

XIDS 2100—The Thirties and the Theatre

Tuesday, Thursday

3:30—4:45

Section 06

Spring, 2005

TLC 1303

Instructor: Shelly Elman
Office: Martha Munro bldg. Room 207C
Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays 10:00--12:00 Noon; 2:00—3:30
 Tuesdays, Thursdays 1:30—3:00
Phone: 678/839-4704 (Office and Messages)
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WebCT: <http://webct.westga.edu>; 678/839-6248 (help desk)
Texts: ***You Can't Take It With You*** by Kaufman & Hart
Our Town by Thornton Wilder
The Children's Hour by Lillian Hellman
Course Packet which includes:
Waiting for Lefty by Clifford Odets
Power by Arthur Arent
Triple-A Plowed Under by the staff of the Living Newspaper
The Purple Flower by Marita Bonner
Don't You Want To Be Free by Langston Hughes
The Big White Fog by Theodore Ward
Recommended Text: ***A Writer's Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research***
by Elaine Maimon & Janice Peritz

Office Hours:

I am available to address matters of concern during my office hours. If those hours are not convenient, please schedule an appointment. If you visit my office at other times, I may not be available because of other duties I must attend to. If you have problems in the class, it is your responsibility to initiate contact with me. I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me. Let me know of any problems early in the semester. I will not accept excuses for poor performance or missing exams, especially late in the semester.

Course Description:

The Thirties and the Theatre will examine the political theatre of the Great Depression. As the 1930's were a time of great political upheaval in the entire world, this course will examine the leftist movement of politics specifically in the U.S. The course will also explore how the arts reflect society by examining the different genres of the performing arts (for example, music, radio plays, film, and theatre) of the time. Students will then have the ability to apply this knowledge to the arts and society of the present time. This course is interdisciplinary and will therefore focus on the areas of theatre, history, and political science of the time.

Course Objectives:

To expose students to the only national theatre the U.S. has ever had
To develop a way of communicating ideas by means other than reading
To develop an interest in political theatre
To gain understanding of society as reflected in the theatre of the time

Core Area C1 Learning Outcomes:

The Thirties and the Theatre supports Core Area C1 Learning Outcomes: To develop the ability to recognize and identify achievements in literary, fine, and performing arts (analysis of contemporary and classic films, fine art, music, theatre, and poetry); To develop the ability to apply, understand and appreciate the application of aesthetic criteria to "real world" circumstances (how a piece of art, theatre, music, or literature can reflect the time period in which the piece was written; how the art can be used as a metaphor for its time).

Responsibilities:

- Be on time. If you must come to class late or leave early, please find a seat close to a door so as not to disturb the students and instructor.
- Be a courteous listener—do not attend class if your intention is to sleep or read material other than course work.
- As the texts of this class are plays, the class lectures will consist of background of the period. You will be responsible for the notes on the lectures that will be included on the tests.
- Throughout the semester, the student will be responsible for five two page papers based on viewing of some type of art from the time period (1930's). Whether this is a play, the work of a certain painter, photographer, musician, film director, etc. (see separate sheet for examples)
- Be aware that the syllabus schedule may change—it is your responsibility to make sure you are aware of those changes.

Assignments:

- **Two 2-3 page response papers to live performances** (worth 15% each) **30%**
 - All response papers should answer the following questions:
 - Why did you choose this?
 - What does the work of art say to you? What does it mean to you?
 - How does it reflect society?
 - Does the piece of work speak to people of present time, that is, does this work speak to you now or is it dated? Why does it relate to you? Or Why does it not relate to you?
 - Does the work of art use symbolism? If so, explain in as much detail as you can what that symbolism means.
 - Think in terms of reacting to the piece, don't give a synopsis of it.
 - Use what you learn in class and apply it to the work.
 - For example, how is the work structured? Does it have a climax? How does it build to this climax?
 - **These papers are to examine your ability to critically think and analyze. Answering the above questions is just the minimum work needed. 'A' work should go above and beyond the questions and examine the work viewed.**
 - **Don't just answer the above questions, but make the paper cohesive with a smooth flow. Give the paper an introduction, body, and conclusion.**

- **4 Multiple choice exams** **48%**
Must use the pink scantron (#229629).

- **WebCT:** **12%**
 - Questions based on texts, in class lectures and viewing material will be assigned on specific days. You will have until midnight on the day question answers are due to complete each assignment. Late answers will be accepted with a point deduction penalty.

- **Events & Project folder** **10%**
 - You will be responsible for viewing three additional events (other than the two events needed to write the above response papers).
 - They may be live concerts, play performances, art gallery viewings, film viewings all outside of class and during this semester. If you have a question about an event, please see me before you attend.
 - Folders will contain paragraphs describing and analyzing these events. Papers should be a minimum of 250 words and a maximum of 500. A ticket or program from the event should be stapled to each paper.
 - Folders will contain your propaganda project. You will find an instance of propaganda from a magazine and explain the propaganda device(s) used. You should also discuss the targeted audience.
 - Folders will contain your *Our Town* project. Explanation of this project will occur in class on the day *Our Town* is discussed (Tuesday, April 19).

Grading Scale:	100-90	A
	89-80	B
	79-70	C
	69-60	D
	59-50	F

- ♦ **Because of the size of this class, grading will take 3-4 weeks. Please be patient.**
- ♦ **This syllabus and its schedule are subject to change.**

Week 1

January

T11 Overview: Responsibilities and Expectations
Great Events of the 20th Century VideoTH13 Great Depression Vol. 1 Video and Discussion
Handout: *The War of the Worlds*Week 2T18 Media of the 1930's: Radio
Discuss Response Papers
Discussion Question 1 on WebCTTH20 The Radio Play
The War of the Worlds
Discussion Question 2Week 3T25 The Great Depression Vol. 2 Video & discussion
***The Communist Manifesto* assignment**TH27 Before the Group Theatre: Vaudeville and Burlesque
***The Communist Manifesto* discussion**
The Marxist influence on art and culture
Theatre
Diego RiveraWeek 4

February

T1 Exam #1

TH3 Class will not meet
Discussion Question 3Week 5T8 Propaganda discussion
Discussion Question 4TH10 Propaganda discussion cont'd. (if needed)
The Great Depression Vol. 3 & discussionWeek 6 (tickets for ***How I Learned to Drive*** available at the Townsend Center Box Office starting Wednesday, Feb. 16)T15 Stanislavski/psychologically motivated acting
The Group Theatre
Waiting for Lefty
Study Guide questions due for *Waiting for Lefty*
Discussion Question 5TH17 The Great Depression Vol. 4 & discussion
The New Deal Alphabet SoupWeek 7 ***How I Learned to Drive*** performs February 23—26 at 7:30p.m. and February 27 at 2:30p.m. in the Townsend Center Black Box TheatreT22 The New Deal
Discussion Question 6TH24 Exam #2
Refresh response paper discussion?

Week 8

March

T1

The Federal Theatre Project

Power**Triple-A Plowed Under****Study Guide questions due for Power and Triple-A Plowed Under**

TH3

One-third of a Nation video**Discussion Question 7****(March 3 is the last day to withdraw with a grade 'W')**Week 9 (tickets for **Episodes in Sexuality** will be available at the Townsend Center Box Office starting Monday, March 7)

T8

The Black Federal Theatre

TH10

Marcus Garvey

Response Paper #1 dueWeek 10 **Episodes in Sexuality** performs March 14—17 at 7:00p.m. in the Townsend Center Black Box Theatre

T15

The Black Federal Theatre (cont'd.)

Theodore Ward

Big White Fog**Study Guide questions due for Big White Fog**

TH17

The Harlem Renaissance

Paul Robeson video (if time permits)**Discussion Question 8****Week 11 (Spring Break)**Week 12

T29

Langston Hughes: The Voice of the Harlem Renaissance (video)

Continue discussion on Marcus Garvey, the Harlem Renaissance, The Black Federal Theatre

TH31

Class will not meet

Discussion Question 9Week 13 (tickets for **The Comedy of Errors** will be available at the Townsend Center Box Office starting Wednesday, April 6)

April

T5

Don't You Want to Be Free?

Langston Hughes discussion

Study Guide questions due for Don't You Want to Be Free

TH7

Exam #3

Week 14 **The Comedy of Errors** performs April 13—16 at 7:30p.m. and April 17 at 2:30p.m. in the Townsend Center Mainstage Theatre

T12

Expressionism Discussion

Marita Bonner & **The Purple Flower****Study Guide questions due for The Purple Flower****Discussion Question 10**

TH14

McCarthyism: American communism 20 years after the depression

Lillian Hellman & **The Children's Hour****Discussion Question 11**

Week 15

T19 Thornton Wilder & ***Our Town***
Our Town Assignment (should be included in events folder)

TH21 Kaufman & Hart
You Can't Take it With You
Discussion Question 12
Response Paper #2 due

Week 16

T26 **Events & Projects folder due**
Last day to answer WebCT questions
Student evaluations

May

TH5 Final Exam

Response papers should adhere to the following criteria:

The essay will receive a grade of A if it has mature, thoughtful, original, clearly expressed and well-developed ideas; it concentrates on a strong central idea, is well organized, and has a well-developed thesis. The major ideas are developed logically and supported by concrete, specific evidence. The essay has an effective style and uses a sophisticated, appropriate vocabulary; it has appropriate topic sentences, transitions, a consistent tone; it addresses a clear audience. The prose is apt and sometimes memorable. Finally, it contains few errors, none of which seriously undermines the effectiveness of the paper for educated readers.

The essay will receive a B if it has clearly stated ideas in the form of a thesis and topic sentences and is logically and concretely developed. It should contain an effective introduction and conclusion. The ideas are presented in a thorough, complex manner and in logical, organized order; sentence structure is clear and varied; finally, it has no serious sentence errors such as comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, or errors in agreement. It may, however, lack the sophistication, vocabulary, or maturity of thought of an A paper.

The essay will receive a grade of C if it demonstrates average, college-level proficiency. It adequately conveys a thesis, supports the central idea by some evidence, and is organized clearly and logically. The evidence is perhaps obvious and lacks originality. Paragraphs are clearly divided; although the transitions may be mechanical, they do foster coherence. The sentence structure may be correct but shows limited competence with sentence variety. The paper may have few serious but some mechanical errors that betray an inadequate sentence sense. Finally, it may contain grammatical errors that reveal unfamiliarity with the conventions of edited American English.

The essay will receive a grade of D if it fails to convey or sustain a central idea. The ideas may be poorly chosen or insufficiently limited. There may be no sense of a particular audience addressed, evidenced by inconsistent vocabulary and tone. Organization may be seriously flawed in the following areas: paragraphs may not be logically divided or appropriately developed; topic sentences may be unclear or missing; transitions are missing or incorrect; introductions are misleading, and conclusions may stray off the argument or are simply nonexistent. Frequently, it may have consistent and numerous mechanical or grammatical errors. The syntax and diction may be so flawed that sentences become incomprehensible. **Lack of proofreading can turn an otherwise adequate paper into a D paper.**

The essay will receive an F if it does not deal with an assigned topic, even if it is coherently and correctly written. It may have not stated or may not have sustained a central idea; it goes off in several directions. The paper may read choppily, lack sentence variety, is not developed adequately and so falls seriously short of minimum length requirements. It may be plagiarized. It is plagued by one or more of the organizational deficiencies of the D paper. It will most probably contain numerous and consistent errors in grammar or mechanics that hamper understanding by the reader.

Essay Grading Criteria

Your essay will be graded on a 100 point scale.

A=90-100

B=80-89

C=70-70

D=60-69

F=59 and below

Each of the following elements is worth 10 points.

Introduction

1. The opening paragraph provides specific information needed for the reader to understand the paper's topic. (Answer the questions Who, What When and Where) _____

2. A clearly stated thesis is presented in the introduction of the essay. (BE SPECIFIC) _____

Body

3. The body of the paper develops the writer's ideas in a thoughtful, collegiate fashion. _____

4. Specific concrete example/evidence is provided to support each point. _____

5. The ideas progress smoothly and in a clearly organized, logical fashion. _____

Conclusion

6. The conclusion answers the question, argument or problem posed in the thesis. _____

7. The conclusion is adequate in length to bring the argument to completion. _____

Mechanics/Overall Impression

8. The grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct. _____

9. The sentence structure is sophisticated and varied and to the point. _____

10. The paper is insightful and interesting. _____

Remember to ask yourself the following questions:

What was attempted?

Was the attempt successful?

Was it worth doing?