Drama 111- Introduction to The Theatre

Randolph-Macon College
Fall '07

Instructor: gregg hillmar
Office: South Hall of the Performing Arts Center
Telephone: x1289, shop x4752
Office Hours: M, 1:30-2:30pm, TR, 9-9:30am, and by appointment.
Email:ghillmar@rmc.edu
Class website: accessed through http://faculty.rmc.edu/ghillmar/
Class Calendar available at http://ical.mac.com/greggx4/Intro
Subscribe to the Calendar at webcal://ical.mac.com/greggx4/Intro.ics

Course Description
The course is primarily concerned with the functionings, purpose, and methods of theatre. Its structure, components, workings, and the contributions of the collaborative artists who make it happen are examined. Attendance at plays and the occasional field trip are required.

Course Objectives
1) To develop an appreciation of the theatre as an audience member.
2) To explore dramatic styles and production techniques that influence theatre today.
3) To gain an understanding of theatre as a collaborative art and an appreciation of the jobs of various artists and technicians who contribute to it.

Text
Another Opening, Another Show by Markus & Sarver
Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew, Miller’s Death of a Salesman, Hansberry’s Raisin in the Sun

Assignments
1. Participation as a Theatre Audience Member (20% of your Final Grade)
   Theatre is a “live” art form. Therefore, to learn about theatre, one must see live theatre productions. Each student is required to see four theatre productions and write a short critique. You are required to see the two RMC productions; Wildest Dreams (September 26-29) and The Crucible (November 14-17). In addition, you must see and write about two professional productions of your choice. Anything at Barksdale Theatre, Hanover Tavern, Theatre IV, The Firehouse Theatre, The Carpenter Center or the Landmark in Richmond, The Riverside Theatre in Fredericksburg, or a variety of professional theatres in DC would be acceptable. See the “Theatre Opportunities” handout for a list of some local productions. A production you want to see that is NOT listed on the “Theatre Opportunities” handout must have the instructor’s approval.
   Critiques are due within a week of seeing the performance, and by the dates listed on the schedule.
   See the “Performance Critique” handout for more information.

2. Participation as a Theatre Artist (20% of your Final Grade)
   To get a closer look at theatre disciplines, you will choose an “assignment” as a theatre artist in the creation of a publicly performed piece of theatre. Once you “apply” for a particular choice, any changes will result in your final grade being lowered by a letter grade. You may:
   A. Be cast in The Crucible or “A Christmas Carol” here at RMC, or cast in a play off-campus. Once cast you must participate in all necessary rehearsals, work sessions, and performances. While time-consuming, this is an exceedingly exciting option.
   B. Work as a theatre artisan. Several possibilities exist here; you may work in the scene shop building and painting scenery and props, you may work hanging and focusing lighting equipment, and/or you may work preparing costumes for the R-MC plays. A minimum of 12 hours of technical theatre work is required, half of which must be completed before Mid-Semester. More than 15 hours is necessary for an “A.”
Drama 111- Introduction to The Theatre

C. Work backstage for The Crucible or “A Christmas Carol” as running crew, helping during each performance. You must commit to working during ALL technical and dress rehearsals, and ALL performances. Generally you must be available each and every evening for the week before and during productions. Contact me for the schedule and more information about running crews.

D. Work as a dramaturg. A dramaturg is an expert in theatre history and criticism. You will choose a topic in theatre history and criticism on which you will write a properly constructed 10 to 12 page research paper. Ask me for the “Dramaturgy” Handout if interested.

Class Participation (10% of your Final Grade)
You are expected to have completed the assigned readings at the beginning of the class noted. Come to class ready to ask and answer questions, discuss, argue, defend, etc. Remember that theatre and drama are ART, which means that there are no right or wrong ideas or thoughts, there are only those that are supportable, workable, and comfortable-- or not. Failure to read the assigned text or play will result in a lower class participation grade, as will a failure to participate in discussions in a reasonable way.

Quizzes (25% of your Final Grade)
The quizzes will be based on the required text and script readings, and material presented in class. As an average, there will be a quiz every week, tho the timing of the quizzes will be determined by progress in class. Quizzes will NOT be pre-announced. If you are absent, your quiz grade will be “0.”

Creative Project (25% of your Final Grade)
As a Final Project, the class will be broken into groups. Each group will write and perform a short play (apx. ten minutes) for the class, and present a design collage demonstrating the visual aspects of the play, were it to be fully produced. See the “Creative Project” Handout.

Attendance:
Attendance will be taken regularly. Note that the college catalog does not recognize “excused” absences. If you are absent, 1/3 of a letter grade will be subtracted from your FINAL GRADE for each hour of class missed over 3 hours. You will be held responsible for all information discussed during all class periods. Should you need to miss a due date for some pre-arranged reason, you must make arrangements with the instructor before the class is missed.

Falling asleep in class, working on other homework or otherwise not paying attention will result in an absence marked on your attendance. Leaving the classroom during class will also result in an absence.

Arriving late twice will be marked as an absence.

Please also come to class wearing proper attire. No PJ’s, flip-flops (dangerous in the theatre), or clothes likely to distract. Men, please remove your hats indoors. Theatre Artistry work will be conducted on the stage or in the shop and require that you work with the tools, paint, and other messy substances. Please dress in clothing that is appropriate for the shop environment, including real shoes. You will be asked to leave the class or shop (and therefore marked absent) if you do not wear proper attire, including shoes.

Please turn off your cell phones- not silence the ringer, but turn it off. Text messaging or other “interactions” with your phone while in class will result in an absence marked on your attendance.
Drama 111- Introduction to The Theatre

Grading:
Due to the nature of the projects much of the grading in this class is subjective. There will be standards that govern this grading. Merely completing the assigned task or hours is what I consider average work, or a "C." Going the extra mile, completing assignments with enthusiasm or emulating the examples seen in the text and in class will most likely lead to a "B." Only extraordinary work will be considered for an "A."

Some projects require working in GROUPS. All group members are expected to pull their own weight, and those that don't will be graded accordingly. ALL group members will receive the same grade except under the above circumstances.

In addition to a printed version, please turn in an electronic copy (a pdf or .doc file version) of any written assignment. They can be emailed to me at the address above, or turned in on a cd or other media with your paper. Any paper turned in without an electronic copy will be considered “late” and graded as noted below.

Due Dates:
All projects or other assignments are due in class on the date listed in the syllabus. All projects not turned in on time will receive a grade of "0." This can be raised to an "F"(50) by turning the project in before the last week of classes.

Any student in this class who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me as quickly as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate his or her educational opportunities. To be eligible to receive accommodations, a student with disabilities must register with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Patrick John Higgins Academic Center.

The College's Code of Academic Integrity sets out a list of prohibited behavior, including plagiarism, cheating, and tampering with or destroying College property (including computers in computer labs). The most common act of academic misconduct is plagiarism, which is defined "Passing off a source's information, ideas, or words as your own by omitting to acknowledge that source-an act of lying, cheating, and stealing." (Gordon Harvey, Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students) Any student who commits a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity will be subject to the policies and procedures outlined in Fishtales. It is each student's responsibility to read and be familiar with the Code.
**Drama 111- Introduction to The Theatre**

**Calendar (Subject To Change)**

**Week of:** Introduction/ What is Theatre?

**September 3**
- **Read:** Introduction, Chapter 1

**September 10**
- How to Read a Play and How to See a Play
  - **Read:** Chapters 2, 11, & 12
  - **Due:** September 14th - Theatre Artistry Choice- Brief typed statement detailing which choice you want to pursue.

**September 17**
- Theatre Architecture; Production Organizations
  - **Read:** Chapters 13 through p223, 16
  - **Auditions:** September 17th & 18th - *The Crucible*

**September 24**
- Styles of Drama- Comedy
  - **Read:** Chapters 3 & 4
  - **Read:** Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*
  - **See:** *Wildest Dreams* at RMC (September 26-29)
  - **Due:** Dramaturgy Paper Initial Idea

**October 1**
- Comedy, con’t;
  - **Due:** October 5th - *Wildest Dreams* Performance Critique

**October 8**
- Playwrights, Directors
  - **Read:** Chapters 6 & 8

**October 15**
- Actors
  - **Read:** Chapter 7
  - **Due:** By October 19th – First Professional Critique
  - **Due:** October 19th - Dramaturgy Paper Outline and Bibliography
  - **Due:** October 19th - Half of shop hours finished
  - **Due:** October 19th - Final Project Proposal- Brief typed statement outlining your group’s initial ideas for your final project.

**October 22**
- Designers
  - **Read:** Chapters 9, 10 & 13 starting at p223

**October 29**
- Styles of Drama- Tragedy
  - **Read:** Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*

**November 5**
- Technical Production
  - **Read:** Chapter 14
  - **Due:** November 9th - Rough Draft - Creative Project Script

**November 12**
- Styles of Drama- Realism
  - **Read:** Hansberry’s *Raisin in the Sun*
  - **See:** *The Crucible* (Nov. 14-17)
  - **Due:** Dramaturgy Paper Rough Draft
  - **Auditions:** November 18th – “*A Christmas Carol*” and *Baby With the Bathwater* (performs in February)

**November 19** (Thanksgiving)
- Styles of Drama- Realism (con’t)

**November 26**
- Styles of Drama- Musicals
  - **Read:** Chapter 17
  - **Due:** November 26th - *The Crucible* Critique

**December 3**
- Theatre as a Profession
  - **Due:** By December 7th - Second Professional Critique
  - **Due:** December 7th - Final Draft - Creative Project Script

**December 10**
- **8:30 AM** Final Projects Presentations