Spring 2013  
Instructor: Mary Robinson  
Shasta Hall, Room 101 (Playwrights' Theatre)  
MW 2:00 - 3:15  
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:30 - 12:00  
and by appointment

Office: Shasta 140  
Phone: (916) 278-6702  
email: mrobinson@csus.edu

There will be times that I need to contact you by email. The email that I will use is the address assigned to you by Sac State (your Sac Link account). Please make sure that you regularly check this account, or have it forwarded to the account you normally use.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide a broad survey of the basic components of theatre. Because theatre is a study of the possible, that is, what may result from the collaboration of many talents, we will study it from a number of different perspectives. We will examine plays, the history of theatre as an art, acting, technical theatre, theatre's impact on society, and important practitioners in the field. Plays are unique in all of literature, because they are only finished in performance in front of an audience. To understand how plays come to their complete realization, we will see several productions, both on and off campus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. By means of reading, lecture, discussion and by demonstration both from instructor and from students, to gain a fundamental understanding of the basic elements of theatre: acting, directing, design, playwriting, and theatre spaces.
2. To understand and interpret the ways in which these elements contribute to the total theatre experience.
3. To gain an overview of the historical roots of theatre; its evolution, styles, and practitioners through time.
4. To learn to read a play, both as literature, and as a potential theatrical production.
5. To develop analytic skills to enjoy seeing and intelligently critiquing a theatre production.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Theatre Experience: Edwin Wilson  
(The bookstore has ordered the Twelfth Edition which you may purchase, or rent. You may also use the Eleventh Edition if you are able to find it less expensively)
Lysistrata: Aristophanes, translation by Jeffrey Henderson (must be this translation)
Macbeth: William Shakespeare
Women of Juarez: Kel Munger
A Raisin in the Sun: Lorraine Hansberry
The Laramie Project: Moises Kaufman
The campus bookstore has everything except *Macbeth*, which is available free online, and *Women of Juarez*, which will be available through the Department of Theatre and Dance. If you choose to buy the plays from another source than the campus bookstore, they must be the acting editions and not the paperback versions. *The acting editions will be less expensive, and have additional elements that we will use in class.*

**SCHEDULE OVERVIEW**

The semester, we will read and work with five plays. Within the study of each play, we will examine the role of audience, playwright, theatre space, design, and performance. We will also discuss these elements in the context of plays we will attend.

**EXAMS**

There will be a quiz on each play, a midterm exam, and a final project. *The final for this class is scheduled for May 22, from 12:45 to 2:45.*

**ASSIGNMENTS**

In addition to the assignments discussed above:

1. You will be required to attend 3 theatre performances during the semester.  
   - *Sacramento/Black Art of Dance:* February 28 - March 3, Dancespace, Solano Hall 1010  
   - *Women of Juarez:* March 14 - March 24, Playwrights' Theatre, Shasta Hall  
   - *Cabaret:* April 10 - April 24, University Theatre, Shasta Hall

   *Information about times, dates, and ticket prices are available at www.csus.edu/dram. Click on "Season" and go to the show title.*

2. For each play/concert, you will write a 2-page typewritten response. The only heading should be your name and the name of the performance, and should fill two pages. Please use 12 pt font, and 1-inch margins. Each paper is worth a maximum of 100 points. 80 points will be for content, and 20 points will be for format. Format includes spelling, grammar, appropriate use of language, and writing that meets expectations for academic use. We will discuss in class the content expectations for this assignment. Papers will be due no later than the Monday one week following the closing performance.

   *You may see a fourth play off campus, and write a one-page paper for a maximum of 50 points of extra credit. This play would not substitute for any of the three required plays.*

3. Read the plays that are listed in the required texts.

4. Read sections as assigned from *The Theatre Experience.*
COURSE OUTLINE

These dates are subject to change, since we will have some guest speakers, whose schedules are yet to be determined.

**January 28 - February 13**
*Lysistrata* and Greek and Roman Theatre
Role of the audience
How to read a play
Theatre spaces (we will probably meet in alternate locations, so please be ready for this information to be discussed in class)
Quiz on *Lysistrata*: February 13

**February 18 - March 4**
*Macbeth* and Elizabethan Theatre
Shakespeare and the Globe Theater
The work of the playwright
The structure of a play
Quiz on *Macbeth*: March 4

**March 6 - March 20**
*Women of Juarez* and Theatre of Protest
Work of the actor
Work of the director
Discussion of *S/BAD*
Quiz on *Women of Juarez*: March 20

**March 24 - April 1: Spring Break, and Cesar Chavez birthday, observed**

**April 3 - April 17**
**MIDTERM EXAM April 3**

*A Raisin in the Sun* and multicultural theatre
Designers of theatre, set, lighting, costume, sound
Musical Theatre
Discussion of *Women of Juarez*
Quiz on *A Raisin in the Sun*: April 17

**April 22 - May 1**
*The Laramie Project* and Contemporary Theatre
Contemporary practitioners
Discussion of *Cabaret*
Quiz on *The Laramie Project*: May 1

**May 6 - 13**
Preparation for final project

**May15 and May 22**
Performance of final projects
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

This course consists of lecture, readings, discussion, demonstration and writing. All of these components will be important. You will not be able to succeed in this class only by attendance, nor only by reading. Attendance must be accompanied by note taking, and participation in discussion. Reading must include being prepared to discuss the readings in class. Therefore, your attendance is very important to your success in learning, and to your grade in the class. **I will be taking attendance 10 times during the semester. Each time will count for 15 points toward your grade. If you arrive at class after attendance has been taken, you will be considered absent for that day.** The only excused absences will be for medical, or family emergencies, which must be accompanied by documentation, such as a doctor's verification. If absences are excessive, even if excused, they will affect your grade.

*Note:* It is not enough to be just physically present. You must be involved in the lecture and discussion. **If I am aware of cell phone use of any kind, or other ongoing distractions, such as talking to others while someone else is speaking, you may be asked to leave the class for that day, and attendance points will be subtracted from your semester total.**

Laptops and tablets: Except with permission from the instructor, no laptops or tablets are to be in use during class. **I will discuss in class the exceptions to this rule.**

LATE WORK

Papers will be accepted up to **one week following the due date**, for a maximum of half credit. No grades of Incomplete will be given for this class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Your work is the product of your energy, commitment, and knowledge. It should be protected, as should the work of others. As a result, any act of academic dishonesty will be cause for serious consequences. Such acts may include, but are not limited to:

* copying from another's work  
* submitting work previously, or simultaneously used in another class  
* misrepresenting another's work as one's own in whole or in part  
* cutting and pasting work done by another

Consequences may include a drop in grade, a grade of zero for the assignment in question, or dismissal from the class and loss of credit. In some cases, students have been dismissed from the university.

For more detailed information, please see the Sac State catalogue under Academic Policies.

ADDING AND DROPPING A CLASS

Via computer registration, there may be students on a wait list for this class. If you wish to add the class, I will need to verify that there are no students already waiting to add. At that point, if there is room, you may submit an add petition.
If you decide to drop the class, you must do so within the first two weeks of the class by submitting a drop request to the department office (Shasta 104). If your request is received after the first two weeks, you may need to submit documentation to support your request. Drops are not automatic, even if you have not attended any class sessions.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability, and require accommodations, you will need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008 (916) 278-6965. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me as soon as possible. Make sure that if you need special accommodations for test taking, that you make arrangements at least one week prior to the test date. Otherwise, there may not be time to give you what you need.

GRADING

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>ATTENDANCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLAY CRITIQUES…………100pts ea x 3…………………..</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>MID TERM</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>PLAY QUIZZES 20pts ea x 5…………………..</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL PROJECT…………………..</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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900 - 1000 = A  
800 - 899 = B  
700 - 799 = C  
600 - 699 = D  
599 and below = F

It is your responsibility to check your semester grade as soon as it is posted. If you believe that there is an error, such as work unrecorded, you must contact the office, or me immediately. Please do not wait until the next semester to verify your grades.

_A Final Thought_

"College is becoming one master checklist, where every class is a to-do task. The idea of doing something unproductive, truly unknowable, or with a high risk of failure is to be shunned at all costs.

“My role is to encourage students to think about the alternatives—to cultivate a love of risk and a willingness to read things that are too hard, watch things that are too difficult, and try things that are impossible. Otherwise [theater] threatens to become a museum, with no purpose other than misplaced nostalgia."

_Sarah Bay-Cheng_
_Professor, University at Buffalo_