

322.22 Stagecraft and Production (3 hrs.)

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Providence College

Winter, 2009

Mondays 3:20, Wednesdays 6:30

SYLLABUS

A. Course Description

A general introduction to the principles of various backstage and frontstage elements of production (eg. script analysis, set design and construction, costume design and construction, make up and hair, house management, marketing, etc.), paired with practical experience through involvement in staging the annual full-length production.

B. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, each student will:

1. understand the various backstage and front-stage aspects of theatrical production
2. have participated in a 'hands-on' experience of some aspect of staging and production.
3. have functioned as a member of the crew of the full-length production, *God Committee*
4. appreciate the importance of co-operative creativity as a central aspect of the production experience
5. be equipped to offer backstage and front-stage knowledge and skills to further productions they may be involved with

C. Course Texts

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Felner, Mira and Claudia Orenstein. (2006). *The World of Theatre; Tradition and Innovation*. Boston: Pearson-Allyn and Bacon.

St. Germain, Mark. *God Committee*. (2006).

D. Course Requirements

1. Script Analysis/Review (10%)

Due Date: Jan. 19

Write a 4 – 5 page analysis of *God Committee*, by Mark St. Germain. Guidelines for writing a script analysis/review are attached to the syllabus.

Note: Those students involved in the cast of *God Committee* are required to write a review of *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller.

2. Rehearsal Analysis (10%)

Due Date: Jan. 26

Attend a *God Committee* rehearsals on Jan 21st (6:30-10:30), and write a 4 – 5 page report (12 pt. font, doubled spaced) addressing the following:

- 1) Your general impressions of the rehearsal process
- 2) Your assessment of the actor's portrayals of their characters thus far in the rehearsal process.
- 3) Based on the class handout (p. 321, *The Essential Theatre*), briefly discuss the type of directing approach being used in *God Committee*.

3. Textbook Summary (15%)

Due Date: Feb. 2

Write a brief summary of chapters 9 – 14 (p. 241-385) of *The World of Theatre; Tradition and Innovation*. Each chapter should be summarized in approx. 1 ½ pages, highlighting the main points, concluding with a 1 page analysis discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the text. (10 pages, 12 pt. font, double spaced)

4. Class Presentation (15%)

Due Dates: Feb. 2, Feb. 9

Working in groups of two, each group will be assigned a chapter from the *The World of Theatre; Tradition and Innovation* to present to the class.

The presentation should

- i) present the basic points of the chapter
- ii) be done via powerpoint
- iii) have numerous visual images
- iv) be approx. 25 minutes in length

5. Production Work and Class Participation (50%)
Due Date: Feb. 23rd

Stagecraft and production are applied skills that develop within the communal creative process. As such, a significant portion of the course grade will be determined by

- 1) the skill, commitment, co-operative spirit, flexibility and availability of the individual student as they complete stagecraft and production tasks in relation to the full-length production, *God Committee*. Each student is required to record hours invested in a production log (attached), due on Feb. 23rd. Some involvement will also be required for Prov Players props and costumes.
- 2) Class participation in discussion of assigned readings.
- 3) On Feb. 24th the class will be attending the Prairie Theatre Exchange's production of *Fly Fisher's Companion*, by Canadian Playwright Michael Melski. There is also a 'talk-back' session after the show, during which time audience members can ask the company questions. The cost per student of \$10.00 must be submitted to the instructor no later than **Jan. 12th**. Transportation will be provided.
(Yes, it's a field trip!)

Failure to attend *Fly Fisher's Companion* **and** the subsequent class discussion (Mar. 9) will result in an automatic 10% reduction of the course grade.

E. Assignment Summary

| | | |
|--------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| Script Analysis | 10% | Jan. 19 |
| Rehearsal Analysis | 10% | Jan. 26 |
| Textbook Summary | 15% | Feb. 2 |
| Text Presentation | 15% | Feb. 2, Feb. 9 |
| Production Log | 50% | Feb. 23 |

F. Grading Summary

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|----------|----|--------------|-----|---------|----|
| Excellent | 4.0 | 96 – 100 | A+ | Satisfactory | 2.5 | 67 – 69 | C+ |
| | | 90 – 95 | A | | | | |
| | | 85 – 89 | A- | Adequate | 2.0 | 63 – 66 | C |
| | | | | | | 60 – 62 | C- |
| Very Good | 3.5 | 78 – 84 | B+ | Marginal | 1.0 | 57 – 59 | D+ |
| | | | | | | 53 – 56 | D |
| Good | 3.0 | 73 – 77 | B | | | 50 – 52 | D- |
| | | 70 – 72 | B- | | | | |
| | | | | Failure | 0.0 | <50 | F |

G. Course Policies

1. Class Attendance

Theatre is always a communal experience, thus learning theatre is also a communal experience. Therefore, due to the interactional nature of the course, class attendance is important. Absence from class negatively affects the production work portion of the course grade, and may result in failure of the course. Late arrival for class will also become part of the final class evaluation.

2. Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted after their due date, and will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will *not* receive requests for extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the zero grade will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

3. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is defined as stealing from the ideas or writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. This occurs when someone copies or closely paraphrases the intellectual work of someone else without giving proper recognition of the source of the material copied or

paraphrased (e.g. in an endnote or text reference). Any assignment in which plagiarism can be identified beyond a reasonable doubt will receive a grade of zero. See the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook.

H. Plays – A Thespian’s Selected Reading List

A Doll’s House, Henrik Ibsen
A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry
A Street Car Named Desire, Tennessee Williams
Blood Relations, Sharon Pollock
Candida, George Bernard Shaw
Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller
Hamlet, William Shakespeare
“Master Harold” ...and the boys, Athol Fugard
Oedipus Rex, Sophocles
Quiet in the Land, Ann Chislett
The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Bertolt Brecht
The Hairy Ape, Eugene O’Neill
The Importance of Being Earnest, Oscar Wilde
The Miser by Moliere
The Second Shepherd’s Play, anonymous (medieval era)
The Three Sisters, Anton Chekhov
Trifles, Susan Glaspell
Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett
Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Edward Albee
Wit, Margaret Edson

Websites:

<http://canadiantheatre.com>

<http://dramatistplayservices.com>

I. Course Outline/Schedule

- Jan. 5 Orientation to the Course
- Jan. 12 Read: Ch. 1 – 3 (pp. 3 – 47), *The Essential Theatre*
 Class discussion of Reading
- Jan. 19 Class Discussion: *God Committee*
 Script Analysis Due
- Jan. 21 6:30 – 10:30 Attend Evening Rehearsal
- Jan. 26 Presentation: Connie LeMay: The Basics of Stage Make-up
 (bring an old t-shirt to wear!)
 Rehearsal Analysis Due
- Feb. 2 **Student Presentations** (followed by discussion)
(3:20 – 5:00) Chapter 9, 10, & 11
 Texbook Summary Due
- Feb. 4 – 22 General availability for preparation of front of house, set,
 backstage, rehearsal involvement, etc.
- Feb. 9 **Student Presentations** (followed by discussion)
(3:20 – 5:00) Chapter 12, 13, & 14
- Feb. 16 **Louis Riel Day (classes cancelled)**
 - some production duties will be required for some students
- Feb. 19 – 21 PERFORMANCE!!
 Feb. 19th, 10:30am
 Feb. 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 7:30 pm
- Feb. 23rd Class Discussion: Production Debrief
 Production Log Due
- Feb. 24th **Evening, 7:00pm**
 Attendance at *Fly Fisher's Companion* at Prairie Theatre Exchange
- Mar. 2 – 6 **Reading Week**
- Mar. 9 Class Discussion of *Fly Fisher's Companion*
- Mar. 16th, 23rd, 30th, and Apr. 6th – Classes cancelled**

1. What is the basic conflict of the play? (i.e. the major dramatic question)
2. What makes this conflict significant? What is at stake?
3. What is the source of suspense? How is the outcome kept in doubt?
4. Where/what is the climax of the play? (i.e. when is the dramatic question answered)
5. What are the major ideas/themes/symbolic elements of the play?
6. What is the significance of the title of the play?

Note: Be sure to refer to the text itself to demonstrate your conclusions.

