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2024

Introduction to Theatre OER Course

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CUNY Bronx Community College

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Bronx Community College
Department of Communication Arts and Sciences
THEA 70 Introduction to Theatre
Hybrid/Asynchronous

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THEA 70 D01-24862, 3 credit course

Weekly Class: Wednesdays 11:00-12:15 (75 minutes)

Asynchronous Online: Weekly learning modules on Blackboard (75 minutes)

Dr. Carmen Meyers

Email: carmen.meyers@bcc.cuny.edu

Office: CO 732 Phone: 718-289-5694

Office Hours: TBA

Course Format: This course is organized for a hybrid/asynchronous format. Our class meets on-campus every Wednesdays for 75 minutes and *the other 75 minutes will be completed asynchronously with weekly learning modules on Blackboard.*

Textbook/Course Readings:

Professor Meyers recognizes and is concerned with the burden buying a textbook can place on students. To relieve this burden, I have designed this course to be a "Zero Textbook Cost" (ZTC) course which means that students do not have to purchase textbook or reading material for this course.

Course Description:

Study of theatre and performance throughout history and across cultures including an examination of African, Asian, European, and American theatrical styles and genres.

Student Learning Objectives:

1. Students will read introductory selections from theatre studies texts as well as several plays that span theatre history and could include works by Ancient Greek, European, African, African American, Asian, and Latina/o playwrights. Students will write response papers that analyze and interpret plays.
2. Students will write a paper that requires critical analysis of a theatrical performance. Additionally, students will analyze a play within its social, political and historical context.
3. Students will write and/or give oral presentations on key movements and developments that have shaped the face of contemporary theatre.
4. Students will identify and apply in written assignments and exams, the fundamental concepts and methods of creative expression in the theatre.
5. In quizzes and exams students will analyze how works of theatre from diverse cultures have impacted theatre today. In addition, students will describe the significance of works of theatre to the societies that created them in their play analysis paper.
6. Students will write response papers on readings and various aspects of the theatrical process.

Blackboard:

There will be a Blackboard site for this course, accessible via CUNY Portal. Students will complete 75 minutes of course work through weekly learning modules and due dates. All readings and learning materials will be provided on Blackboard. Students will submit most assignments to Blackboard. Please note: since this is a hybrid course, it is essential that your CUNY Portal account is up and running. Please set your Blackboard course to the email you check most – all announcements will go to this email address. The default is your BCC email. Students are expected to check email daily.

You can verify and change your email address in Blackboard via the Global Navigation Menu (where your name appears in the top right of the Blackboard window), in Settings > Personal Information > Edit Personal Information. If you wish to change your Blackboard contact email address to a different CUNY email address, do so from the Global Navigation Menu, click on Tools > Update Email.

Learning Modules:

Each learning module opens automatically in our “Weekly Module” folder on Wednesday morning (8:00 a.m.) and closes end of day (11:59 p.m.) on Tuesday. **All work for the module must be completed by the due date for credit. No late work accepted.** Once we complete our module, it is moved to our “Past Module” folder so that you may go back and review content in previous weeks. Learning Modules will contain an overview of what needs to be completed, the readings and learning materials you must engage with, and any quizzes or assignments due.

Organization of Blackboard Site:

Home: Announcements- announcements from me about the course

Faculty Info: Prof. Meyers- meet your instructor and contact information

Getting Started: Syllabus & Schedule- the syllabus, schedule, and other useful information

Office Hours- days/times and link to personal zoom room for Zoom hour and appointments

Weekly Learning Module - weekly content and assignments to be completed in each module

Past Modules: where completed past modules are stored

My Grades- students’ grades for the course

Student Support- student services, including academic, financial, accommodations/disabilities, and much more

Academic Integrity:

Your work must be your own and you are responsible for knowing BCC’s issued standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the college policy on Academic Integrity published in the BCC college catalog. Plagiarism and/or cheating will result in an automatic failure of the assignment and a report to Academic Affairs.

Turning in Assignments:

It is recommended that assignments be submitted at the time/date specified in the schedule so that students can best move through the class at a steady pace. Assignments are also “scaffolded” so that assignments build upon each other. **Assignments must be completed by the due date —no credit will be given for late work, tests, assignments, and quizzes** Also, please do not email me your work without prior approval. I will not accept it. You will receive a grade on Blackboard in “My Grades” once your assignments have been graded. Participation is a requirement of the course and it is not possible to successfully complete the course without timely participation in all assignments.

Assessment of Learning/Grading:

1. **Daily In-Class Participation (14%):** If students attend the full class session and participate, they will receive the full 5 points. Lateness and failure to participate will lower this score. If absent, even for a legitimate reason, you will not receive the points as this is unfair to those who attended. I will offer a few extra credit assignments during the semester to help make up any lost participation points. Each class period is worth up to 5 points.
2. **Homework/Assignments (23%):** Students will complete weekly assignments on Bb or in-class. These assignments offer additional opportunities to apply the concepts explored in this course.
3. **Quizzes (10%):** These short quizzes on Blackboard assess your knowledge of the readings. They are multiple choice and will be 1-10 questions. You will take these quizzes on Blackboard, and they must be completed by the due date for credit. There will be 5 quizzes this semester. Each quiz is worth up to 10 points.
4. **Group Project (15%):** Students will participate in a group project where they will be asked to organize, research, and prepare a presentation for the class. Students will be evaluated individually and collectively for a more equitable assessment.
5. **Play Response Paper (8%):** Students will attend the free play production at BCC and write a 1-2 page response to the work.
6. **Final Presentation Project (30%):** TBA- The final will include a presentation in class and a written document uploaded to Bb. The final is worth up to 150 points.

**Please note, if you are a veteran attending college using veterans' benefits, you must finish the class with a letter/academic grade (A through F) as well as maintain your full-time status or you will have to pay back the money you received.*

Final grades are assigned according to this 500 point scale:

485-500 = A+	435-449 = B+	385-399 = C+	335-349 = D+	0-299 = F
465-484 = A	414-434 = B	365-384 = C	315-334 = D	
450-464 = A-	400-414 = B-	350-364 = C-	300-314 = D-	

To figure one's overall grade manually, take the total number of points earned and divide it by the total points possible (500). The number listed can then be converted to a percentage (e.g. $.434 = 86.8\%$, a B+). I use a 500-point system. This means that an assignment worth 20% is worth 100 points ($100/500 = .20 = 20\%$).

General Note Regarding Grading Policies and Procedures:

If you simply meet the requirements for the assignment, your grade will be somewhere between a middle C and a middle B. In order to get an "A", you must demonstrate you both understand the material and can apply it to beyond what is discussed in class and the textbook. Language convention errors (e.g. spelling and punctuation mistakes, inaccurate citations, improper grammar) will also result in point deductions. You are expected to do college-level work. "I didn't know" is not acceptable. Leave enough time for computer problems, emergencies, and the like when completing your work.

Questions and Contact with the Instructor:

The best way to reach me for this course is via the **Section Q&A Forum** for questions about the course, and via email (carmen.meyers@bcc.cuny.edu) for individual or personal questions. **Please indicate in the subject line of your email your course and section number to make it easier for me to assist you.**

I typically log in to monitor course activities every weekday, usually in the morning hours. Expect responses to questions posted in the **Section Q&A Forum** or sent by email within 48 hours, though I usually respond within 24 hours. Many times, another student can help clarify and answer questions and I've set up a **Student Forum** for students to post questions and offer feedback to each other. Do your best to plan the timing of your questions to allow adequate time for a response.

In-course Behavior and Netiquette:

It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette. Please see [NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf](#)

I have a few basic rules for course interactions that focus on courtesy. Violate these rules and I will ask you to stop. If this behavior continues, I will delete the relevant post and ask you to meet with me afterwards to discuss the incident privately.

Because this class can take on topics that are deemed controversial, the primary rule we will observe in class is that of courtesy and respect. That is, please talk to your classmates the way you want them to talk to you. This includes when you are *sure* they are simply wrong about something. Remember that taking a moment to step back can help you find a constructive way to talk about a difficult topic. You'd be amazed how often it can lead to really positive conversations. Also, I will consider requests for class assignments that addresses such topics that you think are really important, so please let me know if and when one arises.

Preferred Name and Pronoun Statement:

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate/preferred name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. You may call me Professor Meyers or Dr. Meyers. Mine are she/her/hers.

Accommodations/DisAbilities/Additional Support:

Bronx Community College respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in your courses due to the impact of a disability, please contact Disability Services as soon as possible. A Disability Services specialist will meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations for your courses. You can reach Disability Services by email at disabilityservices@bcc.cuny.edu, phone at (718) 289-5874. You may also reach Disability Services through Microsoft Teams: log in using your CUNY First login and join [Disability Service – Student Center](#).

Office of Personal Counseling:

<http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-resources/personal-counseling-services/>

Please also note that the Office of Personal Counseling in Loew Hall, room 430, is another excellent resource for students experiencing a variety of emotional challenges. The Office of Personal Counseling (OPC) is working remotely due to COVID-19, but is still available to help you with free and confidential services. Services are offered via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime and telephone. To speak to a counselor please call, 718.289.5223 and leave a message. When leaving a message, please say your phone number twice. A counselor will call you back. You can also send an e-mail to their Intake Coordinator at Personal.Counseling@bcc.cuny.edu. If you are experiencing an emergency, call 911. Please note that counselors from the OPC are only available during their office hours. If you are in crisis and you need immediate support or need to speak to someone outside of business hours, please call NYC WELL at 888.692.9355 or text “WELL” to 65173. NYC WELL is a 24/7 phone or text hotline for support and referrals. For help for domestic violence, call Safe Horizon at 1-800-621-HOPE (1-800-621-4673). They are available 24/7. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 1-800-273-8255. They are available 24/7. In NYC, call 311 for all COVID-19 (Coronavirus) related questions. They are available 24/7. You can also speak to a therapist for free by calling the NYS COVID-19 emotional support hotline at 1-844-863.9314.

Open Door Policy:

The course should be a brave environment in which we all can learn, myself included. I prefer the word *brave* instead of safe, as safe is not actually attainable in all group settings. Brave implies a willingness from all to hold space for others and take responsibility for themselves. If you have concerns, please feel free to email me and we can set up a meeting so that we can address any concern that may arise.

THEA 70 -WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 and Week 2 – What is Theatre?

Objective: Chart the basic historical development of theatre and the audience’s relationship to the theatre. Understand the basic elements of theatre production.

Homework and Assignments:

- Introductions – Bb Discussion forum
- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read: “[What is Theatre and Basic Elements](#)” by Dr. Meyers
 - PPT Lecture: “[Introduction to Theatre](#)” by Dr. Meyers
- Bb Discussion forum: What is the relationship of the audience to theatre performance?
- Quiz #1: Covers all reading and learning materials in Module 1 and 2

Week 3 – Ancient Greek Theatre

Objectives: Identify the historical context of ancient Greek theatre, the basic elements, and influence on theatre today.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read “[Ancient Greek Theatre](#)” by Dr. Meyers

- Watch Videos: "[An Introduction to Greek Theatre](#)" and "[Modern Interpretations of Greek Chorus](#)" both created by the National Theatre of London
- Discussion Board: Students will explore the four theatre genres proposed for the group research project and in this discussion board response, select their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice.
- Quiz #2: Covers all the reading and learning materials in Ancient Greek Theatre

Week 4 – Elizabethan Theatre and William Shakespeare

Objective: Understanding of the historical context of Elizabethan theatre, the basic elements, and Shakespeare’s contribution to playwrighting and poetry.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read “[Shakespeare and Elizabethan Theatre](#)” by Dr. Meyers
 - Watch Video: “[Elizabethan Theatre, Queen Elizabeth I and William Shakespeare](#)”
 - Watch Video: “[William Shakespeare: Legendary Wordsmith - Fast Facts | History](#)”
- Discussion Board: Using the text “All the Worlds a Stage” from *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare, discuss the imagery of the language.
- Quiz #3: Covers all the reading and learning materials in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Theatre

Week 5 – 20th Century Theatre Genres: Theatre of the Absurd & Theatre of the Oppressed

Objective: To familiarize yourself with two of the four 20th century theatre genres that students will present for their Midterm Group Projects. This week: Theatre of the Absurd & Theatre of the Oppressed.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Watch video: [Beckett, Ionesco, and the Theater of the Absurd: Crash Course Theater #45](#)
 - Watch Play: *Play* by Samuel Beckett
 - Read article: [An A to Z of Theory | Augusto Boal: Theatre of the Oppressed](#) by Andy McLaverty-Robinson
 - Watch video: [Forum theatre performance | Shannon Ivey and STATE of Reality | TEDxColumbiaSC](#)
 - Work in Theatre Genre groups

Week 6 – 20th Century Theatre Genres: Chicano Theatre & Musical Theatre

Objective: To familiarize yourself with two of the four 20th century theatre genres that students will present for their Midterm Group Projects. This week: Chicano Theatre & Musical Theatre.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read article: [El Teatro’s Living Legacy by Jorge A. Huerta](#)
 - Watch video: [Luis Valdez - Founder "El Teatro Campesino"](#)

- Read article: [A Brief History of Musical Theater by David Valdes](#)
- Watch video: [Broadway Book Musicals: Crash Course Theater #50](#)
- Work in Theatre Genre groups

Week 7 – Modern Realism: 1800-present

Objective: Understanding of the history and influence of the realism movement and how it transformed our media today.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Watch video: [Realism by Nicholaus Garcia](#)
 - Read article: [Theatrical Realism by hellovaia.com, free digital learning material](#)
 - Read play: [Trifles by Susan Glaspell](#)
 - Discussion board: Discuss what you think happened in the play, *Trifles*.
 - Quiz #4: Covers all the reading and learning materials in Modern Realism

Week 8 – Midterm Theatre Genre Presentations

Week 9 – Introduction to the Personal Narrative Project (*this will take place over the remaining half of the semester*)

Objective: Review the personal narrative project where students will write personal narratives-their writing and telling of an event that resulted in personal change-as the basis of the project design. Through scaffolded learning opportunities, students practice the fundamentals of theatre elements, such as: writing and refining a dramatic text; enacting a performance; conducting textual analysis; casting actors; developing a directorial vision; choosing a theatre space for staging; and designing scenery, costumes, and sound. In so doing, students engage in the problems and procedures of professional theatre artists.

Part 1: Developing the text by creative writing and storytelling

Part 2: Developing the script by applying concepts of dramatic structure

Part 3: Developing the characters by applying concepts of acting and directing

Part 4: Developing the scene by applying concepts of design and theatrical space

Part 5: Rehearsing and performing the script

Part 6: Final Paper: putting all the elements together in a 4-6 page paper.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Review the [Personal Narrative Project](#) assignment
 - Read article: “[How to Structure a Story: The Fundamentals of Narrative](#)” by The Author Learning Center
 - Writing Assignment: Part 1: The Story- Write a two page description of a true event which caused a personal change.

- Some questions to consider:
- What were you like before the change occurred?
- What circumstances—or conflicts led to the change?
- What specifically caused the change?
- How has your life been altered as a result of the change?

Week 10 – Elements of Drama-Plot Arcs

Objective: Identify the basic elements of drama through plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read article: [5 Key Elements to a Good Story](#) Written by MasterClass
 - Study: [Elements of Drama Vocabulary](#) by Dr. Meyers
 - Discussion Board: Create your story plot arc and post the document or picture.
 - Quiz #5 - Covers all the reading and learning materials in Elements of Drama

Week 11 – Scenes

Objective: Understanding theatrical scenes and playwrighting. Students will select and write one of their scenes from their play plot arc.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Listen: Author/playwright, Joe Meno on [Writing Plays versus Writing Novels](#)
 - Watch video: [How Scenes Should be Structured](#) by The Author Learning Center
 - Writing Assignment: [Part 2: The Scene](#) - write a scene (first draft) from your play

Week 12 – Role of Director & Designers

Objective: Students gain a working knowledge of the role and responsibilities of a theatre director and designers by creating a visual vision board for their play.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read/Watch: [What Does A Theatre Director Do?](#) Written by StageMilk Team on May, 18th 2017. Please read this short article on what a director's duties are. Specifically in relation to vision and concept.
 - Watch/Read slide deck: [The Role a Theatre Designer](#) by the National Theatre
 - Watch video: [How to make a vision board with Elaina Di Monaco](#). This week in class, we will begin looking at the role of the director and the importance of a director's vision. Students will watch this short 6 minute video to get an overview and example of how to create a director's vision board.

- Discussion Board: [Director Vision Board](#)– students will upload their vision board and respond to two of their peer’s work.

Week 13 – Role of Actors

Objective: Understanding the role and responsibilities of an actor in a theatrical production.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Read article: [An Introduction to Theatre Acting](#) by The Actors Place
 - Read article: [Acting Basics](#) by Valerie Brugh
 - Read blog: [A Quick Guide to a Character Bio](#) by Parichehr Parsi
 - Read article: [How Do You Write a Character Bio? The Road to GREAT Characterization](#) by Industrial Scripts
- Writing Assignment: [Write character bios for scene](#). Students will write a 100-200 word bio for each character in their scene. The bio should include physical, mental, and emotional information for the director, actor, and designers. Please consider these elements although you may choose others as you feel necessary.
- Discussion board: [Final Presentation Survey](#). This survey focuses on the presentation section of the THEA 70 final. Students will share their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice for the presentation final. Depending on the class size, play/scene length, and available time, several scenes will be performed during our final. After each scene, the director will share about their process and the designer will share their vision board for the scene presentation. Each scene will have three roles:
 - **Director (1)**
 - **Actors (as needed)**
 - **Designer (1)**

Week 14 – Rehearsal

Objective: Introduce the types and process of a play rehearsal through theatre etiquette, planning, and goals.

Homework and Assignments:

- Reading and Learning Materials:
 - Watch video: [Inside The Rehearsal Room | It's True, It's True, It's True](#) by London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art
 - Read article: [Director’s Guide: Rehearsals](#) by TwistedPlays.com
 - Read blog: [Creating a Rehearsal Schedule](#) by Kerry Hishon
 - Students work in final production teams on scenes
 - See BCC Play: Write response paper

Week 15 – Final Papers and Presentations

Objective: Students will present their final scenes and turn in their final personal narrative papers. The THEA 70 final consists of two parts, a written final paper and a presentation. The final paper demonstrates the student's knowledge of theatrical production elements and the creative process: story, dramatic structure, acting, and directing. The final presentation demonstrates the student's working knowledge of a specific role in theatre production: director, actor, or designer.

Homework and Assignments:

- [Final](#)
- [Paper Rubric](#)
- [Presentation Rubric](#)