Prefix and Number: THEA 3960
Initial Term: Fall 2010

Select One:
New x  Delete  Course Modification

Type of modification:
Title        Description        Credit hours
Prerequisites Grade Type
Number: Old New

Title: Dramaturgy Seminar

College/School: Liberal Arts  Dept: Theatre

Abbreviated Title: Dramaturgy Seminar  (30 spaces total)

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Prerequisites (course must be taken prior to this course) Department approval.
Theatre majors who do not earn a grade of "C" or higher must repeat this course.

Corequisites (course must be taken the same term of this course)

Prerequisite with concurrency (course may be taken prior to this course or taken during the same term)
Study of fundamental skills and collaborative processes needed to dramaturg a piece of live theatre including both production and new play dramaturgy, critical analysis, research, presentations, and performance.

Credit will not be given for both ______________________ and ______________________

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Justification (Indicate reason for change) A course in dramaturgy is integral for theatre students who seek to bridge their work across the theatre curriculum. Dramaturgy provides the opportunity for students to get familiar with a fast growing, increasingly important segment of the theatrical profession. The course also allows students to engage with the department's production season as dramaturgs. Dramaturgy as a practice reflects a larger department goal of training students to think comprehensively and holistically about the discipline of theatre.

Additional resources or resource shifting required. If none, please explain. A new tenure track faculty member with expertise in dramaturgy was hired in the fall of 2009.

Attach a copy of syllabus to add a new course.

To modify an existing course, attach a copy of the old syllabus and the new syllabus.

To add an honors version of an existing course or to add a distance education version of an existing, attach the existing syllabus and the syllabus for the proposed new course.

No attachment is required to delete course.

Contact Person Dan LaRocque
Email larocdj@auburn.edu Phone # 844-4748

Revised June 2008
THEA 3960-001 DRAMATURGY SEMINAR-- FALL SEMESTER
3 Semester Hours (3 contact hours per week for 15 weeks)
Tues/Thurs, 11-12:15 THTRE 128. Dr. Chase Bringardner. 844-4748.
cab0023@auburn.edu office hours—as posted or by appointment. Office-UTH 214

Prerequisite: Department Approval. Theatre majors who do not earn a grade of “C” or higher must repeat this course for credit toward their theatre degree.

Course Description: Study of fundamental skills and collaborative processes needed to dramaturg a piece of live theatre, including both production and new play dramaturgy, critical analysis, research, presentations, and performance.

This course will use a case study approach to develop and practice the many skills of a production dramaturg. We will consider: What is a dramaturg? How does the dramaturg’s work fit into the production process? What does it mean to study a play in its historical and theatrical context? What kinds of knowledge are useful for a dramaturg and how can s/he make those knowledges useful to the play’s production and reception? What role can a dramaturg play in the creation of new work?

Dramaturgy is a skills-oriented course, in that process is as important as product. I’ve chosen a variety of plays that will raise different questions and call up different skills. We will also become very familiar with the four plays and periods on which we focus. In addition, we will read a number of essays that explore production dramaturgy from different perspectives to challenge assumptions about what a dramaturg can do to transform contemporary theatrical practice.

Course Objectives:
• To acquire and to practice skills necessary for a production dramaturg, including close readings of plays, research of historical period, context, and production history
• To use the library and internet (wisely) for research
• To translate research into communicable forms
• To demonstrate the ability to engage a pre or post production audience
• To read and interpret plays closely and critically and to express that analysis clearly and concisely in writing
• To read critical essays and articles closely and critically and to express that response in writing.
• To practice taking a critical position in response to an essay or article
• To problematize assumptions about theatre history and historiography and the dramaturg’s role in providing “correct” interpretations of plays and performances.
• To work with a group to make dramaturgical research performative
• To embody the role of the dramaturg in leading class discussion and compiling a protocol

Required Texts:
Richard Kislan, The Musical, Revised Edition
Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler, *Sweeney Todd*
Arthur Miller, *The Crucible, A Play in Four Acts*
David Savran, *Communists, Comboys, and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*
Michael Kirby and Victoria Nes Kirby, *Futurist Performance*
Annabelle Melzer, *Dada and Surrealist Performance*

**Required Viewing:**
*Sweeney Todd* (Time TBA)
*The Crucible* (Time TBA)

**Course Requirements:**
Attendance and participation are expected and required. After two unexcused absences the FINAL GRADE will be lowered by a full letter grade for each subsequent unexcused absence (that is, a final grade of A will become a B if you have three unexcused absences).

**15% Participation:** Spoken and written participation is an integral part of this course, both to ensure a high level of discussion and to encourage you to practice and develop your spoken and written communication skills. Quality and Quantity both count here. Participation will take on several forms throughout the semester:

1. Posting five messages (out of 10 possible opportunities) to the class Blackboard discussion list: Please post our message by 9 p.m. on the day preceding that day’s discussion (dates are listed with a * on the course syllabus) to allow the rest of the class to see and respond to the message. The post should be a short (at least 150 words), thoughtful response to the reading. You can raise questions, pose problems, critique an essay, explore what’s useful about an essay, connect the essay to other issues raised in class, and so on. Your post should indicate a close reading of the day’s assignment.

2. Responding to other student’s email postings and the class discussion on email.

3. Participating in class: After the first month of class, I will let you know how you’re doing participation-wise. I expect you to sustain consistent interaction with the course material and to develop a critical perspective, critical voice, and critical relationship to dramaturgy.

4. Dramaturg’s Manifesto, due the last day of class by 5 p.m.: A 2-3 page statement of self-assessment and purpose, of why dramaturgy matters for you, of questions and concerns that remain for you, of how your thinking has changed or what ideas have been reinforced over the course of the semester. You may want to create a “journal” to keep over the course of the semester or you may opt to simply reflect on your work only at the end of the semester. I encourage you to engage specifically with the course material and with specific theoretical and methodological questions. I want this manifesto to be self-reflexive and useful, so I ask you to define other parameters for yourself.

**For each of the four units, you will engage in dramaturgical praxis from a different perspective by practicing a different aspect of the dramaturg’s job and/or by**
completing a different portion of the dramaturg’s protocol. Each assignment will focus on different research, critical thinking, and writing skills, which are all crucial to professional dramaturgical work. (You will choose which assignments you want to complete for which unit – A sign up sheet will be circulated during the second week of class).

15% Reading of a playtext, doing dramatic criticism: a 4-5 page paper (1000-1250 words) in which you make an argument for an interpretation of the playtext. You may refer to other critical essays, although it is not required. The paper should have a thesis and examples and quotations from the text (very much like a traditional English paper). You may focus on a small issue or make an argument about the entire play. (In theatre practice, a reading of a play would offer the director and designers an angle, point of view, a useful interpretation. It might also be in program notes, a production website, or part of a pre or post show discussion.)

15% Precis: A 4-5 page paper in which you first concisely summarize the argument of an essay or article, including argument, structure, content, and style (first 2/3 of paper) and then take a position in relation to it (last 1/3 of the paper). What do you find useful about the essay or article? What do you find problematic about it? These articles may be selected from the course reader or from another source with the approval of the instructor. (In theatre practice, such a paper would be useful to write dramaturg’s program notes, to develop a pre or post show discussion, and to help the director make production decisions.)

15% Research and Presentation: A 10-minute presentation on an element of the context, history, production history, specifics of a performance, or another related topic. You should also prepare and copy a bibliography to be distributed to the class. You are encouraged to use visual aids, sound, music, or other materials, and to organize your presentation to be lively and interactive as well as informative. Choose a relevant and useful topic; one that will contribute significantly to our understanding the play in its context. You may also work in pairs if you like. You will be graded on: organization (including keeping to time); clarity of explanation; extensiveness of research and resources; thoughtfulness and relevance of presentation; use and usefulness of visual and aural materials; enthusiasm and commitment to the project; originality, creativity; ability to engage the audience – visually, aurally, and/or kinesthetically. (In theatre practice, information might be presented to the director, designers, cast, crew, or audience (pre or post show) to expand knowledge of the play.)

15% Group Performance and Discussion Facilitation – Dramaturgy in Practice: The motivating factor of dramaturgy is its use value – that is, how can the director make use of the information gathered and digested by the dramaturg? How can the dramaturg influence the production decisions of the play throughout the production process? How can the dramaturg help to create a significant performance experience for the audience? To that end, each student will work with a group to create a short performance that makes use of the information gathered and discussed in the unit. Performance choices should be clear and bold, challenging what we think we know about theatre, performance, and dramaturgy in relation to the specific playtext. The group will also prepare a list of discussion questions and/or notes and/or a program to distribute to the
class, and a bibliography. Each person in the group will individually write a brief log of the process, which should document meetings, research, decisions made by the group, rehearsals, and so on. Finally, the group will facilitate the discussion of their performance. You will be graded as a group as follows:
1) Creativity of the performance
2) Explicit use (even critically or deconstructively) of dramaturgically-based theatrical knowledges.
3) Ability to keep the class discussion focused and moving and useful
4) Ability of the group to work together; fair distribution of tasks
(It is possible to receive a grade lower than your group if you do not participate fully. All groups are encouraged to see me in advance to discuss ideas)

25% Dramaturgy Protocol: roughly 20 pages on a play of your choice. Handout to follow. Due the last day of class.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation 5% 50 pts
Posts (5) 5% 50pts
Manifesto 5% 50pts
Research Paper 15% 150pts
Precis/Position Paper 15% 150pts
Presentation 15% 150pts
Group Performance/Facilitation 15% 150pts
Final Performance & Process Paper 25% 250pts
Totals 100% 1000 pts

Course Outline/Schedule of Classes:
Please note: The reading load for this course if sometime uneven – some days we will discuss nearly an entire book while others we may have no reading at all. Do try to structure your time to keep up with the reading and your own research.

Session 1: Introduction to the course, you, me; Goals and expectations; Organization of the class; The role of the dramaturg
Session 2: Library Tour and Research Workshop. Meet at the Library.
“Section 1: Precedents and New Beginnings,” DAT, 1-38 * POST #1
*** SIGN-UP for Assignments
Session 3: “Section 2: Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility,” DAT, 39-120 * POST #2
FIRST PRODUCTION: Sweeney Todd
Session 4: Richard Kislan, The Musical * POST #3
Session 5: Presentations I
Session 6: Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler, Sweeney Todd/Viewing of Sweeney Todd. (Reading I due)
Session 7: Stephen Banfield, Sondheim’s Broadway Musicals (reader)
Chapter 1: “Sondheim’s Career and Output,” 11-59
Chapter 9: “Sweeney Todd,” 281-310. (Precis I due)
Session 8: Performance I
Session 9: “Section 3: Models of Collaboration,” DAT, 121-240 * POST #4
PRODUCTION TWO: The Crucible
Session 10: David Savran, from Communists, Cowboys, and Queers, 1-75 * POST #5
Session 11: Presentations II
Session 12: Arthur Miller’s The Crucible
(Reading II due)
Session 13: Assorted Readings of The Crucible (packet)
Griffin, “The Crucible,” Understanding Arthur Miller, 59-80
Schissel, feminist reading of witches, Modern Drama, Vol. 37, 461-473
(Precis II due – choose one or more essays)
Session 14: Performance II
PRODUCTION THREE: An Evening of Avant-Garde Performance
Session 16: Michael Kirby and Victoria Nes Kirby, Futurist Performance, skim 3-231
* POST 7
Session 17: Presentations III
Session 18: Kirby, “Playscripts,” Futurist Performance, 232-318
(Reading III, chose one or more plays)
Session 19: Annabelle Melzer, Dada and Surrealist Performance
(Precis III - chose one or a few chapters)
Session 20: Performance III
Session 21: “Section 5: Developing New Works,” DAT, skim 373-516 * POST 8
PRODUCTION FOUR: The Love Suicides at Sonezaki
Session 24: Presentations IV
Keane, “Introduction,” 1-38 (Reader)
(Reading IV due)
(Precis IV Due)
Session 29: Performance IV and Wrap Up
Session 30: Dramaturgy Manifestos and Protocols Due

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
Auburn University Department of Theatre Syllabus Appendix

**Academic Honesty Policy:** All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) found in the *Tiger Cub* will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

**Office Hours:** Faculty office hours are posted outside faculty offices on the second floor of the Telfair Peet Theatre. While students may visit faculty members at any time during their posted office hours, students are encouraged to make an appointment with individual faculty members to confirm a time when the faculty member can devote undivided attention to the student.

**Emails:** Faculty members in the Department of Theatre respond to student email as promptly as possible. Response time varies based on the size of the section of the course and the teaching load of an individual faculty member in any given term. Faculty members in the Department of Theatre are also regularly engaged in intensive research, creative work and outreach within and beyond the department each semester, and student consideration of faculty workload when measuring faculty response time to emails is greatly appreciated.

**Late Submission of Written Work:** Late work will be accepted in the case of excused absence at the next class session after the excused absence. Students who forget written work have a grace period of until 4:45 p.m. on the day the work is due to turn it in to the instructor’s office.

**Missed In-Class Work Policy:** It is the absent student’s responsibility to make arrangements for any make-up sessions.

**Missed Examinations:** Students with excused absences should make arrangements to make up missed quizzes and exams no later than the first class session after the excused absence.

**Preparation:** Students are reminded that all readings and written work are to be completed before the scheduled class session on the dates these assignments are due.

**Unannounced Quizzes:** Courses within the Department of Theatre often include unannounced quizzes. These quizzes are graded and included in the determination of a student’s final grade based on criteria devised by individual faculty members. The Department of Theatre affirms the right of individual faculty members to administer unannounced quizzes at any time during the semester they deem suitable. Students are therefore well advised to attend class regularly, and complete all readings, preparations, and assignments prior to the class discussion, studio, laboratory, or lecture session for which they are due.

**Course Withdrawal:** Students may withdraw from any course up until mid-semester with a “W” on their transcript.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Every Auburn University Theatre faculty member complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students needing
accommodations should arrange a meeting the first week of class. Come during office hours or email for an alternate time. Bring the Accommodation Memo and Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. Discuss items needed in this class. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need special accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TDD).

**Final Examination Schedule:** The final examination schedule for this semester may be accessed at:

[http://www.auburn.edu/administration/registrar/calendars/exam-schedule.html](http://www.auburn.edu/administration/registrar/calendars/exam-schedule.html)

Some courses within the Department of Theatre substitute performance tests, research projects, term papers, laboratory evaluations or other forms of evaluations suitable to the objectives of the course for a final exam. If so, your syllabus includes written information describing the method by which the final grade will be determined.