

REVISED 10/1/14

THE 1041 MT: INTRODUCTION TO THEATER ARTS
Hybrid Traditional / Online Course

Baruch College, Vertical Campus 3-185
Fall 2014, T 11:10 – 12:25 PM and online at
<http://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/theaterhybridf14/>

Professor: **Dr. Debra Caplan** (debra.caplan@baruch.cuny.edu)
Office: NVC 7-229 Phone: 646-312-4057
Office Hours: Thursdays 10:30 - 12:30 & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the art of theater. We will examine how theatrical productions are developed via artistic collaborations between writers, actors, directors, designers, producers, and audience members. Students will read plays and theater reviews, attend theatrical productions, and participate in workshops and conversations with guest artists. Attendance at professional performances in New York City outside of class is a required part of the course. Hybrid online/in-person activities and assignments will allow students to connect with performers and other theater professionals and to interact with New York's theater scene.

LEARNING GOALS

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

- Identify the basic components of live theatrical performance
- Indicate how these elements produce an effect on audiences
- Explain practical aspects of creating, participating in, and attending theater
- Critically analyze a script
- Distinguish between different dramatic genres and historical periods
- Navigate New York City's theater scene
- Critique theatrical performance and respond aesthetically to theater
- Articulate how theater is understood and created differently in cultures around the world

GRADING

In-Class Attendance and Participation (10%)	10 points
Weekly Online Assignments (25%)	25 points
Performance Reviews (2) (20%)	20 points
Production Team Project (15%)	15 points
Quizzes (2) (10%)	10 points
Final Exam (20%)	20 points
Total possible:	100 points

EXTRA CREDIT: You may earn extra credit for attending **up to two** additional theater productions not required for this course. Attendance at any live performance (other than a concert or standup comedy) will count, including theater, musical theater, dance, opera, performance art, and circus. Each performance is worth 1 point extra credit. You must write a

two-page (minimum) analysis of what you saw and how it relates to the topics covered in this course. **A ticket stub MUST be attached.** Extra credit must be submitted by December 9th.

REQUIREMENTS

A) Attendance and Participation (10%)

The simplest way to do well in this course is to attend all classes and contribute to class discussion. Attendance will be taken at each class. As per Baruch's attendance policy, you are only permitted **four** absences for the semester unless there are extenuating circumstances. Failure to submit an online assignment will count as missing one class. If you are absent 5 times, I will drop you from the course with a grade of WU (the equivalent of an F). If you choose to withdraw, please note that November 6th is the last day that you can receive a grade of W (i.e. a withdrawal that does not affect your GPA).

Attendance will be taken at the instructor's discretion. Sometimes attendance will be taken at the beginning of class, other times in the middle, and sometimes at the end. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be marked absent. The doors to the classroom lock automatically, and I will not admit students who arrive later than 11:30.

Attendance at all scheduled class sessions is especially important in a hybrid course, as we have only half the number of sessions as a traditional course. As such, you are only permitted **only one unexcused absence** from a Tuesday class without penalty. After that, you will lose 1 point for every subsequent absence.

Lateness Policy: Three latenesses (more than 5 minutes) will count as one absence.

B) Weekly Online Assignments (25%)

Each week, in lieu of a class session, you are required to complete an online assignment. Directions for these assignments will be posted online at our Blogs@Baruch site (<http://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/theaterhybridf14/>).

Online assignments are due **every Sunday night** (as indicated in the syllabus) **by 11:59 PM**. Each online assignment is worth 2 points towards your final grade.

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| 2 points: | Evidence of serious attention put towards assignment, all requirements fulfilled, on-time submission |
| 1.5 points: | Assignment called for more work or intellectual investment than demonstrated; not all requirements fulfilled; on-time submission |
| 1 point: | Assignment is late and/or does not demonstrate an adequate engagement with the assignment; several requirements unfulfilled |
| 0 points: | Assignment is more than 3 days late or not submitted |

12 online assignments x 2 points each = 24 possible points

Students who submit all 12 weekly assignments on time will receive an **additional bonus point** at the end of the semester.

Online assignments will vary in difficulty and length. A typical online assignment will require you to engage in an online activity (visit a website or digital archive, collect

media on Storify, annotate a video clip) and then reflect upon that activity in a blog post. Blog posts will typically have a minimum length of 500 words (approximately 1.5 pages of typed, double-spaced text), but length requirements may vary.

I recommend that you schedule a weekly timeslot of at least 75 minutes to complete these assignments. Some assignments may require more or less time investment, so please plan ahead. Assignments that ask you to respond to a reading may require less time; assignments that ask you to do online research, engage in an online meeting, or find and annotate media may require more.

C) Two Performance Reviews (2-3 pages each) (20%)

Short reviews of two theatrical productions of your choice, 10 points each. You may attend plays, musical theater, dance, opera, or performance art productions to complete this requirement (concerts, improv, and standup comedy do not count). Tickets and playbills must be submitted with your review to receive full credit.

D) Production Team Project (15%)

Student teams will prepare a design and production concept for a play of their choice. Each student will build a design board, and will submit a concept statement. Teams will also submit a collaboratively authored “mission statement” that summarizes their collective approach to the production. You will be graded both on your individual contributions (15 points) and on the overall success of your team’s project (5 points), as evidenced by the final product and your team’s process website.

E) Two Quizzes (10%)

Quizzes will be administered in class on dates announced in the syllabus and will consist of vocabulary and short answer questions. Quizzes cannot be made up for any reason.

F) Final Exam (15%)

The final exam will consist of identification, short answer, and essay questions. The exam is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, December 23rd from 1 - 3 PM**, subject to change as per Baruch’s final exam schedule. There will be no early exams or makeups.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Students are required to acquire a copy of the following play, available at the Baruch bookstore and on reserve at the Newman Library:

Sarah Ruhl, *The Clean House* (2004)

All other reading and viewing material will be provided online via the course website.

THEATERGOING REQUIREMENT

All students will be required to attend and review **two** theater productions of their choice during the semester. These productions may be anywhere in NYC or beyond, but they *must* be live. Circus, vaudeville, and other forms of popular theatrical entertainment can count at the instructor’s discretion; comedy shows and music concerts do not. It is your responsibility to arrange for tickets. Information about reasonably priced theater performances across the city will

be distributed in class and via email regularly.

COURSE OUTLINE

Readings/viewings are to be **completed** prior to the date for which they are listed.

Online assignments are to be **completed** on or before 11:59 PM on the Sunday evening when they are listed.

UNIT ONE: UNDERSTANDING THEATER

What is theater? How is it made? How do we read a play? How do we interpret a production?

What is the role of the theater artist in society?

DATE	LOCATION	TOPIC	READ / WATCH	DUE
T 9/2	VC 3-185	Introduction: Storytelling and the Theatrical Impulse		
Until Su 9/7	Online	Elements of Drama: How to Read a Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Lecture #1: Elements of Drama • Ayad Akhtar, “On Reading Plays” • Video Lecture #2: What Makes a Play Good? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 1: Art on your commute (photo essay) • Email Prof. Caplan – 1st 3 words that come to mind when you think of “theater”
T 9/9	VC 3-185	From Page to Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Ruhl, <i>The Clean House</i> • <i>The Clean House</i> selected reviews 	
Until Su 9/14	Online	Theater Spaces and Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Lecture #3: Theater Spaces and Audiences • TDF Videos: Blackbox, Thrust Stage, House, Fourth Wall, Rush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 2: Visit a theater space response
T 9/16	VC 3-185	The Actor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from Stella Adler, <i>The Technique of Acting</i> • <i>Theater People</i> Episode 1: Day Jobs 	
Until Su 9/21	Online	The Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video of Baruch visit by director Andrew J. Scoville • TDF videos: Cattle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 3: Coffee/Skype with theater professional

			Call, Callback, Chewing the Scenery, Cheating Out, Missed Cue	
Until Su 9/28	Online	Theatrical Collaborations: Designers, Stage Managers, Producers, and Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Lecture #4: Theatrical Collaborations • TDF videos: Booth, Catwalk, Dry Tech, Fight Director, Rigged Costume, Scrim, Thanks 5, Strike • Production process time-lapse clips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit online meeting schedule, choice of play, and minutes of first meeting for team project • Set up team process site
T 9/30	Start at VC 3-185	Theater in NYC Theater history scavenger hunt: *11:10 – 1 PM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Kenrick, “Theater in New York City: A Brief History” 	

UNIT TWO: THE ROOTS OF MODERN THEATER

A brief tour of the highlights of global theater history. What are the best dramas and theatrical performances ever produced around the world? Why were they important?

Until Su 10/5	Online	Western Roots: Tragedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 4: Scavenger hunt response
T 10/7	VC 3-185	Tragedy and Comedy Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Lecture #5: Greek Tragedy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #1 (Video lecture 5 will NOT be inc)
Until Su 10/12	Online	Origins of Comedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> (Video #6 no longer required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 5: Ancient / Modern Comedy Annotation w/ VOCAT
T 10/14	VC 3-185	Chinese Theater and Japanese Theater		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Review #1
Until Su 10/19	Online	African Theater and Indian Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Lecture #7: African Theater • Video Lecture #8: Indian Theater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 6: <i>Shakuntala</i> Response

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kalidasa, <i>The Recognition of Shakuntala</i> 	
T 10/21	VC 3-185	<i>Shakuntala</i> discussion, Shakespeare and Elizabethan Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i> 	
Until Su 10/26	Online	Shakespeare and Elizabethan Theater continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS Documentary <i>In Search of Shakespeare</i>, Pt 3 (Parts 1, 2, and 4 recommended but not required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 7: <i>Hamlet</i> response and annotation w/VOCAT
T 10/28	VC 3-185	Modern Drama I: The Well-Made Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Team Project
Until Su 11/2	Online	Popular Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse Virtual Vaudeville site • Browse NYPL Digital Collections (search terms: vaudeville, circus, burlesque, minstrel show, wild west show) • Browse LOC American Variety Stage Collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 8: Highlight 3 items of interest from NYPL or LOC collection (1 para. each) + 1 paragraph response to Virt. Vaudeville • Define (in your own words) vaudeville, circus, burlesque, minstrel show, wild west show)
T 11/4	VC 3-185	Modern Drama II: American Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthur Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> 	

UNIT THREE: THEATER TODAY

What are the dynamics of the contemporary stage? What is the impact of new technologies (film, television, the internet) on theater? What is the future of drama, theater, and performance? Does theater still matter?

Until Su 11/9	Online	The American Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDF video: Play vs. Musical • John Kenrick, “Let’s Start at the Very Beginning” • Go to NYPL Performing Arts library and watch a video of a Bway musical (OR attend a Bway musical) *does not count for theatergoing requirement or extra credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 9: Response to Broadway musical viewing
T 11/11	VC 3-185	Dramatic Monsters: Theater and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Capek, <i>Rossum’s Universal Robots</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #2
Until Su 11/16	Online	Theater & Radio, Film, Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Listen</u>: RadioLab Broadcast on Orson Welles’s radio play <i>War of the Worlds</i> • <u>Watch</u>: Scemes from Charlie Chaplin, <i>Modern Times</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 10: Annotate a 5 minute film clip of your choice in VOCAT. How would this change if performed live?
T 11/18	VC 3-185	Contemporary Stage I: Documentary Theater; Devised Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Deveare Smith, excerpt from <i>Twilight: Los Angeles</i> • TDF video: Devised Theater 	
Until Su 11/23	Online	Contemporary Stage II: Site-Specific Theater; Internet Theater, Interactive Theater, Performance Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles about new forms of theater • TDF video: Performance Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 11: Open Topic
T 11/25	VC 3-185	Applied Theater Workshop with Theater of the Oppressed NYC (in-class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDF video: Applied Theater • Augusto Boal, Excerpt from <i>Theater of the Oppressed</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Review #2

11/26 – 12/1		Thanksgiving Break – No Assignments		
T 12/2	VC 3-185	Sports and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brecht, “Emphasis on Sport” • Watch: 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony 	
Until Su 12/7	Online	The Arts in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Op-Ed Packet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Post 12: Storify Assignment – The Arts and Education
T 12/9	VC 3-185	The Future of Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA 2012 Arts Engagement Report • Craig Lambert, “The Future of Theater” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit via email: 5-10 words related to “theater”
T 12/23	TBA 1-3 PM			FINAL EXAM

OFFICE HOURS & APPOINTMENTS

My office hours are Thursdays from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. I am also available to meet with students outside of these times by appointment. These meetings are an opportunity for us to discuss class material, your progress, assignments, preparing for exams, your feedback on the course, or anything else related to this class. You may make appointments for regular office hours online by visiting <http://caplan.youcanbook.me>

If you would like to set up a time to meet outside of office hours, please email me to schedule an appointment. Meeting with you is a chance for me to get to know you better, which in turn, enables me to tailor your experience of this course.

EMAIL CONTACT

Please allow 48 hours for receipt and response to all emails. Email correspondence should be reserved for setting appointments outside of office hours and for quick clarification questions. If you have questions that require a longer explanation, it’s best to make an appointment.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

FORMATTING: All written work should be typed in 12 point font and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: One day late – 1 letter grade reduction (i.e. A to B)
Two days late – two letter grade reduction (i.e. A to C)
Three days late – three letter grade reduction (i.e. A to D)

PAPERS 4+ DAYS LATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

I encourage you to use the services offered by the Baruch Writing Center. Writing Center consultants are available to meet with you and/or consult via email, online chat, or phone to help

you with your writing.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. **My policy is to give a failing grade to any assignment that has been plagiarized or an exam in which you have cheated.** I am also required by Baruch College policy to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. This report becomes part of your permanent file.

Cheating is the attempted or unauthorized use of materials, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying from another student or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment or examination
- Taking an examination for another student
- Asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
- Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to two classes without consulting the second instructor
- Allowing others to research and write assigned papers including the use of commercial term paper services

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own:

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledgment
- Using information that is not considered common knowledge without acknowledgment
- Failure to acknowledge collaborators on homework assignments

For more on plagiarism, see the online tutorial prepared by the Newman Library faculty:
<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/help/plagiarism/default.htm>.

DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

Please turn off your phone and/or other electronic devices before you enter the classroom. You will learn more if you can concentrate on the course while you're in the classroom. For this reason, I ask that students not use laptop and tablet computers in class. If you have a documented disability or extenuating circumstances that require you to use a laptop or tablet, please speak with me. Recording of lectures and classroom discussions is also strictly prohibited.