Worcester State University

TH 191-EL

Introduction to Theatre

Spring 2017

Professor: Sam O’Connell
Office: LRC 325
Office Hours: By appointment and available via Skype, Google Hangout/GChat, or in person
Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00-11:00am

Contact Information:
Email: soconnell7@worcester.edu
Phone: (508) 929-8254

Required Texts

Theatrical Worlds by Charlie Mitchell
Boeing Boeing by Marc Camoletti

Course Description

This course will provide you with an overview of world theatre history and practice. Readings will cover aspects of production such as acting, directing, design, and playwriting, as they are practiced throughout the world. We will examine how theatre traditions have been created, as well as how they adapted, especially in our contemporary global community.

In this course, we will pursue some fundamental questions: What is theatre? Why and how do artists make theatre? Why and how do we attend and study theatre? How does theatre influence, shape, transform, and enrich our identities? How is theatre influential in the shaping of our culture, and how does our culture shape our theatre? We will pay particular attention to different cultural exchanges in theatre and our discussions will be framed with a world and multicultural viewpoint.

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to Theatre as a performing art from the perspectives of a critic, an audience member, and a creative artist. By the end of this course you will be able to:

- answer questions about the many components and relationships of theatre including theatrical space and design, acting and character, script and performance, theatre audiences and performers, etc.
- understand the relationships between Drama, Theatre, and Performance in a global and historical context
- investigate the multiple definitions and forms of Theatre in our contemporary culture.

You will also be able to read and write about theatre and performance in a critical way while taking into account both the theatrical potential of a dramatic work and the unique performance elements of any production.

Required Materials

This course requires access and use of the following additional materials:

- Access to a computer and the internet
- Registration with Google Classroom
This course also requires your attendance at two on-campus events and one off-campus event that take place outside of class time:

- *Almost Maine*, Fuller Theatre, March 2-5 (Admission for students is $7.00. There may be opportunities to see the show for free in exchange for volunteering as an usher.)
- *Boeing, Boeing*, Fuller Theatre, April 27-30 (Admission for students is $7.00. There may be opportunities to see the show for free in exchange for volunteering as an usher.)

**Meeting Times and Deadlines**

This online course is an asynchronous course, which means that you can complete the materials on your own timeline within each week’s scheduled material, provided that the due dates for any assignments, quizzes, and readings are met. Also, since this is a summer session course, we are fitting a full semester’s worth of material into six weeks. This means that some weeks there is a fair amount of reading as well as weekly deadlines for reading quizzes and discussion board forums. Here is an overview of how meeting times and deadlines will work in this course:

- Lectures: Except for the first week of the course, each week’s lecture notes, supplementary materials, and reading quizzes will post on Google Classroom (or in the Classroom’s Drive Folder) by the end of the day on Mondays.
- Reading Quizzes: Each week you will be expected to complete the reading quizzes for the assigned reading. The quizzes will be Google Forms posted on Google Classroom and will be due each Sunday at 11:59pm. If there are any questions on meeting times and expected deadlines, please let me know.
- Class Discussions: Each week I will post one or more questions on the stream in our Google Classroom which will serve as the foundation for our class discussion. Discussions for this course consist of two categories of posts: primary posts and response posts. Primary posts are your own individual answer to the posted question. Secondary posts are your responses to mine or your classmates’ answers. Each week you are responsible for one primary post and at least two response posts.

**Course Policies**

**Netiquette:**

"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the do's and don'ts of online communication. Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and the informal "rules of the road" of cyberspace. This page provides links to both summary and detail information about Netiquette for your browsing pleasure. (from, http://www.albion.com/netiquette/)
Since this is an online course, everyone in the class needs to be aware of what will and will not be acceptable for course communication. In our communications, everyone must be respectful. Also, it is expected that everyone will adhere to the university’s policies on harassment and discrimination.

“Attendance”
Since this is an online course, the only way I have to gauge your attendance is through your ability to meet the deadlines for all assignments. Attendance is a requirement for this course. If for some reason you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, you need to let me know at least 1 day before the assignment is due so that we can make appropriate alternative arrangements if necessary.

Google Classroom
This course will use Google Classroom as our online course management system. All relevant assignments and announcements will be posted to our Google Classroom, as well as any additional required readings not available in the bookstore. All communication with you will be sent through Google Classroom, so please make sure you check the stream regularly.

Discussion Posts
Discussion posts are a very important part of this course. As a guide for my expectations of your responses, please take note of the following examples:

Bad: “Ditto!”

Mediocre: “I think you make a really good point. I agree.”

Good: “That’s an interesting idea; I hadn’t thought of that. The ways in which PLAY A and PLAY B from this period communicate to their audiences have a lot more in common than I thought.

Great: “Your point about the interpretation of PLAY A does a really nice job of linking the historical information to the plot of the story. It reminds me of a similar case in the way PLAY B serves to communicate to the socio-cultural context of the audience at that time. Are there other examples that we can think of?”

As you can see, bad responses simply echo earlier posts, while great responses further the conversation and provide responses to the discussion up to this point. It is not simply a matter of quantity; quality of responses is the most important.

Readings
For this course, there are multiple types of readings including a theatre textbook, play excerpts that will be posted as PDFs on Google Classroom, and other additional critical resources that will be posted as PDFs under course materials in the “About” section of the Google Classroom. For your success in this course, it is important to complete and stay up to date on the readings. Please note that the reading quizzes only draw on information in the textbook chapters.
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Academic Honesty:
Please review the university’s policies on Academic Honesty.
http://www.worcester.edu/Academic-Policies/

Academic Support Services:
Please review the support services available to you on campus:
http://www.worcester.edu/Academic-Support-Services/

Late Work:
Late work will be accepted, but late work will have a full letter grade deducted for each week that it is late. Work more than three weeks late will not be accepted.

Grading Policy
A Superior work demonstrating student’s ability to engage the materials in a stimulating, creative, and insightful manner; clearly written with no, or minimal, typographical or grammatical errors
B Completion of requirements demonstrating student’s understanding of materials and ability to apply knowledge; minor writing and/or conceptual problems
C Moderate completion of assignment requirements; lacks clear writing or has significant conceptual problems, and/or is inadequately proof-read
D Unsatisfactory work; failure to engage with most of materials presented; unfocused discussion; failure to meet majority of requirements of the assignment
F Failed to complete/turn-in assignment; does not fulfill any requirements.

Assignments
Reading Quizzes (20 Percent): For each chapter in Theatrical Worlds, you will be asked to take an online reading quiz. Quizzes will be posted on Google Classroom and will be due each week on Sundays at 11:59pm. Quizzes are open book and open notes. Our first quiz will be due February 5.

Discussion Posts (20 Percent): In an online course, discussion posts are equivalent to attending class and participation in classroom discussion, therefore participation is mandatory. Each week there will be one or more questions. This assignment requires one primary post, which responds to the prompts/questions for the thread that I post. For weeks when there is more than one question, you will be expected to write a primary post for each question, but you can spread your minimum of two response posts across the questions. You are, of course, welcome to write more than 3 posts, but your grade will be based on your 3 best posts.

Performance Review (20 percent): During the semester, each student will be required to read and attend the play Boeing, Boeing. Upon seeing the production, you will be asked to write a performance review that responds to the live production’s interpretation of the scripted materials. Specific questions for this review will be handed out later in the semester.
Creative Concept (20 percent): After we have read chapters 2-6 in *Theatrical Worlds* on the subject of Theatrical Production, you will be expected to apply those skills towards the creation of your own creative concept for *Boeing, Boeing*. This assignment will expect you to think as a director, an actor, and a designer of set, costume, and lights. More specific information on this assignment will be posted after we read *Boeing, Boeing* in class.

Final Project (30 Percent): The final project for this course will be introduced after spring break. It will require you to take into account our readings and discussions to do your own creative project based on your reading, analysis, and interpretation of a play you select from a list provided by me. This project will require you to be able to read and analyze a play and be able to think creatively about how and why you will stage the play for a live audience. The project will include two components: the creative project itself and a reflective essay in which you talk about your process.

Course Schedule
Each week except for the first week will start on Mondays. Please note that for each week where it says “Read” for any chapter, I expect you to look at all supplementary material for that chapter that may include lecture notes, video clips, play excerpts, etc. For the sake of the course schedule, “Read” is an umbrella term that means look at all online material related to the main reading/chapter.

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<th>WK</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Schedule</th>
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| 1  | W   | 1/18 | Register in Google Classroom  
Introduce yourself |
| 2  | M   | 1/23 | Read “Mapping Reality: An Introduction to Theatre” in *Theatrical Worlds*, pages 3-24  
Complete Reading Quiz #1  
Answer 1st set of Discussion Question |
| 3  | M   | 1/30 | Read “Mapping Reality: An Introduction to Theatre” in *Theatrical Worlds*, pages 24-46  
Complete Reading Quiz #2  
Answer 2nd set of Discussion Question |
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<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Read “EF’s Visit to a Small Planet” by Elinor Fuchs (Available online) Read <em>Boeing, Boeing</em> by Marc Camoletti (Available online) Complete Reading Quiz #3 Answer 3rd set of Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Read “Acting” in <em>Theatrical Worlds</em> Complete Reading Quiz #4 Answer 4th set of Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>Read “Directing” in <em>Theatrical Worlds</em> Complete Reading Quiz #5 Answer 5th set of Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/27</td>
<td>Read “Set Design” in <em>Theatrical Worlds</em> Complete Reading Quiz #6 Answer 6th set of Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>Read “Costume Design” in <em>Theatrical Worlds</em> Complete Reading Quiz #7 Answer 7th set of Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>Read “Lighting Design” in <em>Theatrical Worlds</em> Complete Reading Quiz #8 Answer 8th set of Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3/27</td>
<td><strong>Creative Concept for Boeing, Boeing Due 4/2</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Read “Genre” in <em>Theatrical Worlds</em> Complete Reading Quiz #9 Answer 9th set of Discussion Questions</td>
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| 4/10 | M   | Read “The World of Shakespeare” in *Theatrical Worlds*  
Complete Reading Quiz #10  
Answer 10th set of Discussion Questions |
| 4/17 | M   | Read “The American Musical” in *Theatrical Worlds*  
Complete Reading Quiz #11  
Answer 11th set of Discussion Questions |
| 4/24 | M   | Read “World Theatre” in *Theatrical Worlds*  
Complete Reading Quiz #12  
Answer 12th Set of Discussion Questions  
Attend *Boeing, Boeing* |
| 5/1  | M   | Work on Final Creative Project  
**Performance Review of Boeing, Boeing Due 5/3** |
| 5/8  | M   | Final Creative Project Due 5/10 |