Course Overview

The first term of the Theatre History sequence traces the development of theatre from its ritual
origins and Ancient Greece through the birth of the Romantic movement, including Roman comedy,
the medieval liturgical drama, the Renaissance, the French Neo-Classic movement, the English
Restoration, and multi-national developments in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Throughout the term, you are encouraged to consider this information not merely as “fact.”
Ultimately, the value of historical study is a new understanding of the modern world and one’s own
functioning within it. It is hoped that this course will allow you to develop a conceptual framework
which will lead to a personal concept of the theatre.

The class will utilize both lecture and classroom discussion, and student participation is actively
sought and encouraged. Input of class members will be treated as part of the content of the class and
may appear on examinations. Formal evaluation will be through quizzes and discussions of assigned
plays, 2 lesser examinations, a research or creative project and a final examination.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please
make arrangements with me immediately.

Instructor Info

Jonathan Cole
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office hours by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is a survey of theatre history. Mastery of the material will include both objective
knowledge of important ideas, people, places, methods, and technology and the ability to relate
theatrical practice to the general culture. Course objectives include:

★ knowledge of important facts
★ ability to identify connections between concepts both within a specific period and between
different periods
★ ability to relate a dramatic text to the period in which it was performed
★ ability to identify concepts and practices that are evident in contemporary theatre.
Course Requirements and Expectations

Readings
In addition to readings from the Brockett text, you are expected to have read carefully, by the date listed on the syllabus, a selection of plays from the period covered this term. **It is expected that you will bring a copy of the plays with you on the days when they are being discussed.** Please find and bring your own copy of the plays in question. Individual, reasonably-priced copies of many of the plays are also available at various local bookstores (the Book Bin, etc.).

Participation
Participation in class discussions (both in large and small groups) is an expected part of this course and will factor into your final grade. Prompt attendance is required, and attendance will be taken through a variety of means. Attendance, plus your active, thoughtful participation in a variety of discussion and written exercises, will determine the participation portion of your grade.

Blurs
In addition to unannounced quizzes (as deemed necessary to insure reading of the assigned work), you may be assigned no more than four “blurs” – one-page, handwritten responses to specific projects or ideas.

Major Writing Assignment
The major writing assignment will offer you three choices. A handout (forthcoming) has specifics. This project may focus on any theatrical topic during the time period covered this term: pre-history through 1880. A brief overview follows:

★ Scholarly Paper
This option will consist of a 10-12 page paper which focuses on a particular theatre artist (i.e. Sophocles, Marivaux) or group (i.e. The King’s Men, The Illustrious Theatre). The paper will be an examination of at least three significant works that haven’t been read in class or productions, and will contextualize these works in a framework which includes other significant works of the artist/group, and relevant social, economic, political, artistic and theoretical factors. Finally, it will draw conclusions about the work of the individual or group in question that demonstrate significant insight into the particular conditions in which the artist(s) create(s).

★ Creative Project
An 8-10 page paper may be combined with a creative project to fulfill the term project assignment. The paper is explained in the term paper handout, but essentially records the research necessary to prepare for the creative project. The creative project may be in any area of theatre (design, playwriting, performance, etc.) but it must address the time period covered this term and **may not focus on an assigned play.**
Dramaturgical Study

The dramaturgical study is the development of a notebook which provides an intensive analysis of a single play. It must address the time period covered this term and may not focus on an assigned play. Its components include sections on the play as text, the play in performance, and a production interpretation.

Reading Questions

As you go through the assigned readings, jot down any thoughts or questions that occur to you. Then, take the single idea or question which seems most suitable for class discussion, type it up and email it to the class list (thtr-217w-01@willamette.edu) no later than the beginning of class on the day that reading assignment is due. You will then choose and respond to one of your peer’s questions via email, and send your reply to the list no later than midnight of the next class day.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON FORMATTING AND GRADING:

The subject line of each email and response must be exactly as follows, or it will not be counted:

- All reading questions must have a subject line of “Last name: RQ #” e.g. “Cole: RQ 5”
- All responses must have a subject line of “Last name: response #” e.g. “Cole: response 2”

Exams

Because of the fragmented nature of the wide variety of material covered in this term, two lesser examinations and a final examination will be given to allow you to focus your thinking. They will consist of short identifications of important people, places, and concepts as well as an essay question. The final exam will be comprehensive. Quizzes, as needed, will be short 2-5 question short-answer exams.

Please note:

- All work is due in class at the beginning of the period on the listed due date.

No late work will be accepted except through prior arrangement.

Quizzes missed due to tardiness or absence may not be made up unless permission is given before the quiz date.
Grading

Grading of the examinations will be based on the clarity and organization of thought, use of documented facts, and pertinence of conclusions. These factors, along with quality of research and general literacy of expression, will also constitute the basis for grading your formal written work.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes, Blurbs and Reading Questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesser Examinations</td>
<td>30% (15% ea.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project/Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Grading Standards

- **A** = Superior work, ability to integrate material and arrive at original conclusions
- **B** = Good work, mastery of assigned materials
- **C** = Satisfactory work, understanding of basic materials and concepts
- **D** = Poor work, incorrect information or lack of understanding
- **F** = Unsatisfactory, incomplete or inadequate work

*There is no curve. Borderline grades will be raised at the discretion of the instructor.*

Written Work

All out-of-class assignments are to be typed and formatted in accordance with MLA guidelines, and are to be impeccably proofread and spell checked. You are STRONGLY encouraged to buy a copy of the current *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*

On Flexibility

This course is a survey of theatre history. As with any survey course, the content must remain flexible if it is to address the specific needs and abilities of the students; therefore, the syllabus and course schedule are subject to change at any time. These changes are at the sole discretion of the instructor, and whenever possible will be made in writing.
Required Texts


The following plays will be read as part of this course. All plays are in the public domain, and are available in the library, online or in local bookstores.

- Sophocles, *Electra*
- Euripides, *The Trojan Women*
- Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*
- Terence, *Brothers*
- Plautus, *The Twin Menaechmi*
- The Wakefield Master, *The Second Shepherd’s Play*
- Anonymous, *Everyman*
- Shakespeare, *Henry V*
- Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
- Calderon, *Life is a Dream*
- Moliere, *Tartuffe*
- Racine, *Phaedra*
- Behn, *The Rover*
- Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*

Be sure to bring a copy of the plays with you to class for play discussion days.

Recommended Texts

# Course Schedule

## Week 1
- **Aug 31** | Introduction/Origins/Ancient Greece
- **Sept 2**  | Ancient Greece | Brockett Ch. 2

## Week 2
- **Sept 5** | NO CLASS: LABOR DAY
- **Sept 7** | Ancient Greece
- **Sept 9** | Greek Tragedy | *Electra* (Sophocles)

## Week 3
- **Sept 12** | Greek Tragedy | *The Trojan Women* (Euripides)
- **Sept 14** | Greek Comedy | *Lysistrata* (Aristophanes)
- **Sept 16** | Ancient Rome | Brockett 40-68

## Week 4
- **Sept 19** | Ancient Rome
- **Sept 21** | Roman Comedy | *Brothers* (Terence) | *Pseudolus* (Plautus)
- **Sept 23** | Wrap up Greeks and Romans | project topics due (email)

## Week 5
- **Sept 26** | Medieval European Theatre/Culture | Brockett Ch.4
- **Sept 28** | Medieval European Drama | *The Second Shepherd's Play* (Wakefield) | *Everyman* (A. Nonymous)
- **Sept 30** | Wrapup/Summary of Greek, Roman and Medieval info | Exam 1 review

FYI: *Smash* runs 9.29-10.15

## Week 6
- **Oct 3** | **Examination #1**
- **Oct 5** | Italian Renaissance | Brockett Ch. 7
- **Oct 7** | Project research

## Week 7
- **Oct 10** | Italian Renaissance | preliminary abstract due (email)
- **Oct 12** | Elizabethan England
- **Oct 14** | Elizabethan England | Brockett Ch. 5

## Week 8
- **Oct 17** | Elizabethan England | working bibliographies due (email)
- **Oct 19** | Elizabethan Drama | *Henry V* (Shakespeare)
- **Oct 21** | Mid-Semester Day: NO CLASS
Week 9
Oct 24 Jacobean England
Oct 26 Shakespeare’s contemporaries  *The Duchess of Malfi* (Webster)
Oct 28 Golden Age Spain  Brockett Ch. 6

Week 10
Oct 31 Golden Age Spain
Nov 2 Golden Age Spanish Drama  *Life is a Dream* (Calderon)
Nov 4 TBA: wrapup Italy, England, Spain or begin French Neoclassicism

Week 11
Nov 7 French Neoclassicism  Brockett Ch. 8
Nov 9 French Neoclassicism
Nov 11 French Neoclassicism  *ALL rough drafts due*

FYI: *PeopleDance* runs 11.10-11.19

Week 12
Nov 14 French Neoclassic Drama  *Tartuffe* (Moliere)  *Phaedra* (Racine)
Nov 16 Renaissance wrapup
Exam 2 review
Nov 18 Examination #2

Week 13
Nov 21 17th century theatre and culture  Brockett Ch. 9
Nov 23 TBA/18th century theatre and culture  Brockett Ch. 10
Nov 25 NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Vacation

Week 14
Nov 28 18th century theatre and culture  Brockett Ch. 11
Nov 30 Restoration/Georgian drama  *The Rover* (Behn)
Dec 2 Restoration/Georgian drama  *She Stoops to Conquer* (Goldsmith)
creative project paper, dramaturgy section 2 due

Week 15
Dec 5 In-class Performance or Demos  *all projects due (papers, dramaturgy & CPs)*
Dec 7 In-class Performance or Demos
Dec 9 Final Review

FINAL
Thursday 12/15: 8-11 am  Final Exam

Be sure to bring a copy of each play to class for discussion days!