

**Raritan Valley Community College  
Academic Course Outline**

**THEA-108 HISTORY OF THE THEATRE: MODERN**

**I. Basic Course Information**

A. Course Number and Title: THEA-108 History of the Theatre: Modern

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal or Revision: Semester: Spring Year: 2018

**D. Effective Term: Fall 2018**

E. Sponsoring Department: Visual & Performing Arts

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G: Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture: 3  
Laboratory: 0

Out of class student work per week: 6

H. Prerequisites: None

I. Laboratory Fees: None

J. VAPA Chair:

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**II. Catalog Description**

This course continues with the study of the traditions of Western theatre from the beginning of the eighteenth century through contemporary times. The course will emphasize the theatre's historical, stylistic and cultural perspectives, with emphasis on what significant developments led to the genres of the modern theatre. Students may be required to attend a live performance.

**III. Statement of Course Need:**

- A. Theatre History is a core requirement in most theatre programs. The majority of four year schools require theatre majors to take two semesters of theatre history.
- B. This course generally transfers as an equivalent Theatre History course, or as a General Education, Arts or free elective.

#### **IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum**

- A. Free elective
- B. This course serves as a General Education elective in Humanities/Appreciation of the Arts
- C. This course is a core program requirement for the A.A. Liberal Arts (Theatre Arts option).
- D. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, [www.njtransfer.org](http://www.njtransfer.org); b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

#### **V. Outline of Course Content**

- A. Review of Restoration period.
- B. Introduction to Nineteenth Century Drama:  
Romanticism, Melodrama, and the Well-Made Play. Students will read and discuss a play such as *Woyzeck* (Buchner).
- C. Ibsen, Strindberg, and Realism:  
The class will read and discuss plays by the prominent realist playwrights Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg. Plays such as *A Doll's House* and *Miss Julie* will be read and discussed.
- D. Chekhov and the Moscow Art Theater:  
The class will read and discuss plays written by Chekhov such as *The Sea Gull* and *The Cherry Orchard*. The class will also read about and discuss Constantine Stanislavski and realistic acting.
- E. Epic Theatre:  
The class will read and discuss plays such as *Galileo* by Bertolt Brecht.
- F. The American Scene:  
The class will read and discuss plays such as *Anna Christie* (O'Neill), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Williams), and *Death of a Salesman* (Miller).  
The Group Theatre and The Actors Studio will also be covered.
- G. The Theatre of the Absurd:  
The class will read plays such as *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett) or *The Dumbwaiter* (Pinter).
- H. Theatre of the 1960's and 1970's in both Europe and the United States.
- I. Theatre today:

The class may read plays by Shepard, Wilson, Albee, Norman, Vogel or Mamet.

## **VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes**

### **General Education Learning Outcomes:**

#### **A. At the completion of the course, students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate both orally and in writing a comprehensive knowledge and critical aesthetic appreciation of the historical, stylistic and cultural development of the traditions and significance of the Western Theatre experience.

(GE-NJ 1, 6, 7, \*)

2. Use general and/or discipline specific information sources to better identify, determine and apply research or information need. (GE-NJ IL)

(\* embedded critical thinking)

#### **B. Course Learning Outcomes:**

##### **At the completion of the course, students will be able to:**

1. Compare and contrast specific significant plays and playwrights throughout the historic periods studied.

2. Classify and evaluate the stylistic characteristics involved in the evolution of theatre styles and genres.

3. Relate historical information to the aesthetic evaluation of contemporary theatre.

#### **C. Assessment Instruments**

1. Selected readings/written assignments (research and/or evaluations)

2. Discussions/critiques

3. Research project/student oral presentation (required)

The primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning are:

A. Lecture/discussion

B. Small-group work

C. Student oral presentations

D. Reading and written assignments

## **VII. Grade Determinants**

- A. Examinations
- B. Classroom participation (and attendance) in all projects, discussions and critiques (required)
- C. Completion of all written assignments (required)
- D. Research project/oral presentation (required)

### **VIII. Texts and Materials**

**Text:** (such as) *Living Theatre: A History* by Wilson and Goldfarb

**Anthology of plays:** (such as) *The Longman Anthology of Drama*

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

### **IX. Resources**

- A. Classroom equipped with media/projection systems
- B. Library of video and DVD performances
- C. Library of plays/scripts

### **X. Honors Options**

Definition: According to the Honors Council, an Honors course is one that enriches and challenges students beyond a course's regular scope and curriculum. An Honors course will offer a sophisticated use of research, introduce intellectually stimulating readings and critical perspectives, promote a higher level of critical discussion and written work, and encourage independent study projects, at the option of the instructor.

1. **Prerequisite:** GPA of 3.5 or permission of the instructor
2. **General Education and Course Learning Outcomes**

In addition to the education goals and learning outcomes in Roman numeral VI. A and B listed above, students should be able to:

- A. Compare and contrast additional plays and playwrights throughout the historical periods studied.
- B. Relate historical information to the aesthetic evaluation of contemporary theatre using specific plays and playwrights.

3. **Honors Option Content**

Students who participate in the Theatre 108 Honors Option must complete 2 additional assignments.

A. A fifteen minute presentation discussing an additional writer from one of the periods/genres discussed in the class.

B. A three-page critique of a historically appropriate play at a professional regional or Broadway Theatre.

#### **4. Assessment Instruments for Honors Option Work**

Honors Option students will be assessed for their ability to deliver the additional required assignments. In particular they must:

A. Demonstrate understanding of the writers, genres and styles of the period.

B. Classify the dialogue of a play to the appropriate playwright.

#### **5. Grade Determinants for Honors Option Work**

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A. Research Paper

B. Presentation of work to class

#### **6. Extra Resource Materials for the Honors Option**

In addition to the suggested textbook above, students may need to use:

A. Additional resources include: The Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.