

Introduction to Theatre **DRAM 101**

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Brief Course Description:

This course also covers dramatic forms and styles, historic developments of the theatre and contemporary theatre practices.

Detailed Course Description:

This is a general course designed to acquaint the student with a basic exposure and appreciation of various forms of theatre as an art form. The course covers major historical aspects of theatre such as important periods and written works; types of theatre; and the various jobs and duties within the theatre business. Some of the areas which are discussed include direction, script writing, introduction to technical theatre elements and performance theatre elements, as well as the current theatrical practices. The course work includes theatre craft projects, attendance of live theatre performances and limited lab time.

Required Text:

Wilson, Edwin. *The Theatre Experience*. Eighth ed. New York: McGraw Hill. 2001.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Successfully understand how to read a play.
2. Understand dramatic structure.
3. Identify the basic elements of theatre.
4. Identify the various forms of theatre and their meanings.
5. Define the various differences between a play and a film.
6. Define the various roles required for a theatrical performance.
7. Identify the basic elements of the various theatrical jobs and duties.
8. Evaluate a play and write a critique of the performance.
9. Evaluate a live production for important theatrical aspects such as character development, plot, scene, setting, and dramatic structure.
10. Identify various genres of theatre (drama, comedy, farce, musical theatre, and other performance types)
11. Recite areas of the basic history of theatre.

Learning Tasks and Activities:

In order to accomplish succeed in this course each student needs to:

1. Read carefully each assigned chapter in the texts.
2. Read critically and carefully any handout selection the instructor may give.
3. Engage actively in class discussion (attendance, therefore, is assumed).
4. Keep accurate notes on lectures and discussions.

5. Write all assigned papers and complete all assignments on time.
6. Document carefully when appropriate.

Assessment of Outcomes:

Student learning will be assessed and grades assigned in the following areas:

1. Responsibility: the ability to recognize, understand, and accept ownership for learning by self-assessing, demonstrating, and evaluating behaviors that support the learning situation.
2. Communications: the ability to create meaning between themselves and their audience: learn to listen, speak and write effectively using words, graphic, electronic media, computers, and quantified data.
3. Problem-solving: the ability to assess, evaluate, and apply information from a variety of sources in a variety of contexts.
4. Global Awareness: students will demonstrate an awareness and appraisal of the world: its scientific complexity, its social diversity, and its artistic variety.

Statement About Written Work:

Make sure to review MLA (Modern Language Association Format) when writing documents for the class. While this is not an English class, your writing must be clear and accurate before I will read your work. If you need assistance with writing the reports concerning what content needs to be included please ask me. If you need assistance with writing the report please visit the Tutoring Center for assistance. If there are too many structural or grammatical errors I will not accept, read or grade the work.

Plagiarism:

The following rules and definitions concerning plagiarism:

Definition: Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving proper credit to the person who devised them. It includes any of the following:

1. Not citing the source for words or ideas which are not your own
2. Incorrect documentation into the body and the Works Cited Page
3. Carelessness or sloppiness in the research which results in faulty documentation
4. Use of purchased or acquired papers

Penalties for Cheating or Plagiarizing (WAC 132Q-4-061)

If the instructor suspects or believes the student has cheated or plagiarized, he is authorized to

fail the student unless that student can prove the authenticity of the paper. The burden of proof rests on the student. If the instructor is convinced that cheating or plagiarism has taken place, the student will be dropped with a failing grade in the course.

First Offense: Automatic failure of the paper or test and possible failure of the course.

Second Offense: Automatic failure of the course.

A Statement About Electronic Devices:

The student may not use cell phones, mp3 players, or other communication or entertainment devices during class time. If the student is using such a device he/she will be asked to leave the class and will receive a failing grade for the day. If the student continues to use such devices he/she will be given a grade of 'F' for the class and will not be able to return to the class.

Eating In Class:

Please be sure to use the time before and/or after class to find your nourishment. If the student is found eating or drinking (other than water) in class he/she will be asked to put it away or throw it away. If the student refuses, then he/she will be asked to leave and will receive a failing grade for the day. If the student continues to choose to eat or drink (other than water) during class then he/she will be given a grade of 'F' for the class and will not be able to return to the class.

Withdrawal Policy:

Please make sure to know the last day to withdraw from class. If the student does not withdraw by the deadline then he/she is given the grade of 'F'. No Z grade is possible.

Disabilities Statement:

In accordance with the mandates of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973-Subpart E and the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations for otherwise qualified students with a disability(s) will be considered after receiving a student's request. The student will need to register with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office and provide appropriate documentation of the disability. Once the student has established a file and the disability(s) has been verified by DSS, then the facts of each situation will be thoroughly analyzed and reviewed to determine appropriate reasonable accommodations for classroom, laboratory or clinical settings. Accommodations that would compromise patient care, or fundamentally alter the essential nature of a program or activity are not considered to be reasonable.

A student who is denied an accommodation has the right to request a review of the determination through the defined grievance process available at each institution.

Procedures for student grievance are outlined in the SCC Student Handbook and in the SCC Center for Students with Disabilities Student Handbook.

Assessment:

Act or Review (10 Total/10pts. each = 100pts.)

The student has the choice whether to (A.) Act or (B.) Review the Act:

(A.) Act

If the student has chosen to act then he/she will be given a scene in which he/she will act out for the rest of the class. He/she will not need to memorize the material, but will need to review and present the material clearly and accurately. The points will be given with the students' basic ability to understand the scene and present it for the other students.

(B.) Review the Act

The student will respond to a type of theatre illustrated by the actors who are performing the scene. The students who observe the performance must use the material we have discussed to evaluate the material. The student will not evaluate the actors, only the material presented and how it illustrates the specific type of theatre which we are discussing.

Attendance and Participation (30pts.)

Each student will need to attend class, participate in discussions, participate in group work and complete required work for the full duration of each class meeting. If the student is late he will not be allowed in class unless he/she has made arrangements with the instructor prior to the specific day of class. If the student misses more than three class meetings he/she will lose 5 points. More than five absences is grounds for failure.

Mid-term (20pts.)

The mid-term exam will be on the material we discussed in class. This in-class exam will be about various elements of theatre which we have discussed as well as readings from the handouts and the text. **Each student must take the Mid-term to in order to pass the class.**

Theatre Elements Reviews (10 Total /12 pts. each = 120pts.)

There will be a total of ten theatrical elements which are discussed and reviewed, each worth fifteen points. The student will need to prepare an MLA formatted one page documents based on the material we have discussed in class.

Performance Report (10pts.)

Each student must write a critique on the current Spokane Community College theatrical production. The student will use the material which we have discussed in class to evaluate the production.

Final Project (40pts.)

The final project will include an oral presentation. The student can chose one of two methods in which to complete the final project. (A.) The Research or (B.) The Application. Either method will be acceptable and will depend on the student's preference.

(A.) The Research

The student will find a scene which best illustrates a medium of theatre which we discussed. (For example, the student can discuss effective directing, acting, playwriting, theatre composing, sound effects application, promotional material, make-up or visual effects) The student is given specific questions to answer prior to the presentation which will be answered during the presentation along with a clear, concise paragraph of review.

(B.) The Application

The student can create a scene live which illustrates an example of a medium of film which we discussed. (For example, the student can direct a scene, write and present a play, compose and present a piece of music as a theatre score, create effective sound effects, create effective promotional material (trailer or poster), create a make-up design or create a visual effect.) The student is given specific questions to answer prior to the presentation which will be answered during the presentation along with a clear, concise paragraph of review.

Each student must complete the Final Project in order to pass the class.

Totals:

Review = 100pts.

Participation =30pts.

Mid-term =20pts.

Theatre Elements Reviews =120pts.

Performance Report = 10pts.

Final Project =40pts.

Total = 320 pts.

Grades:

320-288 = A

287-256 = B

255-224 = C

223-192 = D

191-below = F

No Make-Up Work:

There is no make-up work. The student must make arrangement turn any work in or give the presentation before the due date if he/she is unable to turn it in at the assigned day and time. All work is counted in the overall grading.

Extra Credit

There are two possibilities for extra credit. One: The student can volunteer to help with the current play at Spokane Community College. Make sure to ask the instructor for more details. Two: The student can view a local theatrical production and write a thorough critique on the performance. The student must write in MLA format and must cover the main elements of theatre. The critique will be graded between a 1-5 points depending thoroughness of the work, how well it is written and the critique of various aspects of the overall performance.

Expectations:

For each class each student needs to...

1. Be punctual and attend every class, except in extreme emergencies.
2. Have the appropriate supplies (paper, text books, writing tools, and other supplies).
3. Have read the assigned material and be prepared to discuss the readings.
4. Listen attentively and participate through class discussions and group lessons.
5. Respect everyone's point of views and ideas.
6. Choose to learn as much as possible and show a positive attitude about the material while in class.
7. Develop positive learning habits throughout the class.

The Instructor will...

1. Attend every class on time and be prepared.
2. Grade each essay and all other work fairly and objectively.
3. Inform each student about the course content and grading policies.
4. Try to answer each question to the best of his ability.
5. Make the lessons and materials as interesting as possible.

The Instructor and students will understand that life is a continual learning and creative process.

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DRMA 101

Assignment Schedule

Part One: What is Theatre?

Week:

What is Theatre & Basic Concepts (Act 1: *The Murder Room* by Jack Sharkey (Farce))

1--- Introductions. What is theatre? Discuss the elements of performance. Types of stages: children, community, educational, regional and professional. Types of productions: individual acting, music, spectacle. Compare and Contrast: Theatre and Film. Basic elements of a performance.

The Stage: elements of theatre. Types of stage spaces and performance styles. Understanding the roles of the theatres and elements of theatrical productions. Main elements of a performance.

Theatre Elements Reviews 1: Discuss the types of productions you've seen and jobs in theatre you have noticed.

The Many Types of Theatre & The Actor in the Scene (Act 2: *Dinner With Friends* by Donald Margulies (Drama))

2--- Audience, critic and early theatre. The basics of acting, directing, producing. Capturing the desired effect. Understanding how to read a play and play terms. Basic dramatic structure.

Types of plays: drama, comedy, tragicomedy. Movement and expression in directing and acting for the production (mime, expression of emotion, goal). Understanding dramatic structure.

Theatre Elements Reviews 2: Discuss people's body position and posture and what it reveals about them.

A Note or More About Musical Theatre (Act 3: *Guys and Dolls* Book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows based on the story and characters by Damon Runyon (Musical))

3--- Theatre and music: musical theatre, opera, cabaret, melodrama. The relationship of sound and stage: music and sound effects in theatre. Development of change in musicals. Adaptations of musicals and the influence of stage musicals to film and film to stage musicals.

Theatre of change: culture and diversity. Understanding the dramatic storytelling and various cultures and environments. Theatre is fluid: continuously changing.

Maybe: *Into the Woods*

Theatre Elements Reviews 3: Discuss a Type of Musical Theatre you've seen.

**Political Theatre & Other Greats (Act 4: “Waiting for Lefty” By Clifford Odets (Union—
Political Play)**

4--- Development of dramatic structure. Changes in structure and expression as well as form and meaning. Political plays, social plays, personal plays, overall human condition. Use of scene and character. Modes of presentation. Important Plays and how they relate to society.

Theatre Elements Reviews 4: Discuss a political or current event which would work as a play.

Part Two: Behind the Scenes

The Design of the Show (Act 5: *Death of a Salesman* By Arthur Miller (Drama)

5--- Stage design: the backbone to a production. Look and mood of design and staging. General ideas of lighting, set design, sound effects, music, make-up. and costuming. Varying styles and period plays. Scenery: sets and props. The use of specific set pieces (what are flats?). Use of important set pieces. The differences in production styles. What is the use of props? Does every prop have a purpose?

Lighting: the illumination of a scene. Effective lighting techniques. Use of lights and performance. Lighting with outdoor vs. indoor performances. Use of lighting on sets and props. Understanding the mood in a scene.

Theatre Elements Reviews 5: Discuss a Store Set Design.

Mid-term

The Clothes Make the Man or Woman (Act 6: *Betrayal* By Harold Pinter (Modern Drama)

6--- Costuming and make-up. Costumes for period pieces and for modern shows. Use of costume to reveal characteristics. Make-up: from subtle shades to creature feature, the evolution of make-up in theatre. The use of make-up in film vs. theatre.

Theatre Elements Reviews 6: Use a piece of clothing to reveal a character and why the clothing is important.

Part Three: Reaching to the Past, the Journey to the Future

Classics and Folklore: (Act 7: “Masterman” Traditional Story Retold by Aaron Shepard (Nigerian Folktale)

7-- Theatre history. Understanding the elements of a play and how it effects an audience. Changing plays and meaning. Comparing the elements of theatre and modern use of theatre. Adapting older plays into modern plays. Rituals and cultures developing meaning and purpose.

Theatre Elements Reviews 7: Important ritual element of theatre. How has it changed?

Abstracts of Theatre & Dinner's Served (Act 8: *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard (Theatre of the Absurd)

8--- Abstract Theatre? What is it? Experimental Theatre as Expression. Understanding Social Meaning in Experimental Theatre. How is it used? Why is it used?

Dinner Theatre. The evolution and the creation of the wonderful world of Dinner Theatre. Types of Dinner Theatre. Those involved in it.

Theatre Elements Reviews 8: Discuss a particular program or show which is different than a conventional play.

PR: The Goal of Any Production is to 'Be Seen' (Act 9: *Almost, Maine* by John Cariani (Fanciful Romance)

9--- Examples combining the theatrical elements. The creation of a production. From the creation as an idea, writing the play, submitting the play and hiring the director. Conceiving the production. Important theatre productions. Children's' theatre: another creature all together. The differences of children's' productions and children's' theatre. Workshops and summer programs to expose theatre to others. Storytelling: from children to adults.

Watching like a critic. Observing the full-spectrum of a production. Social commentary or fun. Deciding on the purpose of the production. Overall evaluation.

Production. Public Relations and promotion materials. The elements of staging a production: stage plays, concert performance, and mixed performances. Review the purpose for a production and preparation. Beginnings of stage management: theatre is a business. Purpose, character, scene, mood, experience. View and critique various plays on film.

Theatre Elements Reviews 9: Show a promotional tool and how it is used. Is it effective?

10--- **Act 10: *Dinner With Friends* and/or *Death of a Salesman* (Reviews for everyone)**
Theatre Elements Reviews 10: Discuss your favorite scene
Presentations of Final Project