

Syllabus
THE 111
Introduction to Theatre Arts
Alabama State University

Faculty

Dr. Anthony Sweeting	229-6942
Mr. Alton England	229-4183
Ms. Ramona Ward	229-6931
Mr. Kel Laeger	229-6928
Mrs. Yvette Daniel	229-6929

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all lectures, seminars, laboratories and field work for each registered class, including the first class session, in order to verify registration with instructors and to complete all work assigned for the course. Instructors of courses are not obligated to provide makeup opportunities for students who are absent, unless the absences have been officially approved. An officially approved absence however, merely gives the individual who missed the class an opportunity to makeup the work and in no way excuses him/her from the work required. Official excuses are granted by the Office of Student Affairs for authorized student activities, verified personal illness or illness or death in the immediate family. Students should understand that absences may jeopardize their grades. Starting with the first official day of class, any student whose absences from a course exceeds 1 1/2 times the number of times the class meets will be assigned a grade of "F".

Classroom Policy

At no time during class hours will men be allowed to wear hats of any kind. No visitors will be allowed to enter the classroom during class sessions. Special permission from the University must be obtained.

ADA Statement (Americans with Disabilities Act)

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. "

INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE ARTS 111 SYLLABUS

Audience

This course is an elective in the Core Curriculum, which satisfies a Humanities requirement. As such, it is open to all students with prerequisites. For Theater Arts majors and minors, it is optional and may be used as an elective. Since the course offers a basis for further study in Theater Arts, it is recommended as a first course. As a service course, it is geared for non-majors and should help the uninitiated develop an interest in and an appreciation for the Theater.

Course Description

"An introduction to drama and theater, constituting a complete and balanced coverage of all elements of drama and theater." (ASU Bulletin) The course is designed to introduce the student to various aspects of drama and theater: as an art form, as a humanistic pursuit and as a dramatic experience. This is done via a study of the various elements that make up the . theatrical event. It is expected that the student will

become familiar with drama, theater technology, theater history and theater production having studied the aesthetics of theater and basic theater and drama history. In addition, an awareness and appreciation of drama and theater as significant to Western Civilization and to the full development of the individual are to be pursued.

Resources

Text – Wilson, Edwin & Goldfarb, Alvin. Living Theater: A History. Second Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994.

Reports

Students are required to attend at least one play that is given in public performance (ASU, other college/university, community theater, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, touring company, et cetera). A written report is required for each performance attended which is to be handed in no later than three class days after the performance.

Group Projects

The class, will be divided into two small groups in an effort to develop a creative project expounding on an assigned objective or textbook chapter. The presentation must be organized, well researched and creatively presented to the class in oral and written forms.

Course Objectives

1. Know the key aspects of the purpose and history of the theater:
 - a. Identify the performance spaces used in the theater from the times of the Greeks until today.
 - b. Identify some of the many aspects of the theater experience that combine to produce a play.
 - c. Critique and document performances of plays.
 - d. Identify key players in the making of theater history.
 - e. Define the production team and responsibilities required to produce a play.
2. Know the relationship between the play and the creative audience by:
 - a. Describing theatrical convention.
 - b. Identifying dramatic elements found in plays.
 - c. Explain the genres evidenced in theater arts.
 - d. Differentiate between the four staging types.
3. Understand the significant periods in western theater:
 - a. Differentiate between the Greek and the Roman periods in history, of the seven we will cover in this course.
 - b. Identify the dramatists of the seven periods discussed.
 - c. Identify the theater structure of the seven periods discussed.
 - d. Identify a play which best represents each time period discussed.
4. Write a two page report evaluating ways by which directors, actors and designers transform the playwright's work into a living production:
 - a. -Must attend one performance and submit a written evaluation.
 - b. Evaluate one performance outlining the effectiveness, worth, audience reaction and your understanding of the production.
5. Write a two-page paper which chronicles the life of an Afro-American personality in theater and identifying his/her contribution(s) to American theater.
6. With a select group from the class, create an in-depth study on a specific time in theater history:
 - a. Research the specifics on costumes, type of theater, outstanding writers of the time and conventions utilized by that period.
 - b. -Present an written and oral report of the group's findings in an organized fashion (see attached for method of evaluation and material to be covered).

Grading:

To satisfy the requirements of this course, the student must earn 70% of the available points for each objective.

A total of four quizzes (totaling 100 points) and two examinations (one mid-term and one final) will be given during the semester for a total of 50 points each.

For Course Objectives 1 - 3: there will be a total of 200 objective questions (Objective 1 = 60 points; Objective 2 = 60 points; and Objective 3 = 80 points). The student must pass 70% of the available points for each objective.

Course Objective 4 will be rated and evaluated based on the significant factors indicated by answers submitted on the analysis/evaluation document (attached). 80 points are available for this objective. Students must earn 50 points to pass.

Course Objective 5 requires a well organized one-page paper, discussing the national or international contribution of an African-American Theater Artist. The paper should include biographical data and nationally recognized projects. Twenty (20) points may be earned to satisfy this objective. Evaluation will be based on grammar, punctuation, documentation and the flow of ideas. Twelve points is required to pass this objective.

Course Objective 6 is worth 100 points. The contents must reflect the assigned segment of the attached play reading and discussion guide. The specific assignment will be determined in the course of the semester on the organization, relevance and thoroughness of the research material. Additional guidance will be provided each student when task is assigned. The written task will be worth 50 points. The oral presentation will be evaluated based upon the successful group presentation, which must make effective usage of stage props, gestures, enunciation; appropriate attire familiarization with material, usage of stage and props, and overall organization of presentation. This task will be worth 50 points. Sixty total points are needed to pass.

GRADING IN REVIEW:

1 African-American Personality Paper	50 Points
1 Play Analysis	50 Points
1 Group Project presentation	100 Points
4 Quizzes (25 points each)	100 Points
<u>2 Exams (50 points each)</u>	<u>100 Points</u>
TOTAL POINTS	400

Each course objective will be valued and tested equally.

In order to receive an "A" for the course, each student must:

- Attend class regularly; participate in the Group Presentations.
- Complete and turn in promptly all assignments to include...
- ...demonstrating a maximum level of preparation for each class period.
- Achieve at least 6 objectives.
- Accumulate a minimum of 350 - 400 points.

In order to receive a "B" for the course, each student must:

- Attend class regularly; participate in the Group Presentations.
- Complete and turn in promptly all assignments, homework and projects.
- Demonstrate a maximum level of preparedness for each class period.
- Achieve at least 5 objectives including objective 6 (group project).
- Accumulate a minimum of 300 - 349 points.

In order to receive a "C" for the course, each student must:

- Attend class regularly; participate in the Group Presentations.
- Complete and turn in promptly all assignments, homework and projects.
- Demonstrate a maximum level of preparedness for each class period.
- Achieve at least 4 objectives including objective 6 (group project).
- Accumulate a minimum of 250 - 299 points.

f In order to receive a "D" for the course, each student must:

- Attend class regularly.
- Complete and turn in promptly at least 70% of all assignments, homework and projects.

- c) Achieve at least 3 objectives, including objective 6 (group project).
- d) Accumulate a minimum of 200 - 249 points.

Any points totally below 190 will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

The Group Project

Play Reading and Discussion Guide for Objective 12I. Title of the Play: Meaning and significance of the play, and the type of play (comedy, farce, tragedy, melodrama, serious drama tragicomedy, etc.).

II. The Playwright:

- A. Nature of his works
- B. Author's contemporaries
- C. Critical appraisals of his efforts

III. The physical theater and historical context:

- A. The playhouse for which the play was written (Greek vs. Restoration, Elizabethan vs. Georgian...) and its physical properties.
- B. What type of audience viewed the original production?
- C. Who were the actors? Who were the directors? Who was the producer?
- D. Recreate the conditions surrounding the original production of the plays as completely as possible.

IV. Theme and Plot

- A. Theme is general or specific statement of the play.
 - 1. Social and/or political implications
 - 2. Historical significance or context
- B. Plot of the play (not story): What incidents are used by author to depict the theme?

V. Character

- A. Who are the people in the play? What do they want? How do they go about accomplishing their goals?

VI. Language

- A. What type of language is used? Is it poetic or everyday, realistic in speech" language?
- B. What does the language tell the reader about the character?

VII. Music (not just musical dramas):

- A. How does the play sound?
- B. How do language, rhythm and pitch add to the "sound" of the play?

VIII. Spectacle or visual aspect of play:

- A. Setting and costumes as prescribed by the play and/or author
- B. Time noted by author
- C. Basic requirements of the script

IX. Philosophical implications: general thought:

- A. What does the playwright have to say? Is what the playwright has to say about the human condition worthy?
- B. Are the ideas presented universal, and are the ideas important to present day readers/audiences?
- C. What is the historical context of the play in the original performances? Is the Political, Religious and Social tone(s) of the times reflected or attacked by the author?

This outline is by no means exhaustive of the numerous considerations one must make when reading a play. Hopefully, this outline will serve as a stimulus and a guide, instead of a convenient and restrictive list.