

WKU Department of Theatre & Dance  
Common Learning Goals, THEA 151: Theatre Appreciation

As a result of taking a Theatre Appreciation Course at WKU, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.
2. Identify and understand the fundamental responsibilities of the various artistic and production staff typically engaged in the production of live theatre;
3. Identify and understand the fundamental features of the most common varieties of stage architecture;
4. Identify and understand the fundamental features of dramatic literature as a unique literary form;
5. Distinguish between, identify, and understand the function of dialog and stage directions in a play script;
6. Identify and understand the fundamental features of the primary dramatic genres (e.g. tragedy, comedy, farce, tragic-comedy);
7. Identify and understand the fundamental features of realism as a dramatic style;
8. Identify and understand the fundamental features of western non-realistic representationalism as a dramatic style;
9. Identify and understand the fundamental features of at least one widely accepted theory of the origins of theatre as a world wide cultural practice;
10. Identify and understand at least three societal functions of theatre as a world wide cultural practice;
11. Identify and understand the fundamentals of the process of live theatre attendance and appropriate audience etiquette;
12. Demonstrate that they can develop and rationally articulate a personal opinion of their experience of a live theater event
13. Demonstrate that they can glean and rationally articulate a basic understanding of the major themes and ideas of a particular dramatic text, either on the page and/or in live performance.
14. Attend Live Theatrical Performances.

## Outcomes Assessment

For one section per academic year each THEA 151: Theatre Appreciation instructor must collect and retain representative examples of student responses to specific exam questions and/or assignments that reflect their students ability to demonstrate points 1-13 above and submit them to the department head. The department head will periodically convene a faculty panel to assess these examples of student responses, which will subsequently be archived with other program assessment materials.

The Grading System is as follows:

Assessment Exam	25%
Play Production Test	25%
Presentation	25%
Final Exam	25%
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Total	100%

You may see and take tests over more than Two plays. I will keep the highest Two Grades for your Production test grades.

No Extra Credit. Don't Ask. You have Seven chances at Two plays. If you see more and take the tests on them, I'll keep the highest Two grades.

No textbook is required. Study materials will be posted on Blackboard under Content.

The Assessment and the Final will be multiple choice: no scantron required.

The Play Test will consist of eight to ten (8-10) short answer questions worth eighty (80) points and a written discussion question worth twenty (20) points for one hundred (100) total points.

The Presentation will consist of a ten (10) to fifteen (15) presentation on a theatrical subject. It may be in the form of a lecture, a video which the student produces personally, or a Powerpoint presentation. The student is required to use no fewer than five (5) original sources and provide an annotated bibliography of the sources.

Contact me at [jeff.beard@wku.edu](mailto:jeff.beard@wku.edu): No Campus Phone, No Office, No Office Hours; E-mail for Appointments.

## Theater Addresses and Contact Info.

Russell H. Miller Theater WKU Campus Ivan Wilson Fine Art Center, 2nd Floor, across from Helm Library

Van Meter Auditorium WKU Campus

Gordon Wilson Theater 100 Ground Floor Gordon Wilson Hall

Phoenix Theater on 545 Morris Alley, off Chestnut Street, between 10th and Main, across Chestnut from Tidballs, Bowling Green, KY

Horse Cave Theater 207 E Main Street, Horse Cave, KY

Theater & Dance Department Office, Gordon Wilson Hall Room #300

WKU Theater & Dance Department Office Gordon Wilson Hall Room #300 270-745-5845

WKU Theater Box Office  
270-745-5222

[www.wku.showare.com](http://www.wku.showare.com)

Jeffrey Beard  
270-745-5845

[jeff.beard@wku.edu](mailto:jeff.beard@wku.edu)

Kentucky Stages

[www.kentuckystages.org](http://www.kentuckystages.org)

Public Theater of Kentucky  
270-781-6233

[www.ptkbg.org](http://www.ptkbg.org)

Fountain Square Players

[www.fountainsquareplayers.org](http://www.fountainsquareplayers.org)

## The Eleven Commandments for Playgoing

### 1. Thou Shalt Turn Off Thy Cell Phone.

It is live theater. The audience can hear you. The actors can hear you. If it's so important that you can't miss the call, stay home. Otherwise, check your phone at intermission, turn it off again, and turn it on again after the show. Some prominent actors have been known to stop the show until the offender has been escorted out. In NYC, it is illegal to use a cell phone in a live theater except to make a 911 call. The rest of the audience did not pay to hear your phone conversation. We can hear the alert when you get a message, too. It is rude.

### 2. Thou Shalt Not Text.

If you're texting during the play, you suck. You know that even a small light in a dark room is eye-catching, right? And if it's eye-catching, it's going to be distracting. If you're texting in the theater, you're either a moron or jerk, or both.

### 3. Thou Shalt Not Speak.

Be quiet. As in, "keep your mouth shut." Even if you think you're being quiet enough that no one will hear you, you aren't. The only time it's acceptable to talk is before the show, at intermission, and after the show. Most wisecracks aren't nearly as clever as the person making them thinks they are. Save the comments for intermission and after the show. This means you. You are not a special exception. [You may laugh at the jokes.]

### 4. Thou Shalt Not Take Notes.

If your short term memory is so poor that you cannot remember the plot or characters, make notes at intermission, and after the show. Believe it or not, the people around you can see you, and sometimes the actors can, too. Plus, if your head is down making notes, you might miss something you need to see.

5. Thou Shalt Not Kick nor Put Thy Feet on the Seats in Front of Thee, nor Otherwise Annoy the Rest of Us.

... especially if someone's in the seat. For that matter, share the armrest, and don't put your jacket down hoping that no one will sit next to you. There are usually reserved seats in live theater. Odds are, someone has that seat. Use the coat check if one is available. If you need the extra space, ask to sit on the aisle when you make your reservations.

6. Thou Shalt Use the Restroom Before the Show Starts.

Why stumble over everyone going back and forth to your seat? And if that's completely impossible for you, if you have a bladder condition, at least have the decency to sit in an aisle seat. Go before the show, or hold it until intermission.

7. This is Not a Movie; There are No Concessions in the House, Only the Lobby.

Remember the talking commandment, food makes noise too! Eat before the show. Have a snack in the lobby or restroom at intermission. (Do you detect a pattern here?) If you have a cough and need cough drops, muffle the noise of the wrapper.

8. Thou Shalt Not Bring Thy Children to Adult Shows.

Crying babies annoy both the audience and the cast, and they don't get anything out of the production. (See Commandment Three.) If they are too young to control themselves, they are too young for theater, except for children's theater. If you can't find a sitter, perhaps there are some parents support groups who can help: have the family go to the play in rotations so that an adult is at home with your child. Form a baby sitting pool with friends and family: so that one couple keeps all the kids one night, and you return the favor the next night. Think!

9. The Theater is Not Thy Make-Out Spot.

Do not kiss, fondle, grope, or have sex with your partner during the play. Seriously, get a room. If you're attractive enough that others would want to watch you making out, chances are you'd be on stage already, and not sitting in the theater with the rest of us.

#### 10. Thou Shalt Not Shoot Video Whilst in the Theater.

This is called piracy, and it is a violation of copyright. It's stealing (there is a real commandment about that one), unless given expressed written permission by the theater, and even then, no lights.

#### 11. Thou Shalt Make Thy Reservations.

Do not expect to walk up to the box office at the last performance and be able to get a ticket without a reservation. There are 64 Students in each class. There are Six to Eight sections of Theater Appreciation. Sometimes English, Literature, and Music classes may be required to see the plays as well. If everybody goes at the same time, there just aren't enough seats.

(I don't accept, "I couldn't get a ticket," as an excuse. You have more than enough chances to see and take tests on only Two productions. If you miss one, for any reason, catch the next one; and don't procrastinate until the last Two. You're sure to have some kind of glitch. Use the last Two as the safety net, in case you have an emergency and have to miss one of the earlier ones. If you wait until the last two, you run the risk of missing them. Plus, there is the added incentive of seeing more than two plays, taking the tests on them, and keeping the top two grades.)

Enjoy!

Some things to look for and think about when watching the plays:

- Does the exposition of the play give you everything necessary to let you know who the characters are and what is going on? If not, is it an intentional mystery?
- What is the genre of the play? Look for the aspects of the play that show which of the five genres (tragedy, tragicomedy, melodrama, domestic comedy, farce or satire) it is primarily. Find what aspects of other genre the play contains.
- Is the play primarily representational or presentational? [Does it remain behind the 4<sup>th</sup> Wall? Does it have a box set or a unit set? Does it use any form of direct address (narration, soliloquy or aside)]?
- What is the primary conflict in the play? What kind of conflict (character, society, nature, self) is it?
- Who is the main character? What does he or she want? What does he or she do in order to get it? How far is he or she willing to go?
- Is the main character a hero, a tragic hero, an antihero, a victim or a villain? What makes him or her sympathetic? What are some unsympathetic traits?
- What or who is preventing the character from getting what he or she wants? How does he, she, or it block the character's advance?
- What is the inciting incident in the play? What conflicts and complications develop as a result?
- What is the reversal? How does the plot change? Where did it appear to be going? How does the change affect the characters?
- To which of the unities [time, place or action], if any, does the play conform, or is it episodic? Is the play stronger or weaker because of it?
- Does the play have a high or low degree of verisimilitude? What aspects strengthen its believability? Which weaken it?
- What is the thought of the play? Is it spelled out in the dénouement of the play or do we conclude what it is by drawing an inference?



- Is the plot a product of cause and effect? If not, what, if anything, holds the events of the story together? If so, is the chain of events easy to follow? Can we trace it from the inciting incident through the dénouement?
- Does the play ask us to accept any premise that is contrary to logic or experience? Does the play remain true to its own internal logic?
- Is the ending of the play satisfying logically and emotionally? Does it make sense? Does it fit in with the events which preceded it or is it a deus ex machina? Is the ending predictable or a surprise?

## Theater Websites

<a href="http://www.newyorktheatreguide.com">www.newyorktheatreguide.com</a>	New York Theater Guide
<a href="http://www.playbill.com">www.playbill.com</a>	Playbill Magazine Site
<a href="http://www.nytheatre.com">www.nytheatre.com</a>	NY Theatre Site
<a href="http://www.curtainup.com">www.curtainup.com</a>	Curtain Up Site
<a href="http://www.theatermania.com">www.theatermania.com</a>	Theater Mania Site
<a href="http://www.ibdb.com">www.ibdb.com</a>	Internet Broadway Database
<a href="http://www.lortel.org/LLA_archive/index.cfm">www.lortel.org/LLA_archive/index.cfm</a>	Internet Off-Broadway Database
<a href="http://thattheatresite.com/index.html">http://thattheatresite.com/index.html</a>	That Theatre Site
<a href="http://www.glencoe.com/theatre/Timeline/timeline_content.html">http://www.glencoe.com/theatre/Timeline/timeline_content.html</a>	Interactive Timeline
<a href="http://www.videoccasions-nw.com/history/jack.html">http://www.videoccasions-nw.com/history/jack.html</a>	Jack Wolcott's Theater History on the Web
<a href="http://www.theatredb.com">www.theatredb.com</a>	Theater Database
<a href="http://www.suite101.com/theatrehistory">http://www.suite101.com/theatrehistory</a>	Theater History 101
<a href="http://www.tctwebstage.com/oftheatre.htm">http://www.tctwebstage.com/oftheatre.htm</a>	History of Theater
<a href="http://www.theatrehistory.com">www.theatrehistory.com</a>	Theater History Database
<a href="http://www.theatredatabase.com">www.theatredatabase.com</a>	Theater Database
<a href="http://www.theatertalk.org">www.theatertalk.org</a>	Theater Talk TV Program Site
<a href="http://www.theatretalk.org">www.theatretalk.org</a>	Chicago Theatre Site
<a href="http://www.backstage.com">www.backstage.com</a>	Stage & Screen News Site
<a href="http://www.variety.com">www.variety.com</a>	Show Business News Site
<a href="http://www.villagevoice.com">www.villagevoice.com</a>	Greenwich Village News Site
<a href="http://www.nyl.com/content/nyl_living/theater_reviews/">www.nyl.com/content/nyl_living/theater_reviews/</a>	NYC TV News & Views Site
<a href="http://www.newyorker.com">www.newyorker.com</a>	Magazine Site
<a href="http://www.broadway.com">www.broadway.com</a>	Site
<a href="http://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/">www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/</a>	Online Interactive Documentary

Monday-Friday 8:00-10:15 Theater Appreciation 151

06/08

Orientation  
Differences Between Art and Science  
Fine Arts and Lively Arts  
Literature and Drama  
Dramatic Conventions  
Presentational and Representational Styles

06/09

Types of Theaters  
Types of Theater Companies  
Dramatic Action  
Setting, Types of Conflicts

06/10

*Aristotle's Poetics*  
The Elements and The Unities

06/11

*Aristotle's Poetics*  
The Definition of Tragedy, The Tragic Flaw, Irony

06/12

Other Genres—Wrap up Loose Ends. Review for Assessment

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06/15

Assessment  
Watch The Producers Act One.

06/16

Watch *The Producers*, Act Two.  
Discuss *The Producers*.

06/17

Functions of the Playwright  
Getting Produced

06/18

The Functions of the Producer  
Preparation for Watching Required Production

06/19

The Functions of the Director  
The Functions of the Designers

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06/22

Casting and Rehearsing  
Previews, Try-Outs and Opening  
The Contribution of the Critics

06/23

Origins of Western Theater  
Tragic Festivals and The Theater of Dionysus  
Conventions and Practices

06/24

Old Comedy, New Comedy, Greeks and Romans  
Senecan Tragedy

06/25

Origins of Theater on Africa, India, China and Japan  
Medieval Drama

06/26

Renaissance Theater Architecture  
Elizabethan Playhouses, Companies and Conventions  
Neo-Classical and Restoration Theater  
Meiningen and the First Directors, Ibsen and the  
First Realists

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*The Trip to Bountiful*

Fountain Square Players

Phoenix Theatre

454 Morris Alley off Chestnut Street between 10th and Main

June 25-28, Thu.-Sat 8:00 P.M., Sun. 3:00 P.M.

[www.fountainsquareplayers.org](http://www.fountainsquareplayers.org)

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06/29

*Trip to Bountiful* Test  
Discussion

06/30

The New Stagecraft  
Early American Theater Through Boothe  
American Musical Theater  
O'Neill  
The Group, Federal Theater Project, Mercury Theater  
Postwar European Theater Movements: Absurd and Epic  
Theater  
Off-Broadway, Off-off-Broadway and Resident Regional  
Theater

07/01

Wrap Up Presentations  
Review for Comprehensive Final

07/02

Final Exam

WKU Theater Department

745-5845

Fountain Square Box Office:

782-2119

Contact me at [jeff.beard@wku.edu](mailto:jeff.beard@wku.edu).

**Extra Credit Policy:** Due the special circumstances surrounding Summer Sessions, I do not give extra credit. If I did, most of my time would be taken up devising and grading extra credit assignments. My philosophy is that if a students spent as much time on the regular assignments as they would spend pursuing extra credit, then they would have no need of extra credit. However, should a student miss a regularly scheduled test or production for legitimate reasons, with the proper documentation such as a signed physician's excuse, an alternate assignment will be devised.

**Office Hours:** Due to my part-time status, I do not keep regular office hours. I would be happy to meet with students after class should the need arise. Most questions can be answered by reading the syllabus or via E-mail.