History of Theatre
Thea 3720/3725 Fall 2019
Department of Theatre | University of Utah
T, Th/12:25 PM – 1:45 PM Performing Arts Building (PAB) 103

Instructor: Mark Fossen, MFA
Pronouns: he/him/his
Email: mark.fossen@utah.edu
Phone/Text: 801.380.4987
Office Hours: T, Th/3:30 PM – 4:30 PM or by appointment (Location TBD)

Course Description
This is the first semester in a two-semester course tracing the history of theatre and performance in societies all over the globe. Through lectures, discussions, and readings students explore the unique problems of studying history of a transitory art form; examine possible origins of theatre; study relationship between societies and their theatres from 500 BCE through 1650 CE. Students conduct individual research and produce papers discussing their findings. Theatre Core Requirement.

Credit Hours: 3 units

Course Objectives/Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will:

• Recognize and understand key theatrical movements, performance practices, and practitioners from about 25 B.C.E. to about 1650 CE.

• Conduct independent research in the field of theatre history in order to inform their own work as artists, technicians, scholars, critics, or audience members. This includes:
  o Defining a research topic and developing an effective search strategy.
  o Collecting evidence by using library catalogs and databases.
  o Evaluating evidence for authority, biases, absences, and relevance.
  o Construct a narrative that explains historical research findings in context.

• Communicate their understanding of theatre history, and its application to current theatrical practice and thought.

Teaching Methods
• Students generally prepare for class by reading the textbook and/or a play.
• Preparation will be measured by regular knowledge-based quizzes.
• Classes will consist of lecture, discussion, writing prompts, small group activities, watching and discussing performances, and other activities.

Required Texts
• The following plays, all free and available in Canvas as PDF:
  o *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus
  o *Thyestes*, Seneca
  o *Atsumori*, Seami
  o *Gallicanus*, Hrosvitha
  o *Everyman*, Anonymous
  o *Mandragola*, Machiavelli
  o *Macbeth*, Shakespeare
  o *Life is a Dream*, Calderon
  o *Tartuffe*, Molière

**Evaluation Methods**

**Participation:** (20% of final grade) This course is designed to incorporate substantial in-class lectures, discussions, and activities for which you will need to be present and actively participating. According to the attendance policy, you are allotted 3 absences before this portion of your grade will be affected. *Please see the section on Attendance in the class policies. In addition, should you be non-participatory in class you will receive 3 warnings before your grade starts to be deducted.

**Quizzes:** (20% of final grade) Quizzes measure preparation for class and are based on readings. They test basic knowledge. These closed-book, short, multiple-choice quizzes generally occur at the top of class and are listed in the schedule. If you are not in class that day, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me to make up the quiz within one week.

**Exams:** (20% of final grade) There will be one midterm exam and a comprehensive final exam, consisting of multiple-choice answers and short essay questions.

**Assignment: Study Guide:** (20% of final grade) You will create a 5-page study guide for college-age students (or upon prior approval, another readership you may prefer) attending the play of your choice from ones covered in the first half of class (*Prometheus Bound*, *Thyestes*, *Atsumori*, *Gallicanus*, *Everyman*). The study guide provides historical background to help the audience understand and enjoy the play. It will include footnotes or in-text citations and a list of works cited. All study guides must include the following:
  1. author biography & play history
  2. introduction to relevant theatre history
  3. a glossary of important terms and concepts
  4. discussion questions appropriate for high school class attending a production of this play
  5. a comprehensive MLA-style Works Cited

The final document should follow a unified style and layout (that is, consistent fonts, margins, etc.) and look professional, including graphics and design. It must be submitted electronically through Canvas.

**Assignment: Why This Play Now:** (20% of final grade) You are responsible for pitching a play for production to a local or national theatre. In preparation for your pitch, you must write a letter that provides an overview of the play's history, explains its relevance to local audiences today, and explains how this particular play is an appropriate choice for the theatre you have selected. You may pick any
play that was written in the periods and places covered this semester, though you may not use a play we have read in class. All pitch documents must include the following:

1. a cover letter, no longer than a page
   a. a clear overview, addressed to your producer;

2. production history
   a. where was the original production and what was the nature of that production
   b. who worked on it—including the playwright
   c. what was the play’s likely significance to its first audience
   d. have there been any other later important productions

3. a brief synopsis of the play’s major action;

4. a discussion of the play’s relevance to an audience today

5. an explanation of how this production would serve the theatre company’s specific mission

6. MLA-style Works Cited

It must be submitted electronically through Canvas.

Honors Students, at semester’s end, will give a live version of their WTPN pitch, including feedback and questions from the theatre’s board (your classmates). This presentation may involve creative elements (a display of original designs), or it may be more formal (such as a PowerPoint presentation). Each honors student will meet with the professor by the Thanksgiving break to discuss the final project and to establish assessment criteria. Students must schedule that appointment.

GRADE SCALE

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<td>90-94</td>
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Grading will be determined by a combination of objective and subjective criteria, including attendance and class participation, performance assignments, initiative, creative effort, the quality of your work and your growth over the semester.

NOTE: Please contact me to schedule a meeting at any time during the semester to discuss your grade or any other concerns. I am here to teach, and if you let me know where you’re having trouble I will do my best to help.

Absences
Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences. Each absence after that will lower your final grade by 1/3 letter grade.

*Please note: having a medical excuse does not exempt you from the attendance policy. Each situation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

If an absence, due to extraordinary circumstances including urgent medical appointments, prolonged severe illness, or a major emergency requiring a student’s presence away from the school, occurs that
takes you beyond the two (2) absence per class limit, it is your responsibility to contact me to discuss
the situation and your future in the class.

If there are circumstances that require you to miss class, it is helpful for you to discuss these with me in
advance or as soon as you are aware of the issue that would require you to miss class. This discussion
will not be an excusal of the absence.

LATENESS: 5 minutes late marks you as tardy. Three tardies equals one absence, unless there is a
specific issue you have discussed with me ahead of time. This also pertains to “leaving early”.

Recommended Performances
You need to see the shows we produce, at the very least. Tickets to our productions are free for students with a
valid University ID. I will also notify you during the semester of other local productions you might
want to see, many of which offer discounted student tickets.

Student Evaluations
Course evaluations are completed online. Near the end of the semester, you will receive an e-
mail message that will provide a link to follow in order to complete the evaluation online,
outside of class. Student evaluations provide feedback that is valuable to the instructor, and I
hope that all members of the class will complete this form.

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for the course. Please note that the instructor may modify it at any
time with reasonable notice to students. The instructor may also modify the Schedule at any time to accommodate the needs
of the class. Should you have any questions or concerns about the syllabus, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor
for clarification.
The Americans with Disabilities Act
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct.
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Campus Safety
The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Diversity and Inclusivity
It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language
If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (http://writingcenter.utah.edu/); the Writing Program (http://writing-program.utah.edu/); the English Language Institute (http://continue.utah.edu/eli/). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.
LGBT Resource Center
If you are a member of the LGBTQ community, I want you to know that my classroom is a safe zone. Additionally, the U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Oplin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: http://lgbt.utah.edu/. Please also let me know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

Student Names and Personal Pronouns
Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name as well as "Preferred first name" (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account, which can be managed at any time). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class or on assignments. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun are respected.

Veterans Center
If you are a student veteran, the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center located in Room 161 in the Oplin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/. Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

Wellness
Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.