

Department: Dramatic Arts

Course No: 101

Credits: 3

Title: Introduction to Theatre

Contact: David A. Stern

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy: DRAM 101, Introduction to the Theatre, Either semester, Three credits, Analysis of the functions of the theatre artists and their contributions to the modern theatre.

Course Information: a. A brief (2-3 sentences) course description that includes course goals and objectives.

The purpose of Drama 101 is to acquaint non-specialists with the world of the theatre--its history, literature, and artistic techniques--so that they may become well-informed audience members for theatrical productions. Readings, lectures and discussions in these areas will be augmented by attendance at campus theatre productions.

b. Course requirements: Specify exam formats, nature and scope of weekly reading assignments, nature and scope of writing assignments, problem sets, etc.

The formats described below apply to the large sections taught on the Storrs campus. Obviously, due to considerably smaller class size, there is more format flexibility on the regional campuses.

A. EXAM FORMAT: Three exams (2 mid-terms and 1 final) each consisting of fifty multiple-choice items. Each exam is worth 25% of the final courses grade. Exams cover information provided in textbook, play scripts, lectures, class demonstrations, and live performances of two CRT productions (at which attendance is required) during the semester.

B. PREP SHEETS: During the course of the semester, students will be required to complete and hand in five written assignments or "prep sheets." Each prep sheet consists of a series of questions based on assigned reading. If students read the assignment carefully, they will be able to answer the questions; these writing assignments do not require outside research. Successful completion of prep sheets is worth 25% of the courses grade.

C. REQUIRED TEXTS (on Storrs Campus):

Cohen, Theatre (6th edition, McGraw-Hill); Jacobus, The Compact Bedford Introduction to Drama (4th edition, Bedford/St. Martin's Press); Moliere, Tartuffe, trans. Wilbur (Harcourt Brace).

Readings may be supplemented with photocopied handouts and information posted on the website.

Students are required to read significant portions of the Cohen textbook as well as ten to twelve

play scripts during the course of the semester.

c. List the major themes, issues, topics, etc., to be covered.

DRAMATIC THEORY AND HISTORY

Aristotle and dramatic genres

Greek Tragedy

Greek and Roman Comedy

Medieval Drama

Renaissance Theatre

Modernism

Post Aristotelian Theatre

Contemporary Theatre

FUNCTIONS OF THEATRE ARTISTS

Producing

Playwrighting

Directing

Acting

Design (lighting, scenic, & costume)

Drama Criticism

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: B. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility;

Drama 101 deals not only with the literature of the theatre, but with the historical and societal contexts within which theatre was created and performed throughout the ages. Through a focus on the development of theatre arts and the dramatic form, students are exposed to a broad range of historical, cultural literary and artistic concepts and constructs.

C. Acquire critical judgement;

D. Acquire moral sensitivity;

Since drama has its roots in religious institutions and rituals, the thematic contents of most plays address both moral and ethical issues. The themes of most dramas involve characters' conflicts over the moral choices they must make. Such issues, within both the scripts and the institutions and societies that gave rise to them, constitute a major portion of the course's content.

E. Acquire awareness of their era and society;

In studying the societal context in which theatre was framed from age to age and society to society, students will be studying many of the roots of western civilization and its development.

F. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience;

Not only will students deal with diversity reflected within the plays of historical and non-Western cultures, but also, during most semesters, the course examines at least one work by a female or minority playwright with (a) major diversity issue(s) as its theme.

CA1 Criteria: A. Investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experience; Lectures and course texts both present a historical/critical perspective on the societies, cultures, and institutions that generated the major theatrical institutions and the works that were performed in them.

B. Inquiries into philosophical and/or political theory; Philosophical and political theories constitute or influence the themes of many of the major works of world theatre that are considered in this courses.

C. Investigations into the modes of symbolic representation; Any study of theatre and drama necessarily explores the use of language (the primary human symbol system) as well as the broader use of “symbolism” within the characters’ interactions and the design of the sets, costumes, and lights.

D. Comprehension and appreciation of written, graphic and/or performance art forms; As stated above, “The purpose of Drama 101 is to acquaint non-specialists with the world of the theatre--its history, literature, and artistic techniques--so that they may become well-informed audience members for theatrical productions. Readings, lectures, and discussions in these areas will be augmented by attendance at campus theatre productions.”

Role of Grad Students: On the Storrs campus, two graduate students are assigned to the 101 professor (Rebecca E. Rumbo, Ph.D.—a long-term adjunct), primarily for logistical and administrative support. On occasions, the graduate assistants direct or act in sample scenes to illustrate principles from the professor’s presentation. Also, the graduate assistants occasionally present short lectures in areas of their own expertise. The sections on regional campuses are small and taught without GAs.