

THE 1041: INTRODUCTION TO THEATER ARTS
Baruch College, Vertical Campus 7-150
Fall 2018, T/Th 2:30 – 3:45 PM

Professor: **Dr. Debra Caplan** (debra.caplan@baruch.cuny.edu)
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-5 PM, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the art of theater. We will examine how theatrical productions are developed via artistic collaborations between writers, actors, directors, designers, producers, and audience members. Students will read plays and theater reviews, attend theatrical productions, and participate in workshops and conversations with guest artists. Attendance at professional performances in New York City outside of class is a required part of the course.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the basic components of live theatrical performance
- Indicate how these elements produce an effect on audiences
- Explain practical aspects of creating, participating in, and attending theater
- Critically analyze a script
- Distinguish between different dramatic genres and historical periods
- Navigate New York City’s theater scene
- Form an opinion on a work’s value from various perspectives (aesthetic, social, political, etc.), and support that opinion with examples
- Articulate how theater is understood and created differently in cultures around the world

GRADING

Attendance (10%)	10 points
Performance Reviews (2) (20%)	20 points
Production Team Project (20%)	20 points
Unit Tests (3) (30%)	30 points
Final Exam (20%)	20 points
Total possible:	100 points

THEATERGOING REQUIREMENT

All students will be required to attend and review **two** theater productions of their choice. This production may be anywhere in NYC or beyond, but it *must* be live. Circus, vaudeville, and other forms of popular theatrical entertainment can count at the instructor’s discretion; stand-up comedy and music concerts do not.

EXTRA CREDIT: You may earn extra credit for attending **up to two** additional theater productions of your choice. Each performance is worth 1 point extra credit. To receive credit, you must write a two-page (minimum) analysis of what you saw and how it relates to the topics covered in this course. A ticket stub and playbill MUST be attached. Extra credit must be submitted by the last day of class.

REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

A) Attendance (10%)

Attendance is required and will be taken at each class session. You are permitted two absences without penalty. After that, you will lose 1 point for every subsequent absence, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Students may also be deemed “absent” for rude or disruptive behavior and for inappropriate use of electronics.

Lateness Policy: Arriving late or leaving class early will count as a lateness. For every three latenesses, you will lose one point from your attendance grade.

Attendance will be taken at the instructor’s discretion. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be marked absent. The doors to the classroom lock automatically, and I will not admit students who arrive later than 2:50. If you must miss class, you are responsible for all work due and assigned on that day. Assignments not turned in due to an absence will be considered late.

As per Baruch’s attendance policy, you are only permitted **four** total absences for the semester unless there are extenuating circumstances. If you are absent 5 or more times, I will drop you from the course with a grade of WU (the equivalent of an F).

B) Two Performance Reviews (2-3 pages each) (20%)

Short reviews of two theatrical productions, 10 points each. Tickets and playbills must be submitted with your review to receive full credit.

C) Production Team Project (20%)

Student teams will prepare a hypothetical design and production concept for a play of their choice. Aspects of the project will include: mission statement, budget, advertising concept, and design board. You will be graded both on your individual contributions (15 points) and on the overall success of your team’s project (5 points).

D) Three Unit Tests (30%)

Tests will be administered in class on dates announced in the syllabus and will consist of vocabulary and short answer questions. Tests cannot be made up for any reason.

E) Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will consist of identification, short answer, and essay questions. The exam is tentatively scheduled for **xxxxx at TIME**, subject to change as per Baruch’s final exam schedule. There will be no early exams or makeups.

REQUIRED TEXTS

This is a zero-textbook cost (ZTC) course that utilizes open educational resources. All reading and viewing material will be provided online free of charge via the Blogs@Baruch course website.

This course utilizes *Theatrical Worlds*, an open educational resources (OER) textbook edited by Charlie Mitchell and published by the University Press of Florida. The textbook is available for free online at: <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=242>

COURSE OUTLINE

Readings are to be **completed** prior to the date for which they are listed.

UNIT ONE: UNDERSTANDING THEATER

What is theater? How is it made? How do we read a play? How do we interpret a production?
What is the role of the theater artist in society?

	TOPIC	READ / WATCH	DUE
T 8/28	Introduction: Storytelling and the Theatrical Impulse		
Th 8/30	Elements of Drama: How to Read a Play	Ayad Akhtar, “On Reading Plays” <i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 39-45	
T 9/4	The Actor	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 49-62 TDF Videos: Cattle Call, Callback, Chewing the Scenery, Cheating Out, Missed Cue	
Th 9/6	<i>No Class – Monday schedule</i>		
T 9/11	<i>No Class – Rosh Hashanah</i>		
Th 9/13	The Director	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 63-79	
T 9/18	<i>No Class – Yom Kippur</i>		
Th 9/20	Theater Spaces and Audiences	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 80-112 TDF Videos: Blackbox, Thrust Stage, House, Fourth Wall, Rush NY Times, “How to Win the Broadway Ticket Lottery”	
T 9/25	Theatrical Collaborations: Designers, Stage Managers, Producers, and Others	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 113-149 TDF Videos: Catwalk, Booth, Dry Tech, Strike, Fight Director, Rigged Costume, Scrim, Thanks 5	

Th 9/27	From Page to Stage	Henrik Ibsen, <i>An Enemy of the People</i> , first half	
T 10/2	<i>An Enemy of the People</i> , continued	Henrik Ibsen, <i>An Enemy of the People</i> , second half	
Th 10/4	What Makes a Play Good?	Selected reviews of <i>Enemy of the People</i> productions	

UNIT TWO: THE ROOTS OF MODERN THEATER

A brief tour of the highlights of global theater history. What are the best dramas and theatrical performances ever produced around the world? Why were they important?

T 10/9	Western Roots: Tragedy	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i>	Unit Exam #1
Th 10/11	Tragedy and Comedy discussion	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> , first half	
T 10/16	Origins of Comedy	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> , second half	
Th 10/18	Chinese and Japanese Theater	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 231-267	Performance Review #1
T 10/23	African Theater and Indian Theater	Kalidasa, <i>The Recognition of Shakuntala</i>	
Th 10/25	Shakespeare and Elizabethan Theater Case Study: <i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 168-203	
T 10/30	Modern Drama I: The Well-Made Play	Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	
Th 11/1	Modern Drama II: American Drama		
T 11/6	Production Team Project Meetings		
Th 11/8	Popular Entertainment: Vaudeville, Circus, Burlesque		Production Team Project + Presentations
T 11/13	The American Musical	<i>Theatrical Worlds</i> , 204-230 TDF Video: Play vs. Musical	Production Team Project Presentations

UNIT THREE: THEATER TODAY

What are the dynamics of the contemporary stage? What is the impact of new technologies (film, television, the internet) on theater? What is the future of drama, theater, and performance culture? Does theater still matter?

Th 11/15	Theater & Technology	Karel Capek, <i>Rossum's Universal Robots</i>	
T 11/20	Contemporary Stage I: Documentary Theater		Unit Exam #2
Th 11/22	<i>No Class - Thanksgiving</i>		
T 11/27	Contemporary Stage II: Devised Theater, Site-Specific Theater, Immersive Theater	-TDF Video: Devised Theater, Site-Specific Theater -Sarah Lyall, "Starring Me! A Surreal Dive Into Immersive Theater"	
Th 11/29	Applied Theater	TDF Video: Applied Theater	
T 12/4	Race and Casting in Theater and Film	- Alisa Solomon, "How <i>Hamilton</i> is Revolutionizing the Broadway Musical" - Cara Buckley, "Another Oscar Year, Another All-White Ballot"	
Th 12/6	Theatricality, and the Performance of Sport		
T 12/11	The Arts in Education	Op-Ed Packet	Unit Exam #3
Th 12/13	The Future of Theater	- NEA 2012 Arts Engagement Report - Craig Lambert, "The Future of Theater"	Performance Review #2 (Plus any extra credit reviews)
T 5/24	3:30 – 5:30 PM (tentative) VC 7-150		FINAL EXAM

OFFICE HOURS & APPOINTMENTS

My office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-5 PM. I am also available to meet with students outside of these times by appointment. These meetings are an opportunity for us to discuss class material, your progress, assignments, preparing for exams, your feedback on the course, or anything else related to this class. Email me to set an appointment, or stop by my office and say hello.

EMAIL CONTACT

Please allow 48 hours for receipt and response to all emails. Email correspondence should be reserved for setting appointments outside of office hours and for quick clarification questions. If you have questions that require a longer explanation, it's best to make an appointment.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

FORMATTING: All written work should be typed in 12 point font and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: One day late – 1 letter grade reduction (i.e. A to B)
Two days late – two letter grade reduction (i.e. A to C)
Three days late – three letter grade reduction (i.e. A to D)
PAPERS 4+ DAYS LATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. **My policy is to give a failing grade to any assignment that has been plagiarized or an exam in which you have cheated.** I am also required by Baruch College policy to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. This report becomes part of your permanent file.

Cheating is the attempted or unauthorized use of materials, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying from another student or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment or examination
- Taking an examination for another student
- Asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
- Allowing others to research and write assigned papers

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own:

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledgment
- Using information that is not considered common knowledge without acknowledgment
- Failure to acknowledge collaborators on homework assignments

DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

Please turn off your phone and/or other electronic devices before you enter the classroom. You will learn more if you can concentrate on the course while you're in the classroom. For this reason, I ask that students not use laptop and tablet computers in class. If you have a documented disability that requires you to use a laptop or tablet, please speak with me. Recording of lectures and classroom discussions is strictly prohibited.



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