THE 101: Introduction to Theatre

TTR 9:20-10:50 AM **** PH 210

Instructor: TJ Parker-Young, MFA, Adjunct Instructor
Email: thornjyoung@gmail.com
Office Hours: T 11:00 – 11:45AM or by appointment *Subject to Change*

Course Description:
An examination of the process by which dramatic literature becomes theatre. The course examines the forms of comedy, tragedy, and their offshoots as well as the elements of theatre – structure, character, language, scenography – and the styles of theatre with an emphasis on modernism and post-modernism

Westminster Student Outcomes:
1) To reason logically and evaluate critically
2) To communicate effectively
3) To think creatively, and appreciate aesthetic expressions
4) To demonstrate intellectual curiosity
5) To acquire knowledge of self, society, human culture, the natural world, and human relationships to God
6) To apply our knowledge to contemporary issues
7) To demonstrate moral and ethical commitments to neighbor, society, and the natural world
8) To demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and the acquisition of skills for careers and responsible service as world citizens

Course Objectives
1) To develop an awareness and sensitivity in one’s role as an audience member in the theater. (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7)
2) To attend, analyze, and critically evaluate live theater performance(s) (1, 2, 4)
3) Develop an understanding of the role of theatre in society (4, 5, 6)
4) Gain knowledge of the roots of theatre and its historical development (5)
5) To analyze dramatic texts and begin to translate how the written stories become live theatrical productions (1, 3, 6, 7)
6) To practice creative approaches to embodied learning, participating in the “how” of theatre-making (3, 4)
7) Know the basic functions and roles of the actor, director, playwright, and designer in the mounting of a production (4)
8) Participate and understand both the onstage roles and backstage roles involved in developing a production (8)
**Required Texts**

**Grading**
3 (of 4) Exams = 300 points
2 Response Papers = 150 points
8 (of 10) Quizzes = 80
Playwriting Activities & 10 min play = 150
Project part 1 = 120
Project part 2 = 150
Participation = 100

**Total Possible points = 1050**

**Grading Scale**
A: 930-1000
A-: 895-929
B+: 865-894
B: 830-864
B-: 795-829
C+: 765-794
C: 730-764
C-: 695-729
D+: 665-694
D: 630-664
D-: 595-629
F: 0 – 594

**Course Requirements:**

**Exams:**
There will be 4 exams given. They will cover the readings and lectures. While an outline of what the lecture was about will be posted online, it will be missing vital information. Attendance is encouraged to ensure that you are prepared for the exams. **The best 3 exams will count towards your final grade.** Exam format will be multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and short essay.

**Response Papers:**
Each paper will be worth 75 points. You are required to attend a live theatre performance (*Love’s Labour’s Lost*, October 11-14th) and write an analytical response paper on it. IT is to be double-spaced, 12pt font, 2-3 pages, stapled, and the date of the performance noted in the heading. A hard copy must be turned in at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. 10 points will be taken off for every day late. You will be asked to upload your papers to D2L to check for plagiarism, but it does not count as a complete submission until the hard copy is received. You must secure your own tickets; you can acquire your free ticket in advance at [www.tickets.thtrwestminster.org](http://www.tickets.thtrwestminster.org) or at the box office. The *Love’s Labour’s Lost* paper is due **Tuesday, October 16th**.
You are also required to write a self-reflective paper at the end of the semester, responding to the ways in which course material, assignments, live theater performances, and in-class activities relate to your major and possible career interests. This 2-3 pages personal essay is due Wednesday, December 4th (both D2L and hard copy). More specific writing prompts will be posted on D2L well in advance of each due date.

Quizzes:
There will be several announced and unannounced quizzes given over the course of the semester, each worth 10 points, covering readings and previous lectures. They might include multiple choice, true/false, or short essay questions. They may be given at the beginning or end of class. The best 8 quizzes will count towards your final grade.

Playwriting Activities:
Throughout the semester, there will be a series of activities that will focus on the creation of written text for theatre. This will involve brainstorming ideas, in class writings, and group development of an original 10-minute play. You will be broken up into groups of 3-4 to write, develop, rehearse, and present a staged reading of an original 10 minute play as your Final for this course. This will take place during the last class period of the semester, as well as our Final slot.

Project (Parts 1 & 2):
In groups of 3-4, you will propose a production of a never before staged play by a contemporary playwright (the plays will be available on D2L). In part 1 of the project, you will read the play your group has decided to propose and give a break-down of major themes, characters, and plot (to be turned in as a hard copy). In part 2, you will develop a design concept and present your proposals during class time. The concept and details of the project are in Chapter 15 of your textbook. Additional details will be available on D2L within a few weeks of starting the semester.

Groups:
The groups you pick for your project will also be the groups you have for your playwriting assignment. Once your group has been decided, you will create a “theatre company name” that you feel best represents the group of people working together. You will act as a collective, sharing ideas and concepts, dividing up responsibilities, and managing your work together to create your presentations.

Participation:
There will be different in class activities (both inside and outside of class) that will make up your participation points. These might be individual or small group activities, written work and/or discussions. When these chances present themselves, you will be made aware.

Attendance:
You are allowed two absences (excused or unexcused) before your final grade will be affected. For every absence thereafter, your final grade will be reduced by 30 points. For every tardy, your final grade will be reduced by 15 points. If you are coming straight from another class and fear being tardy on a regular basis, please inform the instructor. After 5 absences (or combination of tardies and absences equal to the point value outlined above), the instructor reserves the right to drop a student with an F. If a student has an excused absence it is the student’s responsibility to schedule any and all makeup work within one week of returning to school if they wish to receive.
(possibly partial) credit for the assignment. The instructor reserves the right to reject late assignments; grade deductions will be assigned to any late work that the instructor decides to accept.

**Extra Credit:**
You are welcome to submit up to two additional performance papers for extra credit. You need to get instructor approval of your performance before submitting any extra credit work. You must attach a ticket stub and/or program to the paper, and submit the paper no more than 2 weeks after the performance. Specific instructions for these one-page essays will be posted to D2L. 20 points each. If you participate in a Theatre Westminster or student theater production, you will receive 40 points upon completion of the show.

**Subject Matter:**
Theatre is about depicting and exploring human experiences. Therefore, this course includes content and characters that may conflict with the opinions and beliefs of certain individuals. Remaining enrolled in this course means that you understand that you may encounter what you consider mature and/or controversial subject matter, and that you agree to be civil and professional in discussions and assignments involving such material. If you encounter material which makes you personally uncomfortable to the extent that you do not feel you can adequately engage with this material, you should discuss this with the instructor.

**Notes on Writing Assignments:**
ALL written work MUST be typed, using 12pt, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and with 1-inch margins, STAPLED.
- Double check your work for spelling and grammatical errors, and utilize the Writing Center.
- Please READ and RE-READ your work before turning it in.
- Emailed papers will NOT be accepted.
- Titles of plays, films, and other full-length works must be italicized.
- NO LATE WORK will be accepted. All assignments are due at the BEGINNING of class. (Both a hard copy and dropbox upload on D2L for plagiarism checks).
- I am available during my office hours and by appointment to help you with your written work.

**Schedule:**
*Subject to Change based on class progression of objectives*

**Week of 8/27:** Course Introduction, Theatre Activities.
- Begin Reading *Oedipus Rex* (PDF Provided)
- Read pages 1-23 in Text book (due Sept. 4th)

**Week of 9/3:** Origins of Theatre, Greek Theatre, Theatre As A Mirror of Society, Asian Theatre
- Finish *Oedipus Rex* (due Sept. 6th)
- Quiz on Sept. 6th
- Read pages 374-387 in Text Book (due Sept. 11)

**Week of 9/10:** Dramatic Structure, The Playwright's Vision
- Begin Reading *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*
Week of 9/17: Playwriting
- Finish *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (due Sept. 18th)
- Quiz September 18th
- EXAM 1 (Sept. 20th)
- Read pages 134-161 in Text Book (due Sept. 25th)

Week of 9/24: The Actor, The Director
- Make Groups and Decide on plays for Project Part 1

Week of 10/1: The Designers, Innovations in Dramatic Structure
- Begin Reading *Water By The Spoonful*

Week of 10/8: Playwrighting Activity
- Finish *Water By The Spoonful* (due October 9th)
- Quiz October 9th
- EXAM 2 October 11th

Week of 10/15: Project Part 1
- Love Labour's Lost papers DUE Oct. 16th)
- In class time to work on Projects
- Presentation of projects begins on 10/18
- Read pages 449-475 in Text Book (due Oct. 23rd)

Week of 10/22: Genre and Playwriting Activity
- Begin Reading *And the Soul Shall Dance (Due Nov. 1'*

Week of 10/29: Realism
- NO CLASS OCTOBER 30th (Fall Break)
- Quiz Nov. 1st
- Read pages 209-217, 247-260 in Text Book (due Nov. 6th)

Week of 11/5: Realism (cont.), Playwrighting Activities, Theatricalism
- Exam 3 November 8th
- Begin Reading *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches (Due Nov. 15th)*
- Read pages 285-295, 341-348 in Text Book (due Nov. 13th)

Week of 11/12: Theatricalism (cont), Playwrighting Activities
- Quiz Nov. 15th

Week of 11/19: Project Group Work
- NO CLASS ON Nov. 22nd (Thanksgiving)
- Read pages 349-372 in Text Book (due Nov. 27th)

Week of 11/26: Musical Theatre
- Watch a Musical (undecided at the time)
- Quiz Nov. 28th
Week of 12/3: Wrap up/Play Presentations
- EXAM 4 Dec. 4th
- Display Project Part 2 Dec. 6th
- Begin Play presentations Dec. 6th

Week of 12/10: Finals
- Finish Play presentations

Other important policies:
Submission Format Policy: You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

Accessibility Statement: Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, Director of Disability Support Services, located in 414 Thompson-Clark Hall (724-946-7192, craigfa@westminster.edu). If you have a condition that qualifies you for reasonable accommodation under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), you must have ADA documentation on file with the Student Affairs Office to receive that accommodation.

Safe Zone Statement: The professor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being - regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

***By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand and accept all the professor's policies listed herein.