to understand or agree with every detail of every reading for this class. You are expected to read and come to class prepared to discuss each reading, and will be graded on your readiness. Take notes on what interests you, what you don't understand, what you disagree with, what makes you question. These notes will form the basis of the midterm and final papers you write.
2. Participation: This is a large part of your grade. A good grade requires your punctual attendance to lectures and sections, a readiness to engage with the material, and a willingness to play and perform.
3. Writing: well-structured analytical essays are the biggest part of your grade in this class. If you are not confident in your abilities in this area, the Student Academic Success Center, provides free, excellent, individual assistance. More info:
<http://success.ucdavis.edu/academic/writing.html>
4. Final project: You will be assigned a group for your final performance project. Expect to spend several hours in rehearsal and preparation outside of class in the last few weeks of the quarter.

Required Books (buy a copy online)

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams

Machinal by Sophie Treadwell

Assignments:

1. *Two papers. One of 750 words that will be your best effort and will be the basis for your final 1200 word paper.*

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1. *Two papers. One of 750 words that will be your best effort and will be the basis for your final 1200 word paper.*

2. *Attending two live performances during quarter, and writing two 500 word performance reviews:*

Slowgirl

See between January 23 - February 24
Capital Stage, Sacramento

Flora the Red Menace

See between February 28 – March 9
Arena Theatre, Wright Hall

3. *You will participate in one group performance project: an original created rendition of a fairy tale or myth. This project will require substantial rehearsals and preparation time outside of class, and your enthusiasm (real or acted) will be necessary, both for your own learning and as it will affect your group's experience and grade. This performance project will require a 750 word reflection paper.*

Theatre is a physical language and often includes communication through touch and shared weight. Students will be expected to engage physically with other students, from holding hands to participating in hands-on warm-up exercises. Please speak to the instructor about any concerns you might have in this regard

GRADING OVERVIEW / IMPORTANT DEADLINES

POINTS	DUE	ASSIGNMENT/AREA
20	Daily	Participation
55	Feb 9	Midterm Paper
15	Feb 28	Performance Critique 1
40	March 14 or 16	Performance Project/Reflection
15	March 14	Performance Critique 2
55	March 21	Final Paper

*Please note: We do not meet during the scheduled exam time in finals week.

Week 1:

Jan 10 Introduction/Ancient Theatres

Jan 12 Theatre Design -

Due: - Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* pp 1-47

- Lee Simonson, "The Ideas of Adolphe Appia," in *The Theory of the Modern Stage*, ed. Eric Bentley (Harmondsworth: Penguin,

1968, pp 30-36.

Week 2:

- Jan 17 Oedipus Rex
Due: - Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* pp 47 - 81
- "What is wrong with Theatre?" Nicholas Ridout, *Theatre and Ethics*. London: Palgrave, 2009.
- Jan 19 Acting
Due: - Tina Fey, "Rules of Improvisation" from *Bossypants*
- Bella Merlin, "Actor-Training" from *The Complete Stanislavski Toolkit*

Week 3

- Jan 24 Early Modern Theatre
Due: - Augusto Boal, selection from *Theatre of the Oppressed*
- **Shakespeare** - *Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Jan 26 The Director
Due: - DeKoven, Lenore. Selection from *Changing Direction: A Practical Approach to Directing Actors in Film and Theatre*.
Amsterdam; Boston: Focal Press, 2006, pp 47-58.

Week 4

- Jan 31 Restoration Theatre/Enlightenment/Melodrama
Feb 2 Writing critically

Week 5

- Feb 7 Realism in 19th & 20th Century European Theatre
Due: *Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov
- Feb 9 Chekhov and Stanislavsky

Week 6

- Feb 14 Realism in the U.S.A.
Due: *Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams
- Feb 16 Realism and casting
Due: - Conroy, Colette. *Theatre & the Body*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. pp 18-21, 31-33, 56-61
Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams
- Young, Harvey. *Theatre & Race*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. pp 4-13, 56-63

Week 7

- Feb 21 American Musical
Feb 23 Writing about Performance

Week 8

- Feb 28 Modern/postmodern Theatre
Due: *Machinal*
- March 2 Case Study: *Machinal*

Week 9

- March 7 Regional Theatre
Due: *Luna Gale* by Rebecca Gilman
- March 9 Pervasive Theatre
Due: *Noise (a musical)* by César Alvarez

Week 10:

- March 14 Final Performance Project
Due: Performance Review
- March 16 Final Performance Project
Due: Final Project Reflection

Final Week

- March 21 Final paper due online. We do not meet during our final exam time.

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