

Eastern Illinois University
Senior Seminar Proposal
EIU 4161G, Theatre as a Soapbox

1. Catalogue Description:
 - a. Course Number: EIU 4161G
 - b. Title: Theatre as a Soapbox
 - c. Meeting/Credit: 3-0-3
 - d. Term: S, Su
 - e. Short Title: Theatre/Soapbox
 - f. Description: A discussion-centered examination of ways playwrights have used theatre as a vehicle for expression to enact change. Attention will be given to theatre as a forum to vent controversial social issues..
 - g. Theatre Arts majors and English majors are excluded.
 - h. Writing intensive.
2. Student Learning Objectives:

In successfully completing this course, students will:

 - Analyze and evaluate through writing and discussion the works of several playwrights. (write and speak effectively)
 - Recognize how theatre and society mutually affect each other. (critical thinking)
 - Identify the socio-cultural environment that shaped a playwright's work. (citizenship)
3. Outline of the Course:

This seminar is a theme-centered, issue-oriented course. The outline below indicates the organization of the seminar. Scheduling the class for one 150-minute class session per week for fifteen weeks will allow sufficient time for discussion, writing assignments, and in-class viewing of videos.

If local theatre groups present a play or plays germane to the course, the outline below would be modified to include an outside viewing assignment or field trip to, e.g. Krannert or an EIU production.

Week One: Overview

1. Introduction/orientation to the course.
2. In-class writing, addressing (but not limited to) the following:

What are society's means of expression? Art? Music? Why not Theatre? Can this expression be in the written drama or only in production?
3. Discussion of ideas/viewpoints
4. Overview of the connection between theatre and society
5. Introduction of "Human Rights" theme

Weeks Two and Three: Anti-War Plays

Week Two:

1. Read Aristophanes' Lysistrata
2. View Rabe's Streamers
3. Discussion of playwright's intent
4. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What is the society the playwright is examining?
 - b. What changes are being proposed?

- c. Do you agree with the tactics employed?

Week Three:

1. View Ragni, Rado and MacDermot's Hair
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What is the society the playwright is examining?
 - b. What changes are being proposed?
 - c. Do you agree with the tactics employed?

Weeks Four through Seven: Women's Issues

Week Four:

1. View Ibsen's A Doll's House
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What is the status of women in the society of the play?
 - b. How does the playwright view that status?
 - c. What reaction should the intended audience have?

Week Five:

1. Read Glaspell's Trifles
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What is the status of women in the society of the play?
 - b. How does the playwright view that status?
 - c. What reaction should the intended audience have?

Week Six:

1. View Norman's 'Night, Mother
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What is the status of women in the society of the play?
 - b. How does the playwright view that status?
 - c. What reaction should the intended audience have?

Week Seven:

1. View/Read Mamet's Oleanna
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What is the status of women in the society of the play?
 - b. How does the playwright view that status?
 - c. What reaction should the intended audience have?

Week Eight:

In-class writing assignment

Weeks Nine through Eleven: Human Rights

Week Nine:

1. View Fugard's Master Harold...and the Boys
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What society is the playwright examining?
 - b. What is the playwright's intent? To bring about change?
 - c. What was the result? What is the status of that society today?

Week Ten:

1. Read Baraka's Dutchman
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. What society is the playwright examining?
 - b. What is the playwright's intent? To bring about change?
 - c. What was the result? What is the status of that society today?

Week Eleven:

1. Discussion based on Fugard and Baraka's works
2. Connection to current events
3. Contrast situations in US and Africa

Week Twelve

TASKS test/assessment.

Weeks Thirteen through Fifteen: Family Values

Week Thirteen:

1. View Wilder's Our Town
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. How does the play reflect the beliefs of the time it was written?
 - b. How close is the playwright to the subject?
 - c. What is the purpose of the play?

Week Fourteen:

1. Read Albee's Zoo Story
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. How does the play reflect the beliefs of the time it was written?
 - b. How close is the playwright to the subject?
 - c. What is the purpose of the play?

Week Fifteen:

1. View Shepard's Fool for Love
2. Discussion of playwright's intent
3. Written reaction paper to questions:
 - a. How does the play reflect the beliefs of the time it was written?
 - b. How close is the playwright to the subject?
 - c. What is the purpose of the play?

4. Evaluation of Student Learning:

- a. Students will be required to submit five short reaction papers to the subjects discussed throughout the term. In addition, each student will write a comparative analysis of a play that is readily available on video, discussing the playwright's intent in writing the play and how it was adapted for the screen.

Reaction Papers	50%
Research/Analysis paper	30%
Participation/Discussion	20%

- b. More than 35% of the final grade is based on the writing component. Additionally, one of these papers will be resubmitted after revision for a grade reconsideration. This is consistent with the criteria for a writing-intensive course.

5. Rationale:
 - a. Senior Seminar.
 - b. Completion of 75 semester hours.
 - c. This course does not duplicate current offerings.
 - d. This course will not be required in any majors or programs other than general education senior seminar.
6. Implementation:
 - a. Faculty member to whom course is initially assigned: David Wolski
 - b. Texts:

Klaus, Gilbert, and Field, Stages of Drama, 3rd edition, 1995.

Watt and Richardson, American Drama: Colonial to Contemporary, 1995.
 - c. Additional cost to students: If students see productions, costs could range from \$5.00 to no more than \$20.00.
 - d. Term First Offered: Spring 2001
7. Community College Transfer:

A community college will not be judged equivalent to this course.
8. Date approved by the Department: 4/3/00
9. Date approved by the College Curriculum Committee: 4/19/00
10. Date approved by the Senior Seminar Advisory Committee: 4/27/00
11. Date approved by the CAA: 10/19/00

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