

**TD 301: INTRODUCTION TO  
THEATRE FOR NON-MAJORS  
FALL 2009, MWF 12-1 PM  
UNIQUE 25605/JESTER A12A**

**Contact Information**

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To reach Carrie or any of the Teaching Assistants by phone, call the Department of Theatre and Dance main office at 471-5793 and leave a message. Please do not attempt to call any members of the teaching team at their homes or on their cell phones.

*Students will be assigned to a TA following the 12<sup>th</sup> day of class. TA assignments will be made according to alphabetical order and will be announced, along with TA office hours, in class and posted to Blackboard.*

**Course Texts**

• **Course Reader** of plays, Available at Abel's Copies, 715 W 23rd St, (512) 472-5353

• **Additional Readings** are posted under Course Documents on BlackBoard

• **Optional\***: *The Essential Theatre (8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> edition)* by Oscar G. Brockett and Robert J. Ball

Available for order at Amazon.com or for purchase at the University Co-Op.

\* Readings from *The Essential Theatre* are suggested as supplementary reading for those students whose learning styles might not favor synthesizing information from lecture. We will not directly discuss any readings from *Essential Theatre* in class, nor will the test questions draw from that text.

\*\* Both *The Essential Theatre* and the Course Packet will be on reserve at the Fine Arts Library.

### **Course Overview:**

This course provides an introduction to the analytical, research and production skills central to the theatre arts and performance studies. Students will read performance texts from a variety of cultures and traditions as well as attending live performances. Lectures provide context from theatre history, theory, and practice to enable nuanced reading and understanding of play texts and performances.

### **Course Goals:**

1. To introduce students to a range of works in the performing arts.
2. To examine these works as expressions of individual or broader human values within an historical, cultural or social context.
3. To develop the analytical skills necessary to articulate an informed critical response to the works being studied.
4. To cultivate aesthetic appreciation through practice or observation of the works being studied.

### **Blackboard**

We will use UT's Blackboard program, an online website where students will be able to read announcements, participate in on-line discussions, and download lost syllabi or other course handouts. To access blackboard:

1. Direct web browsers to <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Note: DO NOT type "www" before the address.
2. Use your UT EID and password to log in.
3. TD 301 will be listed under "courses." Click on "TD301" to access the course site.

See one of the teaching assistants if difficulties arise in reaching or using Blackboard. **All students are responsible for class information posted on the announcements section of Blackboard – check it often!**

Other Important Places on Blackboard: **Course Documents** (required readings) **Assignments** (requirements for essays and blackboard posts) **Discussion Board** (where you submit your blackboard posts)

### **EGradebook**

Course grades will be posted on eGradebook (**NOT BLACKBOARD!**). To check your grades, click the "eGradebook" link on the Blackboard site, or use the following steps to access eGradebook directly:

1. Log onto UTDirect.
2. Select TD301 from your CLIPS menu.
3. On your TD301 page, select "eGradebook."

Grades will be posted within three days of quizzes or exams. Allow two weeks for essay grades and blackboard posts. If your grade is not posted within this time frame, please contact your **assigned teaching assistant**. Note: Until a grade has been entered, it will appear as a zero.

**Course Grade**

|                                         |                    |             |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Quizzes (7 @ 40 points each)            | 280 points         | 28%         |
| Exam 1                                  | 180                | 18%         |
| Exam 2                                  | 180                | 18%         |
| Exam 3                                  | 180                | 18%         |
| Blackboard post 1 (Play Analysis)       | 50                 | 5%          |
| Blackboard Post 2 (Research Assignment) | 50                 | 5%          |
| Audience Experience Essay               | 80                 | 8%          |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>1000 points</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| <b>Total Points</b> | <b>Grade</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 900-1000            | A            |
| 800-899             | B            |
| 700-799             | C            |
| 600-699             | D            |
| 0-599               | F            |

A student’s final grade for the class will be determined by dividing the total number of points earned over the course of the semester by 1000 (the total possible points).

**Assignments**

**Quizzes**

Students will take 8 multiple choice quizzes over the course of the semester. Only 7 quiz grades will be used in calculating the final course grade. If you take all 8 quizzes, that means that you actually will have the possibility of earning 1040 points in the course, but your final course grade will still be determined by dividing by 1000. Please note that NO quiz grades will be dropped from your point total; instead, you have the opportunity to earn some extra points. Also, if you take all the quizzes, 40 extra points are possible but not automatic; if you only earn a grade of 20/40 on the 8<sup>th</sup> quiz, you will only have taken advantage of 20 extra credit points.

Quizzes may take place at any time during the class period; please note that **late students will not be permitted to make up quizzes**. Students may make up quizzes missed for officially approved reasons only (see attendance policy below), and, in such cases, students must provide **appropriate documentation** of the reason for their absence. To make up a quiz missed due to a pre-arranged absence, students must **notify their assigned TA at least 10 days prior to the absence** and provide appropriate documentation at that time. Please notify us **immediately** for quizzes missed due to documented illness. All quizzes must be made up prior to the next quiz or exam.

### Exams

Students will take 3 multiple choice exams over the course of the semester. These exams will include material taken directly from the lectures; they will also contain questions that require you to draw connections between the material covered in lectures and the required essays and plays we have read. Exams missed for officially approved reasons (see attendance policy) may be made up with appropriate documentation within 1 week. To make up an exam missed due to a pre-arranged absence, students must **notify their assigned TA 10 days prior to the absence.**

### Blackboard Posts

- 1) Play Analysis: Each student will be assigned a play from the required readings and will post a short response to Blackboard (assignments will be posted to Blackboard after the 12<sup>th</sup> class day). **Posts must be made to the correct Blackboard Discussion thread by 5 pm on the day before the play will be discussed** (as indicated on the syllabus). See Assignments under Blackboard for the Post requirements. **Students will receive credit only for posts on their assigned play.**
- 2) Research Assignment: Each student will research an aspect of the play *Angels in America*. Students will submit a link to their source material and a brief description of how the research informs his or her understanding of the play. See Assignments under Blackboard for post requirements. **Posts must be made to the correct Blackboard Discussion thread by 5 pm on Thursday November 12<sup>th</sup>.**

### Audience Experience Essay

Students are required to see at least one of the following productions from the UT Main Stage Season and submit an Audience Experience Essay (see Assignments under Blackboard for the Audience Experience Essay requirements). Essays should be passed in as a hard copy to your TA on the due dates marked on the syllabus:

*The Psyche Project*  
Sept. 10, 11, 12 at 8pm  
Sept 12 at 2pm

Oscar G. Brockett Theatre  
Free  
Essay Due: Sept 18th

*There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom*  
October 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 at 8:00 p.m.  
October 3, 4, 11 at 2:00 p.m.

Oscar G. Brockett Theatre  
Tickets \$20/\$17/\$15  
Essay Due: Oct 14th

*The Trojan Women*  
October 30, 31 & November 3, 4, 5, 6 at 8:00 p.m.  
October 31 & November 1, 8 at 2:00 p.m.

Oscar G. Brockett Theatre  
Tickets \$20/\$17/\$15  
Essay Due: Nov 11th

*Pride and Prejudice*  
November 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20 at 8:00 p.m.  
November 15, 22 at 2:00 p.m.

B. Iden Payne Theatre  
Tickets \$20/\$17/\$15  
Essay Due: Nov 23rd

### **Extra-Credit Essays**

Students have the option of submitting two extra-credit performance reviews. A list of acceptable venues for extra-credit performances and the requirements for the essay are posted under Assignments on blackboard.

### **Scholastic Dishonesty:**

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services website.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend every class meeting prepared to participate. If you are absent for any reason – excused or unexcused – you are still responsible for all material covered in class. **TA's will not provide class notes to students.**

Quizzes and exams may only be made up in the event of an emergency (documented illness, death in the family, etc.), or pre-arranged absences (religious holidays, athletic events, conferences, weddings, etc.). Absences due to religious holidays must be arranged in accordance with the University of Texas at Austin Student Handbook. All make-ups (including those due to illness) must be accompanied with appropriate documentation and completed prior to the next scheduled quiz or within one week, as indicated above. Make-up quizzes and exams may differ in form and content from those given in class.

Please note that **traffic, car troubles, oversleeping, and missed busses are not excused absences** and students who miss a quiz or exam for one of these reasons **will not be allowed** to make them up. Out of fairness to all students, no exceptions will be made to this policy.

**Students with disabilities** may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

**A Note on Course Content:** *Theatre, historically and currently, deals with complex and controversial issues; it is often challenging and at times uncomfortable. It would therefore be impossible to offer a meaningful Introduction to Theatre that did not engage, at times, with potentially difficult issues including religion, gender, race, sexuality, class, violence, and politics. Many of us will have different responses to the plays we read, and that is an excellent thing; in our discussions, all thoughtfully and respectfully expressed viewpoints are welcome and encouraged. However, no one will be excused from reading, attending, or discussing a play based on its content. Students who are concerned about the content of this class or their ability to complete the required readings should contact the instructor before the 12th class day.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

\*(ET) refers to optional readings in *The Essential Theatre*; (CP) refers to readings in the course packet; (BB) refers to readings posted under Course Documents on blackboard.

### WEEK ONE

*W Aug 26* Introduction and Syllabus

*F Aug 28* Theatre Studies and Performance Studies: useful terms and ideas

### WEEK TWO

*M Aug 31* Elements of Drama

- **Required:** *Trifles* (BB) “EF’s Visit to a Small Planet” (BB)
- (Strongly)Suggested: Chapter 3 p37-54 (ET also posted on BB)

*W Sep 2* Realism

- **Required:** Handout on Realism (BB)
- Suggested: 145-157 (ET)

*F Sep 4* Away from Realism: Modernist Movements

- **Required:** Excerpts from “Manifesto of Surrealism” (BB)
- Suggested: 161-174, 203-207 (ET)

### WEEK THREE

*M Sep 7* Labor Day: NO CLASS

*W Sep 9* *True West*

**QUIZ #1**

- **Required:** *True West* (CP)
- Bring a #2 Pencil

*F Sep 11* Greek Theatre

- Suggested: 56-72 (ET)

### WEEK FOUR

*M Sep 14* Brechtian Theatre

- **Required:** Excerpts: “A Short Organum for the Theatre” (BB)  
Handout on Brechtian Theatre (BB)
- Suggested: 177-181 (ET)

*W Sep `16* Feminist Theatre/Gender and Performance

- Suggested: 245-248

*F Sep 18* *How I Learned to Drive*

**QUIZ #2**

- **Required:** *How I Learned to Drive* (CP)
- Bring a #2 Pencil

**\*Essays Due for *Psyche Project***

### WEEK FIVE

*M Sep 21* Latino/a Theatre

- Suggested: 236-240 (ET)

W Sep 23 El Teatro Campesino  
**•Required:** “El Teatro Campesino:An Interview with LuisValdez”(BB)

F Sep 25 *Zoot Suit* and REVIEW **QUIZ #3**  
**• Required:** *Zoot Suit* (CP)  
**• Bring a #2 Pencil**

**WEEK SIX**

M Sep 28 **EXAM 1**  
**• Bring a #2 Pencil and your UT ID**

W Sep 30 Roots of American “Popular” Entertainment: Melodrama  
**• Suggested:** 133-145 (ET)

F Oct 2 Blackface Minstrelsy

**WEEK SEVEN**

M Oct 5 Vaudeville and Burlesque

W Oct 7 Musical Theatre

F Oct 9 Dance in the Americas

**WEEK EIGHT**

M Oct `12 African American Theatre Part 1  
**• Suggested:** 230-236 (ET)

W Oct `14 African American Theatre Part 2  
**•Required:** “The Ground on Which I Stand” and “Subsidized Separatism” (BB)

**\*Essays Due for *There’s a Boy in the Girl’s Bathroom***

F Oct 16 *Fences* **QUIZ #4**  
**• Required:** *Fences* (CP)  
**• Bring a #2 Pencil**

**WEEK NINE**

M Oct 19 Asian and Asian American Performance  
**• Suggested:** 240-243 (ET)

W Oct 21 Noh and Kabuki Theatre  
**•Suggested:** 253-260

F Oct 23 *36 Views* **QUIZ #5**  
**• Required:** *36 Views* (CP)  
**• Bring a #2 Pencil**

**WEEK TEN**

M Oct 26 Exam #2  
**• Bring a #2 Pencil and your UT ID**

W Oct 28 Genres: Comedy  
**•Suggested** 111-118 (ET)

F Oct 30 Improvisation

**WEEK ELEVEN**

M Nov 2 Community Based Theatre  
• **Required:** “Interview with Jan Cohen-Cruz” and excerpts from  
“Local Acts” (BB)

W Nov 4 Documentary Theatre

F Nov 6 *The Laramie Project* **QUIZ #6**  
• **Required:** *The Laramie Project* (CP)  
• Bring a #2 Pencil

**WEEK TWELVE**

M Nov 9 Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Theatre  
• **Required:** “Lesbian and Gay Drama” by Jill Dolan (BB)

W Nov 11 Dramaturgs and Play Development  
• **Suggested:** 302-308 (ET)

\*Audience Experience Due for *Trojan Women*

\*Research Assignments posted to BB by 5pm Thursday Nov 12<sup>th</sup>

F Nov 13 *Angels in America* **QUIZ #7**  
• **Required:** *Angels in America* (CP)  
• Bring a #2 Pencil

**WEEK THIRTEEN**

M Nov 16 Theatre of the Oppressed  
• **Required:** Excerpt: *Theatre of the Oppressed* (BB)

W Nov 18 The Jazz Aesthetic  
• **Required:** “Elements of Style” (BB)

F Nov 20 Solo Performance

**WEEK FOURTEEN**

M Nov 23 *sista docta* **QUIZ #8**  
• **Required:** *sista docta* (CP)  
• Bring a #2 Pencil

\*Audience Experience Essay Due *Pride and Prejudice*

W Nov 25 TBA

\*Last Day an Extra Credit Essay can be submitted

F Nov 27 Thanksgiving Holiday: NO CLASS

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

M Nov 30 Performance Art

W Dec 2 Site Specific Performance and Wrap Up

F Dec 4 Exam #3 (Final Exam)

• Bring a #2 Pencil and your UT ID

*The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus at any time during the course of the semester.*



