

Spring 2018

# Intro to Theatre Arts

Brandon Judell  
*CUNY City College*

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## Intro to Theatre Arts (Spring 2018)

(THTR 13100-C) (23999) Mon./Wed. 11:00-12:155 PM Room: SH-376



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(mobile)

**Office hours:** Email/text me to make an appointment or call my cellular phone to connect with me immediately. I'll be in and out of my office Mondays and Wednesdays most of the day—and some Thursdays.

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to the history, practice, and performance of the Theatre Arts, with particular attention to the following inquiries: What is theatre? How is it created? What are the various occupations in the theatre? What is the position of theatre in society? My goal for this course is to give you the means to discuss theatrical experiences (either as theatre makers or spectators) as well as the great variety of theatrical traditions, and provide a basis for your future endeavors with this art form. This will be based on lectures, readings, videos, in-class discussions, and seeing theatrical productions—both on campus and off.

### General Education Information

As part of the College's General Education Curriculum, this course is designed to enhance your understanding of artistic issues and how they are

studied. Students successfully completing this course will develop the following proficiencies:

**Oral and written communication skills** - Students will produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

**Critical thinking skills** - Students will evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

**Information literacy** - Students will gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

**Creative expression proficiency** – Students will identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the difference between the dramatic text on the page and the performance text on the stage in class discussions, written assignments, and in-class presentations.
- Students will correctly distinguish the various roles of the creative and production team members and their roles in creating a performance in written assignments and in-class presentations.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how different dramatic genres and forms work toward varying ends (entertainment, political efficacy, bolstering or challenging historical theatrical traditions, etc.) in class discussions, written assignments, and in-class presentations.
- Students will be able to identify the relationship between varying performance spaces/intended audiences and the performance itself and how one affects the other in discussions about script analysis.
- Students will exhibit an understanding of the ways that a particular play can be reinterpreted (without altering the text) through different practical approaches of production in written assignments and in-class presentations.

### **Required Texts:**

**Handouts will be supplied throughout the semester.**

### **Policies:**

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

The Department of Theatre and Speech adheres to City College's strict attendance policy. Consistent attendance is an absolute requirement for success in this course. **If a student misses the equivalent of two and a half weeks of class meetings (= five regular class meetings), then he/she will either have to drop the class or fail.** Punctuality is also important, and lateness will result in a significant lowering of the final grade.

Plagiarism is prohibited and will result in an "F" on that paper. That "F" cannot be made up. Say good-bye to an "A" . . . and possibly a "B" and "C" on your final grade. Identify your sources. **THERE IS NO MAKEUP FOR A PLAGIARIZED PAPER.**

Ringling cell phones will be thrown out of the window, except for my own. If there are no windows in the room, they will be stomped on.

**Participation:** Please be prepared to discuss the play readings, as well as the readings from your handouts. Your participation in class discussion is required. In class you will also be asked to participate in readings, acting exercises, and writing groups.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability may visit <http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/accessibility/index.cfm> for further information. If you need disability-related academic accommodations, please schedule a time to meet with me to discuss them privately. **IF SOMETHING IS GOING WRONG IN YOUR LIFE THAT IS AFFECTING YOUR CLASSWORK, LET ME KNOW AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER.**

**Assignments:**

**Short papers will be due throughout the semester. They will range from 2 pages to Bible-length tomes.**

**Response papers:** Students will write a response paper for 2 of the CCNY theatre productions.

**Director Essays:** Each of you will be assigned a theatre director to research. Papers should include information about his/her background, directing style, methods of working with performers, significant productions, reception by the public and the critics, etc. You may want to go to the Performing Arts Library at Lincoln Center and see if they have any recordings of your director's work as part of the Research Collections (it must be watched there). The presentation must include visual images of the director's work.

**Group Design Presentation:** Each group will be assigned a one-act play or a single act from a longer work for which they will act as an artistic team (director, set designer, lighting and sound designer, and costume designer). The group's director will have three responsibilities:  
1) provide the artistic direction for the group with

his/her interpretation of and feelings about the play as a whole. The director's goal is to provide inspiration for the designers in the group and lead the collaboration, NOT to design the production for the group; 2) cast the production with thoughtful reasons for the choice of actors; 3) serve as the group's leader making sure that the group is on track in completing the assignment by the given deadlines. Each designer creates his/her design for the artistic function/area chosen based on the overall direction they as a team have agreed upon, providing visual and/or aural original sketches or research materials. The entire presentation should be 20 minutes per group (not per designer). This will be followed by a brief discussion of your choices with the whole class."

**Final Paper:** There will be one final paper due, a 4-6 page (double-spaced) comprehensive analysis of an off-campus theatrical production that you will see on your own. This final paper should take into account all the important artistic and practical choices that are part of the creation of a theatrical event. There are three parts to this assignment:

**Part I - Proposal (5%):** You will tell me the name of the play you are planning on attending, as well as the play's venue, performance schedule, and ticket information. In a short paragraph (3-4 sentences), tell me why you are choosing this production.

**Part II - Notes, Outline, Bibliography (10%):** You will turn in your handwritten notes from attending the performance, a general outline of your paper, and a bibliography of between three and six sources of research you have done to contextualize the performance. (These could include books or articles about the playwright or director, original reviews of the production, etc.). The bibliography should follow the MLA style. (A copy of the latest MLA Handbook is on reserve in the library). You are also required to turn in a copy of the program and/or ticket stub.

**Optional -** You may turn in a first draft of your paper by Dec. 7 if you wish to receive written feedback during your writing process. Strongly recommended.

**Part III - Final paper (15%):** A hard copy to be turned in on the final day of class. The paper serves in lieu of a final examination and is therefore intended to demonstrate applied

understanding of the material covered throughout the semester.

**The following Grading Scale will be used in this course:**

<b>A</b>	<b>93-100</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-92</b>	<b>Superior</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83-86</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80-82</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79</b>	<b>Better than satisfactory</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>70-76</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>65-69</b>	<b>Just Passing</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>0-64</b>	<b>Not passing</b>

**Methods of assessment:** Active participation in discussion is essential to the life of the class and the vigor and relevancy of students' responses will have a noted effect on grades. Expect quizzes on readings. Much of the grade will also depend upon the quality of the written and oral assignments required by the course, which will be spaced fairly evenly over the term.

Participation: 15%

Attendance: 10%

Written Assignments: 35%

Group Design Presentation: 15%

Final Paper: 25% (proposal 5%; notes, outline, and bib 5%; final draft 15%)

There will be numerous quizzes throughout the semester, but no final exam.

**Jan. 29**

**Opening class. Overview of semester.**

**Excerpt of Margret Cho's *Notorious C.H.O.***

**Jan. 31**

**The History of Theatre in New York City.**

**Screening of short "Whacked." Read aloud: Langston Hughes' satire "Limitation of Life."**

**Bigotry scene from Spike Lee's *25<sup>th</sup> Hour*.**

**Short: "Enchanted."**

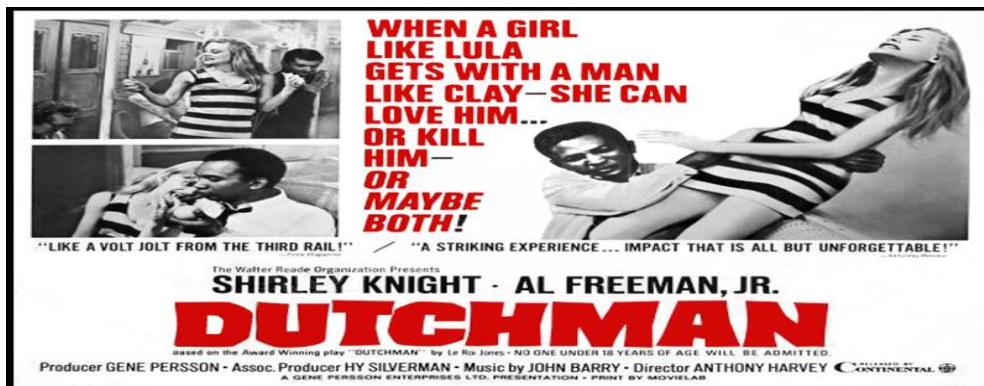
**Feb. 5**

**What is theatre? Why Theatre? Theatre and Women.**

**Theatre and How We See Ourselves.**

Feb. 7

Amiri Baraka's *The Dutchman*.



Feb. 12

NO CLASSES SCHEDULED. HURRAY! Lincoln's birthday.

Feb. 14

Read Amiri Baraka's *The Dutchman*.

Amiri Baraka's *The Dutchman*. Quiz on *Dutchman*

Feb. 19

School closed. President's Day

Feb. 20 (This is a Tuesday, but follows a Monday schedule.)

The Audience Response." Read *Think Theatre*, Chapter 2. Check Blackboard.

Feb. 21

What is directing? Costumes, Makeup and Masks. Scenes from *Body Art*.

Feb. 26

What is satire?

Feb. 28

Aristotle on Theatre  
 Playwriting/Play analysis.

March 5

NO SCHOOL. COLUMBUS DAY.

March 7

*Oedipus Rex*

March 12

*Oedipus Rex*

March 14

*Oedipus Rex*

March 19

Masks, Makeup, and Costumes

March 21

Incorporating the philosophy of Augusto Boal, the class will be broken into groups and come up with pertinent sketches.

March 26

What is the producer?

March 28

Goals of Set Design.

March 30–April 8

Spring recess

April 9

Musical Theatre

*Funny Girl*

April 11 (NO CLASSES)

FRIDAY SCHEDULE

April 16

Set Design

*Funny Girl*

April 18

Costume Design

*Funny Girl*

April 23

Light, Sound, and Multimedia Design

April 25

*Macbeth*

April 30

*Macbeth.*



**May 2**  
***Macbeth.***

**May 7**  
***Macbeth.***

**May 9**  
**Final performances of final skits.**

**May 14**  
**Final performances of final skits.**

**May 16**  
**Final day of class. Hurray!!!**  
**Final performances of final skits.**

**PRODUCTIONS:**

There is going to be a lot going on this Spring!!! Two faculty-directed shows; two student-directed shows, CUNY Theatre Festival, and the Student-directed ONE Act Play Festival....and more!

Speech classes are required to come to 1 production.

**I DON'T HAVE TO SHOW YOU  
NO STINKING BADGES!**  
by Luis Valdez  
Director: Carlos Garcia  
Compton Goethals 318  
2/24-26

**WOMEN ON THE VERGE  
OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN**  
by David Yazbek and Jeffrey Lane  
Director: David Willinger  
ADH, Theatre B  
3/15-17

**FIRES IN THE MIRROR**  
by Anna Deavere Smith  
Director: Lucius Seo  
ADH, Theatre B  
4/12-14

2011 Pulitzer Prize Winner  
**CLYBOURNE PARK**  
by Bruce Norris  
Director: Chan Harris  
ADH, Theatre B  
5/3-5



**NO EXCEPTIONS AND YOU MAY NOT RESERVE A BLOCK OF TICKETS FOR YOUR STUDENTS. IF A LARGE NUMBER SHOWS UP UNDER YOUR NAME OR ONE THAT WE CAN FIGURE OUT IS YOURS IT WILL BE DELETED.**