

Eastern Illinois University  
Department of Theatre Arts  
Spring Semester 2013

**THA 3756: TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEATRE**  
*A University-designated "Writing Intensive" Course*

*Instructor.* Dr. Chris Mitchell  
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Office Hours: TR, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm, or by appointment.

Professor's website: <http://ux1.eiu.edu/~cjmitchell> (check often)

*Class Meets.* MWF, 1:00 – 1:50 pm, in DFAC 2040

*Texts.* Wilson and Goldfarb, *Living Theatre: A History* (6th ed.)  
Jacobus, *The Bedford Introduction to Drama* (7th ed.)  
Klaus, Gilbert, and Field, *Stages of Drama* (5th ed.)  
Brandt, *Modern Theories of Drama*

+ several materials on reserve in library, which you must photocopy for use in class

Also, you should have close at hand:

A research paper style manual appropriate to your discipline. If your discipline is Theatre Arts, then that is MLA (*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, most recent ed.). Majors and minors will use this in all my theatre history and literature courses.

*Prerequisites.* ENG-1001G, ENG-1002G, and THA-3752G (or Permission of Instructor)

*Overview.* This course examines "social, political, economic, philosophical, and artistic currents that shaped 20th century Western non-musical theatre, drama, and design. Attention given to defining movements and persons in the period." (from *Eastern Illinois University 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog*)

We will examine theories of staging and playwriting practices in each period, using historical narrative, playtexts, and theoretical writings. Special attention will be paid to controversies in theatre history, so as to stimulate your critical thinking. You also will have opportunity to put your skills into practice.

For Theatre Arts majors, the course satisfies one of your core requirements for the “History and Literature”) component of the curriculum.

*Requirements  
And Grading.*

The grading scheme is mathematically simple for this class. All of the numbered requirements listed below are of equal weight, and are **each scored out of 100 points**. Your final score is a simple average of the scores for these requirements, adjusted for attendance (see “Attendance,” below). The letter grade equivalent is as follows:

- A = at least 90 points out of 100
- B = at least 80 but less than 90 points
- C = at least 70 but less than 80 points
- D = at least 60 but less than 70 points
- F = any point total less than 60

The course requirements are as follows:

1. **Active participation and keeping up with assigned readings.** This includes ensuring that the reading assigned for a particular series of classes is done on time, that you bring the relevant texts to class, and that you enthusiastically contribute to discussions in class, especially at times at which you are appointed the leader of a discussion, which will be frequently since we are a small class. (I will cover how that will work in the first days of class.) The volume and scope of covered material necessitates your constant engagement with the material and with other members of this class; your rating of 0-100 here reflects how consistently and diligently you are engaging these. You will be rated TWICE, once at midterm and once at the end of the semester. Each rating is an independent grade, to be averaged with the other requirements. There is a rubric sheet explaining how participation is evaluated on [my website](#).

Reading assignments are covered in a separate handout, which is posted on your class page of [my website](#).

**SPECIAL NOTE TO THEATRE FOLKS:** Repeat this until it sticks in your head— *“Being in rehearsal, in shop, in tech, or in performance does not excuse me from my responsibilities to this class.”* Part of being a theatre major/minor is learning to achieve a balance between classwork and the practice of your art. Strive to achieve that balance. I expect no less.

2. **A midterm exam and a final exam.** In keeping with the writing-intensive designation of this course, these are essay exams which will determine how well you connect concepts together. The midterm, tentatively scheduled for **March 1**, will cover material from the first half of the semester and the final, scheduled for **Wednesday, May 1, 12:30 – 2:30 pm**, will cover material from the second half only (i.e. it's not cumulative).
3. **A 3-5 pp. written critical response paper** critiquing a significant 20th-century theatre theory tract, chosen from a list I provide. Further details TBA. You'll do this in two drafts: the first draft is due **February 4** and the final draft is due **March 6**.

Paper particulars are covered in handouts which be posted on your class page of [my website](#).

4. Do one of these, and ONLY ONE:
  - Deliver, in front of an invited audience, on an agreed-upon date and time, a **10-minute mini-lecture** on a topic in 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre history (research is required) followed by a question-and-answer session;
  - Select an approximately **5-10 minute scene** from a list of 20<sup>th</sup> century plays I provide, cast it (from any personnel available outside the class of your choice), and direct it for presentation to an invited audience on an agreed-upon date and time.

Inform me of your choice by **February 20**, so we can begin to make plans for the date of presentation, which will be in the second half of the course (likely the week of **April 22-26**)

Project particulars are covered in handouts which be posted on your class page of [my website](#).

**ATTENDANCE.** Along with active participation, consistent and prompt attendance is absolutely necessary to reap the maximum benefit from the course. As such, you will be held accountable for your attendance. An attendance sheet will be circulated at every class meeting **on and after Monday, January 14**, and it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to ensure you have signed it before you leave class. In tracking absences, the following definitions apply:

- “Excused absence”: An excused absence results ONLY from a university-sanctioned activity, a family emergency, a health-related absence in which you are under a physician’s care, or an extraordinary circumstance as determined by the professor. All “excused absences” must be supported by a note from an official (physician, university official, etc.) supporting the absence.
  - “Excused absences” do not result in a penalty applied to your final average.
- “Unexcused absence”: Anything not defined by “excused absence” above. This includes, but is not limited to: “personal” days or non-university business, oversleeping, and health-related absences not supported by a physician’s note.
  - You are permitted THREE “unexcused” absences without penalty to your final average; more than two, see below.

For every unexcused absence beyond the three you are permitted, you will lose **three points** off your final average. (That’s nearly 1/3 of a letter grade, folks. ATTENDANCE IS SERIOUS BUSINESS IN MY CLASSES.)

**EXTRA CREDIT.** There will be some opportunities for you to earn some extra points that can bolster your final average. As a general rule, these will be posted to [my website](#), so it is up to you to keep checking it!

*Late Policy.*

For all assigned stages of the critical response paper, it is expected that you turn in the work on the assigned date, unless an alternate arrangement is made with me in advance. Same goes for the lecture or scene: be ready on the assigned/agreed upon day. If you choose to turn in or do any work past the deadline without an arrangement, each subsequent class period of lateness will cost you **five points** on that assignment. For the midterm and final, makeups are given ONLY IN EMERGENCY CASES (never for an unexcused absence) and must be cleared with me.

*Classroom Etiquette.*

A few ground rules to maximize fairness to all and to help make our classroom environment enjoyable and productive:

1. Be on time and plan to stay the whole time. Class begins at 1:00 pm and ends at 1:50 pm. (That is, don’t begin getting ready to go at 1:45— or earlier. If you’re doing that, you’re being rude to everyone in the class.)

**“The 10-minute rule.”** Even though I can’t remember the last time this was relevant (I’m very time-conscious), you can safely assume that the “10-minute rule” is valid for this class, according to the “official time” of the classroom (usually the classroom clock, unless otherwise designated by the professor).

2. Respect other class members’ right to learn as well as your own. This includes not having distracting conversations with your neighbor (or cell phone/text message buddy), not listening to your iPod/mp3 during class time, not reading newspapers or other non-class material during class, and always respecting others’ opinions in class conversation, even if you disagree. While you may keep your cell on “VIBRATE” in case of emergencies, all other electronic devices must be turned OFF during class time.
3. During examinations, no electronic device is permitted in the classroom, save your cell phone on “VIBRATE.”

*Disabilities.*

Should you require any special accommodations due to a documented disability, please contact the office of disability services at 581-6583 as soon as possible. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to give me a copy of the “Academic Accommodations” statement no later than January 18.

*Academic Integrity.*

All assignments are expected to be your original work, and ALL resources you quote must be properly cited using an accepted Citation method, appropriate to your discipline. (If you are in Theatre Arts, the most appropriate method is MLA.) THIS INCLUDES INTERNET SOURCES! You can always ask for help from me on citation method; that’s what I’m here for.

Academic honesty, suffice it to say, is taken VERY seriously here, and any instance of plagiarism (see me if you are not clear on the definition of the word) or cheating will result in a zero for the assignment AT MINIMUM (depending on the severity of the infraction).

<p>No paper will be accepted for a grade without proper documentation of sources. If I see a paper without citations, I will return it to you the next class period and you will begin losing points as per the late policy above.</p>
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***THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE  
AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PROFESSOR.***