

Point Loma Nazarene University
Department of Communication Studies
TRE 1001-2: Introduction to Theatre
Spring Semester, 2023, 2.0 Units

Professor: Walter O. Williams, Ph.D.	wwilliam@pointloma.edu	Office: Cabrillo 207
Office Hours: M/R 12 – 2:30 pm, or by appt.		Phone: 849-2724
Final Exam Schedule: Tuesday, May 2 10:30 am – 1:00 pm		Salomon Theatre
Class Meeting Times: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 am – 11:55 am		Starkey B 100

PLNU Mission To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Foundational Explorations Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

Course Description

This is an introductory theatre appreciation course. Historical and stylistic developments are studied as well as the elements of theatre. Includes basic terminology and instruction for aesthetic understanding of western theatre form.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this semester, you should be able to:

- 1) List and discuss the dramatic elements of theatre (Aristotle's).*
- 2) Identify the major genres and periods of theatre.*
- 3) Critically examine stage performances by use of the dramatic elements.*
- 4) Participate and contribute to the creation of a dramatic piece for the stage.*

Foundation Explorations Learning Outcomes (FELO):

FELO 1a. Written: Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through written communication.

FELO 2b. Students will understand and appreciate diverse forms of artistic expression.

Spiritual Care:

PLNU strives to be a place where students grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or if you have prayer requests, you can contact the Office of Student Life and Formation.

Student Responsibility:

It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her class schedule. Should the need arise to drop this course (personal emergencies, poor performance, etc.), the student, not the instructor, has the responsibility to follow through (provided the drop date meets the stated calendar deadline established by the university). Simply ceasing to attend this course or failing to follow through to arrange for a change of registration (drop/add) will result in a grade of F on the official transcript.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 2-unit class delivered over 16 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 75 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy:

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, it is required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix

PLNU Copyright Policy:

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

State Authorization:

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

Required Texts:

Cassady, Marsh. *An Introduction to: The Art of Theatre*.
 Shakespeare, William. *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Hamlet*
 Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*.

Course Procedures

- 1) Try to be timely. We have very little time in this course and must be very conscientious in our use of it. Though the class structure is primarily oriented toward lecture, I strongly encourage questions, ideas, and discussions. Take an active role in the process and you will get far more from the experience. Most of the material is presented using PowerPoint technology, and I move fairly quickly. If you are not adept at notetaking (which is a form of shortening through paraphrasing), I have no problem with small recording devices. **I do not post the lectures (i.e., PowerPoints) online, or make them available anywhere outside class.** If you're not a skilled notetaker, check out this page: <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/effective-note-taking-in-class/>
- 2) Exams: There will be four examinations, each weighted at 12.5% of the course grade. The exams consist primarily of multiple choice and essay questions. Missed exams cannot be made up without an email from the provost's office excusing a student for an official university activity.
- 3) Quizzes: There will be occasional, unannounced quizzes. The purpose of the quizzes is to help you keep up on the readings and to provide you with sample test questions. **There are NO make-up quizzes.**
- 4) Reviews: Each student will be responsible for a written review of a LIVE theatrical performance. The review will critically and subjectively examine all the pertinent artistic and craft-elements of the production (as discussed in class) and will assess their effectiveness within the overall endeavor. The review will account for 9% of your final grade. See attached review for example.
- 5) Critique: Each student will analyze *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Becket, *Much Ado about Nothing* by William Shakespeare, and *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, in a written historical/critical or rhetorical essay. I will post the prompts on Canvas where you will write your responses. Each essay is worth 7% of you grade.
- 6) SceneFest: Each student will participate in the staging and presentation of an original scene. Each scene will consist of an ensemble scene related to/based on *Much Ado about Nothing*, or *Hamlet*, or *Waiting for Godot* (or a combination). To the degree that we are able given the obvious restraints, we will incorporate all the components of the process (i.e. students will be directors, playwrights, actors, designers, etc.). These are group projects and will require some time commitment outside of class, therefore, cooperation with the ensemble will be considered in grading. The group project is weighted at 20% of the course grade, but lack of participation in SceneFest will result in failure of the course.
- 7) **THIS IS IMPORTANT.** Your final course grade will be based solely on the work you do in class. There is NO extra credit in this course, nor any additional work that can augment your grade. There will be NO "bumping up" of grades at the end of the semester, so please don't write me a flattering email during the last week asking for this kind of accommodation. My policy on the FINAL grade rounding is: if you are within 0.5% of the next grade, I round up. Therefore, 89.55 becomes an A-; 89.48 remains a B+. Please refer to this and DON'T email me about this at the end of the semester. Also, I accept late assignments until the last day of classes with a 10% reduction.

100 POINT GRADING SCALE:

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>POINT VALUE</u>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Grading for this course will be determined in the following manner:

Exams	4 @ 12.5%
Live Performance Review	9 %
Play Essays	3@ 7 %
SceneFest	<u>20 %</u>
TOTAL	100 %

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1/12	Course orientation and overview	Syllabus
1/17	What are Theatre and Drama?	Chapter 1
1/19	Structure, Style & Genre	Chapters 2 & 3
1/24	Structure, Style & Genre	Chapters 2 & 3
1/26	The Beginnings	Chapter 11
1/31	The Beginnings	Chapter 11
2/2	EXAM #1	
2/7	The Actor	Chapter 6
2/9	Medieval Theatre	Chapter 12
2/14	Renaissance Theatre	Chapter 13
2/16	<i>Hamlet</i> Exploration	Read Hamlet
2/21	The Playwright	Chapter 5 Hamlet Essay
2/23	EXAM #2	
2/28	<i>Much Ado</i> exploration	Read Much Ado
3/2	Discussion of Genre	Ref. Chapter 3
3/14	Criticism (&Asian Theatre)	Chapter 10 Much Ado Essay
3/16	17 th & 18 th Century Theatre	Chapter 14
3/21	Designers & Supporting Artists	Chapter 8
3/23	Modern Theatre: Realism	Chapter 15
3/28	EXAM #3	
3/30	Modern Theatre: Antirealism	Read WFG
4/4	The Director/Producer	Ref. Chapter 15 Chapters 7 & 9 WFG Essay
4/11	Musical Theatre	Ref. Chapter 15
4/13	Musical Theatre	Ref. Chapter 15
4/18	Theatre Today	Review Due Ref. Chapter 15
4/20	Theatre Today	
4/25	SceneFest Tech	
4/27	EXAM #4	
Tuesday, May 2	SceneFest (10:30 – 1:00)	Salomon Theater

Sample Review

Spit flew freely, vocal chords strained, and veins stood out on the actors' necks as they skillfully delivered the demanding text, but the inner life seemed lacking at Wednesday night's performance of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, at the San Diego Repertory's Lyceum Stage.

Albee's first great success, *Woolf*, debuted in 1962, changing the face of American theatre. A psychologically compelling tale of alcohol-saturated disillusionment and dysfunction in the middle-American family, the play has often elicited adjectives such as "gut-wrenching," "excoriating," "shattering," and "stunning;" however, the adjective that perhaps best describes the Rep's current production of *Woolf* is . . . competent.

Ellen Crawford, Mike Genovese, Peter Friedrich, and Carla Harting who play (respectively) Martha, George, Nick, and Honey, are competent, capable, skillful, even proficient in their presentation of the material. Their diction is excellent, volume is never a problem in the cramped-feeling Lyceum black-box space; the pace seems to be what the play demands, but in the end one is left oddly cold by the sum total—not shattered, not drained, not really even thoughtful, but . . . what is a fitting description . . . entertained? Perhaps it is that a generation has passed and what was once shocking is now passé; or perhaps we as an audience are desensitized by the radical familial dysfunction that defines our current culture. But what is more likely is that Todd Salovey's by-the-numbers direction created a mild disconnect, a barrier between the actors' skilled recitation of the text and the inner life that must be present to give it the power that lies dormant in Albee's written word.

Three of the four performers (Crawford, Genovese, and Friedrich) suffer most from this malaise of competence. Their mouths, faces, and bodies go through the proper motions; they portray anger at the necessary moments, they yell when the scene calls for it; they are "hitting the marks" demanded by the script, but it feels like just that—hitting predictable marks determined by pedestrian directorial choices. The rising action rises because the script says it must, not because the actors have tapped into the truths beneath these character's tormented lives. The only antidote for this malaise is found in Carla Harting's portrayal of Honey. Harting is compelling in her shocked but manipulative simplicity. She has

discovered the essence of Honey—perhaps the true beneficiary of the play’s exorcism, and the hope for the next generation—and she plays her with a subtle nuance.

The other elements of the production actually exacerbate rather than relieve the general malaise. Giulio Cesare Perrone’s set, a neoclassical façade (replete with massive columns, ceiling-to-floor bookshelf, fireplace, bar, and sparse furnishings) is completely whitewashed—all, that is, except the rich, caramel-colored liquors populating the bar. Before the first word is uttered, this set tells us exactly what to expect—the lives of these people are a whitewashed sham, a self-delusion, a colorless façade—except for the life-giving, truth-revealing, exorcism-inducing alcohol. The feeling of the settings is a cramped one, which could be used effectively to give a sense of the imprisonment of the characters, but again, the direction seems to subvert this with a good deal of impulse-laden, or craft-laden wandering in and about the furnishings in a much too predictable cat-and-mouse visual metaphor.

Jerry Sonnenberg’s lights, too, tend to draw the viewer out of the action by their too blatant focus-shifting, telling us what we should see and how we should feel—all these being necessary components of the theatrical adventure, but they would benefit from a bit more “art” and a bit less “craft.”

Generally speaking, the audience members seemed to be entertained by the San Diego Repertory Theatre’s production of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, but the talk on the stairwells after the production centered more on the pedestrian than the profound—whether or not to get a decaf tall mocha at Starbuck’s? This cannot have been Albee’s intent.