

THTR 101-02 - Living Theatre
Tues/Thurs 2:30-3:50p
Kupfrian Hall, Rm 110

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Course Description

An introduction to the basic elements of theater through an examination of the roles of the playwright, director, designer, and actor. The focus is exploring the world of theater and becoming familiar with the elements the work together to create it.

Course Objective

We will do that by reading five plays of differing styles and length, performing monologues and scenes, seeing two productions and writing an opinion paper on each, completing a quiz after each play, and writing a research paper.

Course Outcome

By the end of the semester, students will be able to

- identify basic play structure including theme, dramatic question, turning points, and climax of each play;
- explore the historical and social dynamics of each play at the time it was written;
- discuss the complicated relationships and human condition inherent in each play;
- easily discuss the elements that make up a theatrical production;
- read sides from a play in a confident manner;
- observe and critique live theatre productions;
- write a play production proposal.

Class Policies

Attendance: Attendance is important for this course as most of the coursework will be discussions happening in class. Lateness and unexcused absences will be reflected in your grade. To get absences excused, a note is needed from the Dean of Students. If there are mitigating circumstances, contact me before the class you will miss. If you are running late, please text me to let me know. If you are feeling sick, please do not attend class in-person. Email me 2 hours before class for a zoom link, and you can attend remotely. You cannot attend remotely for any reason other than being sick.

Participation: For this class you will be asked to read out loud in class and do some acting. While I do not expect it to be award-winning caliber, I do expect you to make an effort.

Consent and Respect: I actively cultivate a room that is welcome for everyone and is grounded in consent. Consent may be given and revoked at any time. Disrespect towards your peers will not be tolerated. If a misstep or action has occurred that makes you feel unsafe or disrespected, please let me know and I will address it.

Anti-Racism: I acknowledge that racism is systemically a part of our culture and am doing my best to dismantle these practices where I find them. We will be addressing issues of race within this course. I welcome any and all feedback about ways I can be more effective in this process.

Land Acknowledgment: We acknowledge that NJIT and Rutgers University are located on stolen land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, specifically the Lenni-Lenape. While many Lenni-Lenape people were forcibly removed from their homelands, they are still an active part of New Jersey culture and society. To learn more about the Lenni-Lenape people, visit nanticoke-lenape.info

Questions/Concerns: If you have a question or concern you are not comfortable communicating to me directly, please use the “Anonymous Question Form” in Canvas and I will respond to question or concern at the next class for everyone.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty. If you have mitigating circumstances that prevented you from completing an assignment, please reach out to me so we can discuss options. Letters from the Dean of Students may negate any penalties.

Honor Code: “Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>. Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu” **Using AI or ChatGPT on written assignments can and will be considered plagiarism.**

Texts

Vietgone by Qui Nguyen

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare (provided on Canvas)

Chicago By Fred Kander and John Ebb (provided on Canvas)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime adapted by Simon Stephens (provided on Canvas)

Topdog/Underdog by Suzan-Lori Parks (provided on Canvas)

Additional Plays (provided on Canvas)

Additional Costs

~\$45-50 for ticket to see *Chicago* on Broadway (If you have a cost barrier, come talk to me.)

\$15/ea - Tickets for NJIT Production of *Legally Blonde* (2/28-3/3) and *Closing Night Party: The Alumni Project* (4/17-4/21)

Assignments

Performances: You are required to see 2 live performances and write a 2-3 page analysis paper for each one. This paper should not be a summary of the show, but rather an analysis of what you noticed about the show. What elements stood out to you? What do you think was done well? What was not done well? Is there anything that surprised you in the show? And finally, did you like it? Why or why not?

Quizzes: At the conclusion of each play, there will be an in-class quiz to assess your familiarity with the play. If you are absent the day of the quiz and have a note from the Dean of Students, you can make it up, but it must be within one week of the original quiz date.

Monologue: Choose a monologue of 10-20 lines from *Much Ado About Nothing*. This will be performed in class. It must be memorized, performed from a standing position, and acted to the best of your abilities.

Acting Scene: You will perform a 2-3 minute (2-3 page scene) with a partner. This can be a scene from a play we have worked on in class or a scene from another play you have found. If this is a scene from another play, you will need to read that play in its entirety to make sure you understand the context of the scene. These scene choices must be approved by me before they are performed. They should be completely memorized. You will need to plan on rehearsing outside of class for at least 2 hours.

Final Project: You will read a play, and then write a 4-5 page proposal paper on it about how you would stage it. The paper should include background on the play itself and an analysis of the script and characters, as well as pictures of design elements for your imagined production of the play.

Extra Credit: Work a minimum of 5 hrs on *Legally Blonde* in some capacity. You can help with sets, costumes, lighting, ushering (2 performances), etc. This will earn you an additional 3% for your grade.

Grading Breakdown

Attendance/Participation 35%

Play Reviews - 10%

Quizzes - 20%

Monologue - 10%

Acting Scene - 10%

Final Project - 15%

Grade Scale

A : 90%<

B+ : 88% - 89%

B: 80% - 87%

C+: 78% - 79%

C: 70% - 77%

D: 60% - 69%

F: > 60%

Schedule

Syllabus subject to change.

1/16 - Introduction and Welcome

1/18 - Basics of Plays

1/23 - *Much Ado About Nothing* - Act 1

1/25 - *Much Ado About Nothing* - Act 2

1/30 - *Much Ado About Nothing* - Act 3

2/1 - *Much Ado About Nothing* - Act 4, **Monologue Choice Due**

2/6 - *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act 5 - Quiz/Wrap-Up

2/8 - Perform Monologues In Class

2/13 - *Topdog/Underdog* - Intro pg 1-41

2/15 - *Topdog/Underdog* pg 42-86

2/20 - *Topdog/Underdog* pg 86-115

2/22 - *Topdog/Underdog* - Quiz/Wrap-up, *Chicago* - Intro/pg. 9-28

2/27 - *Chicago* - pg. 29-55

Legally Blonde - 2/28-3/3, Jim Wise Theatre, Kupfrian Hall, \$15

2/29 - *Chicago* - pg. 57-70

3/5 - *Chicago* - pg. 71-91, *Chicago* - Quiz/Wrap-up

3/7 - Theatre Design - Sets and Costumes, **1st Performance Analysis Paper Due**

Spring Break 3/11-3/15

3/19 - Acting With A Partner, **Acting Scene Choice Due**

3/21 - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* - Intro/pg. 5-18

3/26 - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* - pg. 18-37,

3/28 - In-Class Rehearsal Time, **Final Project Play Choice Due**

4/2 - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* - pg. 38-55

4/4 - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* - pg. 55-73, Quiz/Wrap Up

4/9 - **Perform Acting Scenes In Class, Initial Statement for Final Project Due**

4/11 - *Vietgone* - Intro/pg 9-37

4/16 - *Vietgone* - pg 38-55, **Rough Draft of Final Project Due**

Closing Night Party: The Alumni Project 4/17-4/21, Black Box Theater, 110 Warren St. - \$15

4/18 - *Vietgone* - pg. 57-72, In Class Peer Review of Final Project

4/23 - *Vietgone* - pg. 73-98, Quiz/Wrap-Up, **Final Project Due**

4/25 - **Final Project Presentation**, Final Class Wrap-Up

5/7 - **2nd Performance Analysis Paper Due** (no class)

5/8 - **LAST DAY TO SUBMIT LATE WORK**