

Revised September 5, 2019

THR 830: Introduction to Graduate Studies<sup>1</sup>  
Fridays 9:10 AM-12:00 noon  
C302 Snyder Hall

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Smith  
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Office: 133 Auditorium Building  
Office Hours: Mon. 4:45pm-5:45pm  
Wed. 1:30pm-2:30pm  
And By Appointment

**Course Description and Objectives**

This course introduces students to three fields of graduate study: pedagogy, research methodology, and scholarly theory. We will examine these professional activities as they pertain to the unique disciplinary concerns of theatre scholars and artists. Through critical engagement with writing on these subjects and by practicing activities necessary to each area, students will develop analytical, writing, and practical skills for teaching, research, and scholarship /artistic production.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Improve their writing skills for academic and professional situations
- Analyze scholarly arguments and apply these arguments to professional and pedagogical scenarios
- Articulate their values in a teaching philosophy and/or artistic mission statement
- Ask thoughtful research questions and engage in important conversations for the field
- Understand the role of theatre in undergraduate general education, the mechanics of the undergraduate theatre major, and the purpose of graduate theatre education

**Required Materials**

All required readings are available online via D2L

**ASSESSMENTS:**

**Participation: 20%**, ongoing

Practicing critical thinking and writing skills demands that you are challenged to test the validity and applicability of your own ideas and those presented in the curriculum. In order to build on your capacities, I ask that you dialogue, debate and collaborate with peers, and try out alternative means of expressing arguments and ideas. Our seminar sessions are opportunities to work through ideas and materials as a team. This requires that you arrive on time and are prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion as an active listener and a considerate contributor. In graduate school, attendance is expected at all class sessions unless you have an emergency or a pre-approved professional conflict.

**Critical Journal Reflections: 20%** (Weekly)

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<sup>1</sup> Syllabus developed in collaboration with Dr. Ann Folino White.

Revised September 5, 2019

Each week, students will write a 300-500 word response to a question related to the week's readings, or to a topic of professional development pertinent to that week's content. Topics are provided for the first three weeks. These assignments should be printed out before class meets and turned in as hard copies at the end of the class session.

**Discussion Leadership: 10%** (Various Dates)

Each student will serve as discussant for two articles (or pairings of articles) on different dates chosen in consultation with the instructor. Teaching the article to your colleagues is intended to help develop pedagogical skills.

**Teaching Philosophy Statement or Artist Mission Statement: 10% (Due November 8)**

Students will choose to write a Teaching Philosophy Statement or an Artist Mission statement. We will look at examples of these kinds of statements together and complete exercises to reflect on developing these statements.

**Conference Paper Abstract and Annotated Bibliography: 20%** (Revision due Monday December 11 by 5:00 PM)

Students will write an abstract for a proposed research presentation at an academic conference. This abstract will be revised and turned in, along with an annotated bibliography for supporting this research.

**Course Syllabus: Introduction to Theatre: 20%** (Due Monday, December 11 by 5:00 PM)

Students will create a syllabus for an Introduction to Theatre or other General Education Theatre course.

**Course Schedule:**

Please note that all readings and Critical Reflection Journals are due on the date listed.

8/30:

Week 1: Undergraduate Theatre Experiences

Readings:

George Kernodle, "Theatre Practice and Theatre Theory in the Liberal Arts Curriculum"

Russell Vandenbroucke, "What Stays?"

Rhonda Blair, "I do-I Understand: Hampshire College's Alternative Teaching Model"

George Hillow, "Design: To BA or BFA, That is the Question."

**Critical Journal Reflection #1: Describe your undergraduate theatre**

**experience/your experience of Theatre undergraduates:** Did you major in theatre?

What courses were required? What courses were useful/less useful? What is your understanding of MSU Theatre undergrads and their expectations about their major?

9/6:

Week 2: Graduate Theatre Curriculum

Readings:

Jill Dolan, "To Teach and to Mentor"

Howard Bay, "Teaching Theatre Design"

Revised September 5, 2019

Shannon Jackson, "Professing Performance"  
MSU Department of Theatre Graduate Handbook

**Critical Journal Reflection #2: What is the purpose of an MFA in Design? Why are you here? What do you hope to get out of this program?**

9/13:

Week 3: New Play Dramaturgy, Visual Dramaturgy, Professional Theatre Settings

Readings:

Art Borreca, "New Play Dramaturgy: The Yale and Iowa Models"

Wes D. Pearce, Catherine Gleason, Justin Maxwell, and Martine Kei Green-Rogers, "Visual Dramaturgy: Problem Solver or Problem Maker in Contemporary Performance Creation."

Websites of professional theatre organizations (LORT, AEA, USA, IATSE, etc.)

**Critical Journal Reflection #3: What is your approach to collaboration? Which of the models described by Borreca do you prefer? To what extent do you see the in-house critic and empathic facilitator models functioning in the essay on visual dramaturgy?**

9/20:

Week 4: Skills 1: Research Methods

Readings:

Annette Fern, "What Have They Done to the Evidence?"

W.B. Worthen, "Acting, Singing, Dancing and So Forth"

Yakel and Torres, "AI: Archival Intelligence"

Reviews of Shannon Jackson's book *Professing Performance*

**Critical Journal Reflection #4: Write a cogent response to this week's readings.**

9/27

Week 5: Design Scholarship and Pedagogy

Readings:

Christin Essin, *Toward an Aesthetic of Backstage Labor*

Richard M. Isackes, *Design Pedagogy*

Gwendolyn Waltz, *Filmed Scenery*

Snyder, *How to Ask a Smart Question*

**Critical Journal Reflection #5**

10/4

Week 6: Skills 2: Pedagogy

Altman and Cashin, "Writing a Syllabus"

Brinko, "Visioning Your Course"

Haggerty, "Teaching Statements are Bunk"

James M. Lang, "Four Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy"

Charlotte Woods, "Researching and developing interdisciplinary Teaching"

**Critical Journal Reflection #6: Reflect on positive and negative education experiences.**

Revised September 5, 2019

What teachers made you want to teach? What activities have helped you learn?

10/11

Week 7: Reading Week: Class will not meet. Students are encouraged to set up individual meetings with the instructor for earlier in the week. Plan to work on Teaching Philosophy/Artist Statement this week.

10/18

Week 8: Theatre and the Liberal Arts

Readings:

Brockett et al, Roundtable on Theatre Education

Nancy Kindelan, The Evolution of the Liberal Arts

Ronald Wainscott, Teaching Intro Classes

**Critical Reflection #7:** How would you approach an Intro to Theatre or other General Education Theatre course?

**Teaching Philosophy or Artist Statement Due**

10/25

Week 9: Contemporary Trends: Devised Theatre and Immersive Theatre

Readings:

Martine Kei Green-Rogers, "What Is Devised Theatre?"

Joan Herrington et al, "Preparing to Devise"

W. B. Worthen, "Sleep No More"

Jonathan Mandell, "Defining Immersive Theatre"

**Critical Journal Reflection #8**

11/1

Week 10: Theatre and the Digital

Readings:

Debra Caplan, Notes from the Frontier

Daniel Fine, Media Design and Dramaturgy

Laura MacDonald, Connection in an Isolating Age

Erin Mee, Smartphone Plays

**Critical Journal Reflection #9**

11/8

Week 11: Reading Week: Syllabus and Research Project Prep Time. Class will not meet. Students are encouraged to set up individual meetings with instructor earlier in the week.

11/15

Week 12: Diversity and Inclusion

Readings:

Lavina Jadhvani, "Color-Conscious Casting"

Revised September 5, 2019

Sam Abel, "Gay and Lesbian Studies and the Theatre Curriculum"

Christian Flaugh, "Trans/formability and the Talk *Tomate*"

Rashida Z. Shaw, "Insert [Chitlin Circuit] Here"

**Critical Journal Reflection #10**

11/22

Week 13: Skills 3: Professional Profile

Readings:

Braun, et al., "How to Fail in Grant Writing"

Eyler, "Rhetoric of the CV"

Hermann, "Grand Applications"

**Critical Journal Reflection #11:** Instead of Critical Journal this week, please submit a draft of your End-of-Semester meeting narrative. This can be submitted via email.

11/28: Thanksgiving Break: Class will not meet

12/6

Week 14: Presentations of Work in Progress

**Bibliography**

Abel, Sam. "Gay and Lesbian Studies and the Theatre Curriculum." *Theatre Topics* 4.1 (March 1994), 31-44.

Altman, Howard B. and William E. Cashin, "Writing a Syllabus." Idea Paper No. 27. Kansas State University Department of Education, 1992.

Bay, Howard. "On Theatre Design." *Masters Teachers of Theatre*, ed. Burnett Hobgood. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1988.

Blair, Rhonda. "I do-I Understand: Hampshire College's Alternative Teaching Model." In *Perspectives on Teaching Theatre*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Borreca, Art. "New Play Dramaturgy: The Yale and Iowa Models." Susan Jonas et al, eds. *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1997.

Brinko, Kathleen T. "Visioning Your Course: Questions to Ask as You Design Your Course." *The Teaching Professor* 5.2 (February 1991), 3-4.

Brockett, Oscar et al. *Theatre Education: Mandate for Tomorrow*. Lawrence, KS: Anchorage Press, 1985.

Caplan, Debra. "Notes from the Frontier." *Theatre Journal* 67.2 (May 2015), 347-59.

Revised September 5, 2019

Dolan, Jill. "To Teach and to Mentor: Toward Our Collective Future." *Theatre Topics* 23.1 (March 2013), 97-105.

Essin, Christin. "An Aesthetic of Backstage Labor." *Theatre Topics* 21.1 (March 2011), 33-48.

Fern, Annette. "What Have They Done to the Evidence?" *Theatre Survey* 45.2 (November 2004), 195-201.

Fine, Daniel. "Media Design and Dramaturgy." *HowlRound* 19 August 2015. Accessed 21 July 2019.

Flaugh, Christian. "Trans/formability and the Talk *Tomate*" *Theatre Topics* 21.1 (March 2011), 85-96.

Green-Rogers, Martine Kei. "What Is Devised Theatre?" *The Theatre Times*, 28 September 2016.

Herrington, Joan et al. "Preparing to Devise" *Theatre Topics* 19.2 (September 2009), 125-138.

Hillow, George. "Design: To BA or BFA, That is the Question." *Southern Theatre* 50.1 (Winter 2009), 31-32.

Isackes, Richard M. "On the Pedagogy of Stage Design: A Critique of Practice." *Theatre Topics* 18.1 (March 2008), 41-53.

Jackson, Shannon. "Professing Performance: Disciplinary Genealogies" *TDR* 45.1 (Spring 2001), 84-95.

Jadwhani, Lavina. "Color-Conscious Casting: Three Questions to Ask." *HowlRound*, 21 December 2014.

Kernodle, George. "Theatre Practice and Theatre Theory in the Liberal Arts Curriculum." *Educational Theatre Journal* 1.1 (October 1949), 82-85.

Kindelan, Nancy. "The Evolution of the Liberal Arts" in *Artistic Literacy: Theatre Studies and a Contemporary Liberal Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Macdonald, Laura. "Connection in an Isolating Age: Looking Back on Twenty Years of Engaging Audiences and Marketing Musical Theatre Online." Jessica Hillman-McCord, ed. *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in the Digital Age*. London and New York: Palgrave, 2017.

Mandell, Jonathan. "Defining Immersive Theatre." *HowlRound* 09 February 2016. Accessed 21 July 2019.

Mee, Erin. "Smartphone Plays: A New Theatrical Genre." *HowlRound* 06 May 2015. Accessed 21 July 2019.

Revised September 5, 2019

Pearce, Wes D. et al. "Visual Dramaturgy: Problem Solver or Problem Maker in Contemporary Performance Creation." *Theatre/Practice* 7 (2018). Accessed 21 July 2019.

Shaw, Rashida Z. "Insert [Chitlin Circuit] Here" *Theatre Topics* 19.1 (Fall 2009), 67-76.

Vandenbroucke, Russell. "What Stays (in Undergraduate Theatre Education)." *Theatre Topics* 26.3 (November 2016), 357-61.

Wainscott, Ronald. "First Contact--Introductory Courses." *Theatre Topics* 17.1 (March 2007), 29-31.

Gwendolyn Waltz, "Filmed Scenery on the Live Stage." *Theatre Journal* 58 (2006), 547-73.

Woods, Charlotte. "Researching and Developing Interdisciplinary Teaching." *Higher Education* 54 (2007), 853-866.

Worthen, W.B. "Acting, Singing, Dancing and So Forth" *Theatre Survey* 45.2 (November 2004), 263-69.

Worthen, W.B. "'The Written Troubles of the Brain': *Sleep No More* and the Space of Character." *Theatre Journal* 64 (2012), 79-97.

Yakel, Elizabeth and Deborah A. Torres, "AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise." *The American Archivist* 66.1 (Spring-Summer 2003), 51-78.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### UNIVERSITY'S DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) LEARNING USING DESIRE2LEARN

Many of the assignments in this course take place within the university's Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system. Use your personal NetID and password to access your D2L Home site by visiting <http://d2l.msu.edu>. From there, select our course name to access our course D2L site. You can learn more about the accessibility of D2L in the company's [D2L Resource Center](#).

### ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

I am committed to providing everyone the support and services needed to participate in this course. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at <http://rcpd.msu.edu>. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc), so that your needs can be addressed. Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, visit <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/services/temporary-conditions> and discuss your needs with me.

## ONLINE SIRS

Michigan State University takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and has implemented the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) to gather student feedback (<https://sirsonline.msu.edu>). This course utilizes the online SIRS system, and you will receive an e-mail during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS web form at your convenience. In addition, participation in the online SIRS system involves grade sequestration, which means that the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO during the week following the submission of grades for this course unless the SIRS online form has been completed. Alternatively, you have the option on the SIRS website to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course. We hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future. If you access the online SIRS website and complete the online SIRS form or decline to participate, you will receive the final grade in this course as usual once final grades are submitted.

## COMMERCIALIZED LECTURE NOTES

Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Article 2.3.3 of the [Academic Freedom Report](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Theatre adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).)<sup>SEP</sup> Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the [Academic Integrity](#) webpage.)

## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Article 2.III.B.4 of the [Academic Freedom Report \(AFR\)](#) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the [AFR](#) states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.



## ATTENDANCE

Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

[Campus policy regarding religious observances](#) requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required assignments/attendance. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term.

## DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Michigan State University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. MSU prohibits acts of discrimination or harassment against any University community member on the basis of age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact [The Office of Institutional Equity](#).

## GRIEF ABSENCES

MSU's Grief Absence Policy can be found here:

<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s13216> Students seeking a grief absence should complete the Grief Absence Request Form found at <https://reg.msu.edu/> under 'Student Services – Grief Absence Request Form.' Students will be asked to supply information on the nature of the loss, the date they became aware, and the expected period of absence. Once completed, the information is routed to the Assoc. Dean of the student's college and must be received prior to the student leaving campus. The student will receive a confirmation and reminder that supporting documentation must be provided to the Dean's office. Once the administrator has either approved or denied the request, the student will receive a message notifying them of the decision. If approved, instructors will be notified by the appropriate dean's office of the period of absence.