



# Theater in the Twin Cities

## *An Introductory Survey of Theatre*

St. Catherine University  
THR 1110 / Spring 2014 / 4 credits  
T/TH 1:30 – 3:10 pm, Speech Building 212

Professor	Contact Info	Office/Office Hrs
Dr. Pamyla Stiehl	Email: <a href="mailto:pastiehl@stkate.edu">pastiehl@stkate.edu</a> 651-690-6681	Music Building 206 T / R 3:30-5:00 by appointment

### COURSE OVERVIEW:

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** A fundamental fine arts course which introduces you to theatre history and to the performance elements found in a variety of theaters throughout the Twin Cities. The attendance and reviewing of St. Catherine University theatre productions and Twin Cities productions is a requirement. You will also be acquainted with the wide range of experiences and opportunities faced by theatre artists today.

**COURSE GOALS:** Why does theatre matter? As this course traces theatre from the written page to the performance stage, it aims to answer this question, helping you acquire a greater awareness and understanding of the artistry, craft, construct, history, community, practice, and significance of theatre, both in text and performance. Through immersion in the world of theatre, you will see how theatre is part of a people's history and cultural DNA; how it provides a communal way of looking at and understanding the world and one's place in it; and how it continues to be a vehicle by which we make connections, explore relationships, challenge norms, indulge aesthetic pursuits, and transform the world. To better appreciate these concepts, you will examine various play texts, historical periods, styles, genres and live productions, as well as the dynamic components that "make" theatre, i.e., acting, directing, producing, design, playwriting, and dramaturgy.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to

- Interpret and critically analyze theatrical texts, concepts, and artifacts (including live theatre productions in the Twin Cities);
- Demonstrate a grasp of theatre history, concepts, and content by passing comprehensive quizzes over lecture material;
- Create theatrical artifacts in written, oral, design/art, and other performance mediums by way of reflection essays, formal critiques, in-class discussions, a design project, and Cliff Notes final group performance;
- Identify and link the connections between theatrical texts, ideas, or artifacts and the human experience in essays and critiques;
- Collaborate with classmates to design and perform an original group theatre project;
- Actively and critically engage in the arena of live theatre by attending and critiquing productions in the Twin Cities.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (ANTHOLOGY):** *Plays for the Theatre*, ed. Oscar G. Brockett and Robert J. Ball

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You may choose, instead, to find the plays that we will be reading in various other sources, including the library. I will also provide PDF versions of *Becky's New Car*, *Our Town*, and *How I Learned to Drive* on D2L, as well as leave a copy of the textbook on reserve in the library.

### TICKET PURCHASES:

You are required to attend **THREE** live theatre productions in the Twin Cities. Please check dates and times (**evening times vary between the theatres**). The required productions are as follows (all theatre websites give travel directions, including public transportation options). Given the small size of our class, we may discuss group outings:

1) **Cyrano** by Edmond Rostand (adapted by Michael Hollinger and Aaron Posner) at PARK SQUARE THEATRE, running **3/14-3/30**; Weds – Sat evenings at 7:30; Sun 2:00 matinees (including preview performances and some Tues/Weds student matinees). Tickets range \$19 (for age 30 and under) to \$58 (premium seats) with **one Tuesday 3/18 performance for \$.99 (first-come/first-served basis)** – reserve tickets by phone **651-291-7005** or online at [www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org). *There is a box office link on D2L under "Theatre Links" module – please refer to site for all crucial box office info!*

2) **Schoolhouse Rock Live!** at THE O'SHAUGHNESSY, running **4/11-4/13**; Fri and Sat evenings at 7:00; Sun 2:00 matinee. **Tickets \$7.00 with student ID**. Reserve tickets by calling O'Shaughnessy Ticket Office **651-690-6700**.

3) **Love, Loss, and What I Wore** by Nora and Delia Ephron at THEATRE IN THE ROUND, running **4/25-5/11**; Fri/Sat evenings at 8:00; Sun 2:00 matinee. **Student discounts (\$15.00 with ID) available for Fri and Sun performances only** – reserve tickets by phone **612-333-3010** or online at [www.theatreintheround.org](http://www.theatreintheround.org). *There is a box office link on D2L under "Theatre Links" module – please refer to site for all crucial box office info!*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION / CITIZENSHIP

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken every day and is 10% of your grade. Absences can be excused if formal documentation is provided (e.g., doctor's note, court notice, obituary with travel itinerary) or if I am notified as to a religious observance conflict. In addition, if a pattern of **tardiness** becomes apparent, I may dock your attendance grade accordingly, with one warning. If attendance is going to be a problem, please do yourself a favor and drop this class.

**Participation / Citizenry:** Participation in this class is crucial! Theatre is action! Responsible participation and good citizenry also includes attentive viewing of video/media material and active listening to the lecture and your classmates; while timeliness is a sign of respect and courtesy to the entire class. **Further, if you are asked questions about assigned readings and cannot respond, it will affect your participation grade.** Following is the **10-point grading rubric** for participation/citizenry:

9-10	Actively participated, often contributed to discussions, on time, and courteous/attentive of others
8-9	Dutifully participated, semi-regularly contributed to discussions, on time, and courteous/attentive
7-8	Seldom participated, occasionally contributed to discussions, on time, and courteous/attentive
6-7	Participated and contributed only when absolutely required, on time, and courteous/attentive
0-6	Failed in regards to participation, contribution, promptness, and/or courtesy/attention

### 2. THREE (3) TWIN CITY PRODUCTION WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Cyrano = Peer Review/ Critique Writing Workshop**. Bring to class your **ticket stub or other proof of attendance** attached to 1) **An opening paragraph in final, typed form**, as if you were writing your Production Critique (see "Production Critique Prompt" on D2L) on the ACTING or DESIGN COMPONENT of *Cyrano* and 2) **three bulleted examples** from the production that support your thesis, using complete sentences to present examples. (5 pt. grade scale) **Due Tues, April 1**

2. **Schoolhouse Rock Live = Production Critique – DESIGN COMPONENT (at least 2-3 pages)** in which you formally analyze the DESIGN COMPONENT of the production. Paper must reference entire production to earn total points. **You must attach your ticket** to your paper. **\*\*See "Production Critique Prompt" on D2L for paper specifications and grading rubric.** (10 pt. grade scale) **Due Thurs, April 17.**

3. **Love, Loss and What I Wore = Production Critique – ACTING COMPONENT (at least 2-3 pages)** in which you formally analyze the ACTING COMPONENT of the production. Paper must reference entire production to earn total points. **You must attach your ticket** to your paper. **\*\*See "Production Critique Prompt" on D2L for paper specifications and grading rubric.** (10 pt. grade scale) **Due Thurs, May 13.**

**NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**NOTE:** All papers must be typed in 11- or 12-pt. font with one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled together; papers must be turned in immediately before or after class (emailed papers will not be accepted). Title page and extra spacing will not be counted toward page-length requirement.

*I strongly encourage you to make use of the Writing/Reading Center as you compose your papers. Tutors in the center can help you identify opportunities for improvement in your writing as well as assist you in clarifying your ideas and unique perspective on the subject. The Writing/Reading Center is located in the O'Neill Center for Academic Development in the lower level of the CDC.*

### 3. DESIGN PROJECT – Scenic or Costume Designer

This is a chance to work with your hands and use your imagination! You will be asked to assume the role of **either a scenic or costume designer**. As a designer, you will submit **(1) a set or costume rendering with (2) a concept statement and (3) thematic collage/montage for one of the plays we have read or viewed**. **\*\*See "Design Project Prompt" on D2L for specific details and grading criteria. Due Tues, April 29.**

### 4. SCHEDULED QUIZZES

There will be **4 noncumulative quizzes** (25 questions of matching, multiple choice, and/or fill-in-the-blank) over the class lectures and assigned plays. I will record the **top 3 quiz grades**. Your lowest score will be deleted.

**No make-up quizzes or grade improvement options! If you miss a quiz (regardless of situation or if absence is excused), that is the grade dropped. Grades are nonnegotiable.**

### 5. PLAY POP QUIZZES

All reading assignments are due by the date specified in the syllabus so that we may discuss them in class. To facilitate this, there will be **short-answer pop quizzes** given periodically regarding the play scheduled for discussion. **TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE FOR QUIZ = 5**

### 6. FINAL PROJECT – "Cliff Notes" Production

The final for the class is a **group project** in which you will collaborate as playwrights, directors, actors, and designers to **create and perform** a "Cliff Notes" version of **one of the plays we have read in this course**. You have free creative reign in this project. Originality, effort, attitude, and teamwork are the most heavily graded aspects of the creation/performance. A **written journal** regarding the development process is also required. **\*\*See "Final Project – Cliff Notes Prompt" on D2L for specific details.**

### Service Extra Credit – Theater Shop Hours

Our theatre shop can always use extra bodies and volunteer labor! Therefore, for every **ten hours** that you volunteer in the shop, **1 extra credit point** will be added to your final grade. **3 points is the maximum** you can earn during the semester and **each work period must be 2 hours minimum**. Shop hours are 1:00-4:30 M-F; and I will give you a sheet that you may use to log your hours and have them authorized by Troy Wilhelmson, our technical director and shop supervisor. Please let me know if you have interest and/or questions. This is a very fun way to get to know the behind-the-scenes workings of live theatre, as well as improve your grade!

Be forewarned that this is the only extra-credit option for this class at this point. I may offer additional or alternative extra-credit opportunities as the semester progresses, but they are only at my discretion and under my direction.

### Grading Breakdown:

Attendance	10%
Participation / Citizenry	10%
Scheduled Quizzes (top 3 scores)	20%
Live Production In-Class Writing Workshop (5 pt. grade scale)	5%
Live Production Reflection Essay (10 pt. grade scale)	10%
Live Production Critique (10 pt. grade scale)	10%
Design Project (10 pt. grade scale)	10%
Play Pop Quizzes (5 pt. grade scale)	10%
Final Project – Cliff Notes Page-to-Stage (5 pt. journal/10 pt. performance)	15%

## OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES

### **ACCOMODATIONS:**

St. Catherine University is committed to equal access for all and recognizes that disability is an aspect of diversity. The University's goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to the learning environment, accurate assessment of your achievement, please contact me and the Resources for Disabilities office as soon as possible. Access Consultants can be reached in the O'Neill Center at 651.690.6563 to discuss academic adjustments or accommodations.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

St. Catherine University's mission provides for excellence in education through the search for truth and justice. According to the provisions of this mission, the University expects all students and faculty to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any act of academic dishonesty threatens the value of all scholastic endeavors. The complete document on academic integrity, including the process for implementation, may be found in the LeGuide, the student guide to policies, procedure and rules at St. Catherine University. Individuals who plagiarize will immediately fail the assignment. Plagiarism may also result in failure of the class or expulsion from the University.

### **LECTURE GADGET "BAN":**

In order to ensure full class participation and to help minimize distractions, I've instated a "ban" on laptop computer use during lectures. It is crucial to the success of the course that you stay engaged during class, not clicking on a keyboard or buried in a laptop (or surfing the web or checking email . . .). Please check with me if you feel you need an exception to this rule. Rest assured, **my PowerPoint slides are posted on D2L and can be used as study guides. You will also want to print them out beforehand, bring them to class, and use them to take any additional notes you deem helpful.** Further, you may use your laptops for in-class assignments or project work. On a similar note, it goes without saying that cell-phone use, texting, etc., is also taboo, and all such gadgets are to be left in backpacks, out of sight, for the duration of the class (you can use the mid-class break to "plug back in").

### **Course Grade Scale :**

A	94-100	superior/excellent	4.0
A-	90-93		3.7
B+	87-89		3.3
B	83-86	good/better than average	3.0
B-	80-82		2.7
C+	77-79		2.3
C	73-76	competent/average	2.0
C-	70-72		1.7
D+	67-69		1.3
D	60-66	minimum passing	1.0
F	0-59	failing	0.0

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

Remember to **check D2L** throughout the week for new and/or updated announcements and information. I will also be emailing you regularly with updates, reminders, and general information. Feel free to email me regularly as well with questions, concerns, or to simply touch base and/or further discuss a topic. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours.

Reading assignments are due by the start of class on the date by which they are listed.

I have a "NO LATE ASSIGNMENT" policy – no exceptions . . . . I also have a "NO MAKE UP" and "NO ADDITIONAL / EXCEPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS" policy. The syllabus, required assignments, and grading rubric/s are set in stone. The grade you earned is the grade you will receive. After-the-fact requests for extra credit, alternate/additional assignments or grading reconsiderations will not receive a response from me, as you have been duly forewarned that your grade is solely determined by the assignments and criteria set forth in this syllabus.

### WHAT IS THEATRE?

T 2/4 Course Intro/Orientation; Theatre Basics

- Send email to me, answering questions on syllabus pg. 7

R 2/6 Theatre Basics cont.; Theatre and Art

- Have read *Becky's New Car* by Steven Dietz – pass/fail "pop quiz"

T 2/11 The Audience and Criticism; The Play

R 2/13 Minnesota State High School One-Act Drama Competition – O'Shaughnessy (\$10.00 ticket fee)

T 2/18 The Play cont.  
Theatrical Spaces

- Have read *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder (D2L pdf version provided – Acts 1, 2, and 3)  
(Video option of live performance available through D2L link)

### TRACING THE LINEAGE – CRUCIAL BEGINNINGS AND PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT

R 2/20 The Greeks.

T 2/25 The Greeks cont.

- Have read *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles

R 2/27 **QUIZ 1**  
The Romans

T 3/4 Medieval Liturgical Beginnings  
Italian Renaissance

**Cyrano opens 3/14 at Park Square Theatre (3/30 is last chance to see – reserve your tickets early!)**

R 3/6 Italian Renaissance cont.  
Elizabethan Theatre

T 3/11 Elizabethan Theatre cont.

## HOW DO WE MAKE THEATRE?

R 3/13 Playwriting and Dramaturgy

- Have read *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* by August Wilson

T 3/18 In-class viewing of *O-Town*

- Have watched *Every Little Step* documentary – YouTube link on D2L

R 3/20 **QUIZ 2**

Directing and Producing

3/24 – 3/30 ----- SPRING BREAK -----

**Schoolhouse Rock Live! opens 4/11 at O'Shaughnessy (4/13 is last chance to see – reserve your tickets early!)**

T 4/1 Directing and Producing cont.

- **DUE In-Class Peer Review/Writing Workshop Assignment (Cyrano)**

R 4/3 Scenic and Lighting Design

T 4/8 Scenic, Lighting Design cont.  
Costume Design

- Have read *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams

R 4/10 Acting

T 4/15 Acting cont.

- Have read *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

## STYLES AND GENRES OF THEATRE

**Love, Loss, What I Wore opens 4/25 at Theatre in the Round (5/11 is last chance to see – reserve your tickets early!)**

R 4/17 Melodrama, Realism/Naturalism

- **DUE Schoolhouse Rock Live! Production Critique -- DESIGN**

T 4/22 Early Modernisms -- Symbolism, Futurism, Dada  
In-class conceptual work on Design Project  
Initial "Cliff Notes" group mtgs

R 4/24 **QUIZ 3**

Early Modernisms cont. – Expressionism

Epic Theatre (Brechtian)

In-class work on "Cliff Notes" group project

- Have read *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill

T 4/29 Absurdist Theatre

Postmodern Theatre

- **DUE Design Project (roundtable sharing of projects if time permits)**

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

R 5/1 Musical Theatre – Terms and Contemporary Trends

T 5/6 Cultural Diversity in Contemporary Theatre  
African American Theatre  
"Cliff Notes" in-class work session

R 5/8 Diversity cont. – African American Theatre  
Women's Theatre

- **Have read: *How I Learned to Drive* by Paula Vogel**

T 5/13 Women's Theatre cont.  
Performance Art  
Live production/s discussion

- **DUE *Love, Loss and What I Wore* Production Critique -- ACTING**

R 5/15 **QUIZ 4**  
Work final "Cliff Notes" projects

<p><b>FINAL EXAM -- THURSDAY, December 17; 1:30-3:30</b> <b>Presentations of Final "Cliff Notes" Productions with Feedback and Group Discussion</b></p>
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***THIS IS YOUR FIRST CLASS ASSIGNMENT -- YOUR EMAIL REPLY IS EXPECTED BY SUNDAY 2/9.***

EMAIL QUESTIONS:

- 1) WHY ARE YOU TAKING THIS CLASS?
- 2) TELL ME OF A PAST THEATRE EXPERIENCE, IF ANY.
- 3) WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR DESIRED GOALS IN THIS CLASS?
- 4) HAVE YOU READ THE SYLLABUS AND REFERENCED ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS ON D2L ("Production Critique Toolbox" "Design Project" and "Cliff Notes Final Project")? DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS, AND ACCEPT ALL AS OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS DESCRIBING BOTH OF OUR OBLIGATIONS IN THIS COURSE (WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT I MAY ADJUST THE SCHEDULE / ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE IF NECESSARY)?
- 5) DO YOU AGREE TO ACCEPT THE GRADE/S YOU EARNED, WITH NO ATTEMPT TO WORK AROUND THE COURSE CRITERIA, ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS, AND DEADLINES TO "IMPROVE" OR "ADJUST" SUCH GRADE/S?