THED 600: Dramaturgy/Research Methodology (3 credits)

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Prerequisites: B.A. or B.S. degree

Course Description: Students learn effective research strategies for the field of theatre arts. Additionally, students will produce a dramaturgical protocol, requiring detailed preparatory research, testing of ideas, and public presentation of theories and concepts in practice. Students work under faculty supervision and prepare a documented written report of their project. This class is on Blackboard – http://bb.unco.edu. If you are unfamiliar with the system, visit the tutorials on the website. Contact me if you have any questions.

Course Objectives:
1) To introduce students to research strategies necessary to be successful in a Master’s program.
2) To examine the best approaches to research in the field of theatre education.
3) To strengthen skills in research, writing, script analysis, dramatic theory and pre-production text work.
4) To produce a thorough dramaturgical protocol of a chosen play.
5) To begin work for your Final Thesis Project – if you choose this option. Your thesis project takes place in the final year of the program (spring, summer or fall). For this option, it is the actual play that you direct, based on the dramaturgical protocol that you begin creating in this class. If you choose this option, you will continue working on your protocol in Thesis I, and finish it in Thesis II.
   NOTE: If you would rather produce a Traditional Thesis or an Action Research Project (see Blackboard for descriptions), you may, yet you still must complete a protocol in this class for a future production.

Outline of Course Content:
1) Written Play Description
2) Website Assignment
3) Electronic Research Assignment
4) MA Thesis Reading Assignment
5) Dramaturgical Protocol
6) Discussion Board Comments

Course Requirements:
Notes –
1) All assignments should be submitted in MLA format 7th edition (ie. Proper heading and pagination, standard 1” margins, no Right justified, and 12 point Times New Roman font only.) Check out the following cite, yet the actual handbook is best: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/. For grammar help, look at: http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com
2) All assignments should be submitted to Blackboard under the appropriate Safe Assignment – in docx format – found under “Assignment.”

3) Some of the example papers on Blackboard may be longer than the required length. This does not mean you have to do the same, yet you will not be graded down if you exceed the length requirement.

4) It is expected that you read the corrections made on your work (make sure you turn on the Track Changes in Word so you can see them) and make the necessary adjustments before submitting subsequent assignments.

1) **Written Play Description.** Choose three plays that you might like to research – hopefully related to your future thesis production if you choose this option. Describe each play briefly and why you chose it in fifty words or less (150 words maximum in total). In addition, describe in 2-3 pages how the articles from Week 1 may have helped you arrive at your decision.
   o Why did you choose these plays?
   o Did your decision come out of the needs of your students (potential students)?
   o Did their desires, strengths, challenges help inform your decision?
   o How and why?
   o Please include a Works Cited in MLA style. It should contain the three plays, the article from Week 1, and other resources you used if any.

2) **Website Assignment.** Find three websites that will assist you in researching information about your future thesis production if you choose this option (have a play chosen by now, even if you change it later), and prepare a written response (2-3 pages) relating to the websites you chose. In your response, the following concerns should be addressed:
   o Describe each step you took to locate your sites. Describe in detail the terms you used, why you made the choices you did in your search and why those choices achieved the results they did.
   o Having read “Majors Areas of Research Questions” (posted on Blackboard under Course Materials), “Evaluating Information Found on the Internet” (http://guides.library.jhu.edu/content.php?pid=198142&sid=1657518), and perusing “A Brief Guide to Internet Resources in Theatre and Performance Studies” http://www2.stetson.edu/creative-arts/resources/theatre-arts/mccoy-theatre-guide.html), characterize the information you located. Which resources contain the better information vs. the least useful? Support your answers with appropriate reasons and examples.
   o Which terms introduced by the aforementioned article, e.g. reliability, authenticity, etc., are most relevant for your search and the resources you retrieved? Why?
   o List the sites in appropriate MLA citation format.
3) **Electronic Research Assignment.** Find an online article on the topic of theatre/drama education research, which you will address in a 3-5 page paper, that reflects your findings from that article as well as the three assigned articles for the week. Also provide the link to the article you found, and post it on the Discussion Board with brief comments as to what you learned from the article.

4) **MA Thesis Reading Assignment.** Locate a Master’s Thesis or Dissertation in Theatre or Theatre Education, and review it according to the following questions (5-7 pages):
   - Identify the arguable opinion (thesis) that the thesis writer sets out to prove.
   - How is the argument structured to prove the thesis? What are the strong points of the thesis?
   - What are its weak points?
   - Is the presentation lively and interesting?
   - What kind of sources does the writer cite?
   - Are you persuaded in the end?
   - What did you learn?
   - How is the first chapter organized?
   - What seems to be its purpose?
   - How is the conclusion organized?
   - Does the writer suggest future directions for study?
   - Describe the “method” of the thesis, drawing on the following list of terms (as many as you deem necessary): empirical, historical, descriptive, analytical, interpretive, quantitative, qualitative and theoretical.

5) **Dramaturgical Protocol.** The dramaturgical protocol consists of written and found materials about a play and its production, intended for the use of directors, designers, actors and audience. Read several plays to insure that you have chosen wisely. It contains:
   - background information about the author and the world of the author
   - a production history
   - a dramaturgical analysis of the text
   - a “glossed” version of the text
   - additional materials that reflect the world of the play and of the proposed production

See specific examples of each assignment on Blackboard under Course Materials. Your final protocol will document a dramaturgical approach to a play of your choice (with my approval). **The approach for preparing the protocol is as follows:** yet use the Chapter II Format document and the example Thesis indicated on Blackboard (Chapter II) to replicate the proper format:
Section I: **Glossed Playscript** – This is simply a copy of your script that includes your directing and technical notations. It will not be included in the Final Thesis printing, and will not be reviewed until THESIS I and THESIS II.

Section II: **First Responses** – includes your first responses, impressions, intuitions of the play script.
- **Pluses** – elements of the play to which you respond in a strongly favorable way.
- **Minuses** – elements to which you respond negatively, or elements that seem problematic in terms of potential production. This might include acting problems, casting problems, design problems, language problems, structural problems.
- **Questions** – elements that leave you with a question of one sort or another
- **Clues** – elements that seem to provide a way into the play; elements that reveal some aspect of this work. Be responsive to reactions that seem inappropriate or socially incorrect.
- **Imagery** – note strong appeals to the senses, strong visual or aural responses.
- **Concretes** – specific objects or activities potentially critical to the play’s characters, action, and world.

Section III: **Supplements to the Playscript/Areas of Inquiry**

**Area A: Source Studies** – examine the play’s sources to better understand how the author has used or altered those sources; use information as a way of better understanding some central aspect of the work.
- **Glossary**: a glossary of definitions, items of potential interest to someone working on the play, terms, phrases, etc. that need explanation.
- **Geographical References and Place Names**: (include maps)
- **Pronunciations**
- **Literary Allusions**
- **References to the Natural World of the Play**
- **References to the Social/Political/Cultural/Ideological Worlds of the Play**

**Area B: The Author and His/Her World** – elements of information pertinent to the author and to the world in which the play was written.
- Include a biography and history
- Include the author’s commentary on the play, if available.
- Include information about events within the world of the author that might shed light on the playscript; parallels between the world of the author and the world of the playscript.

**Area C: World of the Play** – interactions between the world of the author and the audience.
- **Connections**: an honest exploration of the personal connections that you make with the work; eccentric connections; intuitive links made between the play and other material that might prove productive, even though on the surface that may seem unusual or unlikely.
Your argument for the relevance of this work to a contemporary audience; what are the parallels and comparisons that would drive the play home for us today? Items to consider: materialism, racism, sexism, issues of sex and gender, power, crime, hate groups, science and technology, media, advertising, family, art, etc.

Your suggestion for updating the work or for moving its production from one setting to another. Include your reasons/justification for doing so.

Explorations of analogous themes, styles, characters, structures in modern art, fiction, film, music, etc.

Area D: Production History
- Part I: Original – This includes the social, economic, cultural influences on the making of theatre at the time and place of the original production, as well as relevant performance conventions.
- Part II: Subsequent Production History – This includes productions that stand out in history, and/or may be relevant to your production.

Area E: Problems – Perceived and Otherwise
- Problematic Moments or Scenes
- Problematic Actions
- Problematic Character Interpretations
- Problematic Character Interpretations Caused by Actors Who Have Previously Done This Role
- Problems Posed by Casting Difficulties
- Problematic Representations of Race, Gender, Religion
- Problems Posed by the Thematic of the Text: understanding the meaning or possible meanings of a moment from the play or the play as a whole; weighing contrasting interpretations
- Problems Posed by Genres
- Problems Posed by the Status of the Text: incomplete texts, new texts, multiple texts
- Problems Posed by Dialects
- Problems Posed by Pronunciation
- Problems Posed by Need for Adaptation
- Problems Posed by Unusual Linguistic or Rhetorical Styles
- Problems Posed by Music or Need for Musical Score
- Problems Posed by Scenic Requirements
- Problems Posed by Special Effects
- Problems Posed by the World of the Play: understanding class structure, understanding pertinent ideologies, understanding daily life in another period, country, class; what people wore, ate, kinds of homes they lived in, how they perceived themselves, their bodies, their use of leisure
Area F: **Applications** – how the director might use dramaturgical discoveries within the rehearsal process. IF YOU CHOOSE A PROMPTBOOK THESIS, THIS WILL BE DONE IN THESIS II.

Section IV: **Visual and Textual Responses to the Playscript**

Non-literal – create a “collage” of images and words, sound tracks, etc.
- Visual: animals, machines, nature, abstract art, juxtapositions
- Verbal: lyrics from songs, proverbs, epigrams, fragments of poetry or fiction, headlines, epitaphs, quotes, buzzwords

Literal – photos
- of the author and his/her world
- of people used as models for characters in the play
- of the setting in which the play takes place
- of costumes or objects from the period
- of art work mentioned or alluded to
- of productions or designs of the play
- from popular media of the period in which the play was written
- from the contemporary world that reflects elements in the play
- from contemporary productions

Section V: **Bibliography of Resources (Works Cited)**

Verbal and Non-Verbal
- books, articles, essays, dissertations, etc.
- video/dvd/cd recordings, etc.

6) **Discussion Board.** Each week you will respond to questions on the Blackboard Discussion Board. You do not need to use MLA format, yet you need to be cognizant of grammar and spelling. There is no specific length required, yet make sure you are thoughtful and thorough. Also, read and respond to your classmates’ posts for a more valuable learning experience 😊.

**Method of Evaluation:** letter grad

1) Written Play Description – 5%
2) Website Assignment – 5%
3) Electronic Research Assignment – 10%
4) MA Thesis Reading Assignment – 15%
5) Dramaturgical Protocol – 40%
6) Dramaturgical Protocol (Final Version) – 15%
7) Discussion Board Comments – 10%

Grading Scale: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 73-76 = C; 70-72 = C-; etc.

**Required Texts and/or Required Reading List:**


5) Articles, posted on Blackboard.

6) Dramaturgical Protocol, posted on Blackboard.

7) Three plays of your choice that you might consider producing.

**Suggested Reading:**

1) *Bird by Bird*, by Anne Lamott.


**Course Outline:**

**Week 1:** Read – “Introduction” and “Doing Reflective Practitioner Research in Arts Education” by Taylor, from *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms and Possibilities*. Read – “Critical Steps” from *Teaching Theatre* (posted on Blackboard under Course Materials). You will be asked to comment on what you have found on Sunday’s Discussion Board.

Mon Aug 24  Complete Discussion Board Introduction

Sun 30  Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles


Sun Sept 6  DUE: Written Play Description

Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 3:** Read – “Into the Labyrinth: Theory and Research in Drama” by O’Neill, “Art in Scholarship and Scholarship in Art: Towards a Poetics of Drama Research” by O’Toole, “Reflections from an Ivory Tower: Towards an Interactive Research Paradigm” by Neelands from *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms and Possibilities*.

Sun Sept 13  DUE: Website Assignment

Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 4:** Read – “Approaches to Drama Research” by Somers, “Ex-citing Writing: Re-evaluating Some Practices in Writing About Drama and its Research” by O’Toole, and “Drama is Like Reversing Everything…” by Stinson. (All are on Blackboard under Course Materials).

Sun Sept 20  DUE: Electronic Research Assignment

Complete Discussion Board Post of Link with Comments
**Week 5:** Locate and read a Master’s Thesis in Theatre or Theatre Education. You may find one at a local library, obtain one through interlibrary loan, or visit the UMI database online and purchase one. If possible, find one that will assist you in your final thesis project/dramaturgical protocol; perhaps it discusses the play, playwright or themes you will be addressing. This is the first step in your MA Thesis Reading Assignment.

Sun  Sept  27  Complete Discussion Board on your research so far.

**Week 6:** Read – “Shitty First Drafts” by Lamott, and “Step Eleven: Revising Your Paper” by Meriwether (both on Blackboard under Course Materials). Continue work on your MA Thesis Reading Assignment.

Sun  Oct  4  DUE: MA Thesis Reading Assignment

**Week 7:** Read pages 1-37 in *Dramaturgy and Performance*, by Turner and Behrndt.

Sun  Oct 11  Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 8:** Read pages 97-120 in *Dramaturgy and Performance*, by Turner and Behrndt, and pages 147-181 in *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility*, by Proehl.

Sun  Oct 18  DUE: Section III, Area B: Background Information About the Author and the World of the Author Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 9:** Read pages 9-46 in *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility*, by Proehl.

Sun  Oct 25  DUE: Section III, Area D: Production History Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 10:** Read pages 47-114 in *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility*, by Proehl.

Sun  Nov  1  DUE: Section II: First Responses; Section III, Area E: Problems – Perceived and Otherwise

**Week 11:** Read pages 146-167 in *Dramaturgy and Performance*, by Turner and Behrndt. Look at Dramaturgical Protocol example Section III, Area A: Source Studies for next week (on Blackboard under Course Materials).

Sun  Nov  8  Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles from Weeks 10 and 11

**Week 12:** Read pages 168-186 in *Dramaturgy and Performance*, by Turner and Behrndt.

Sun  Nov 15  DUE: Section III, Area A: Source Studies Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 13:** Read pages 117-146 in *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility*, by Proehl.

Sun  Nov 22  Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles

**Week 14:** Read pages 182-206 in *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility*, by Proehl.

Sun  Nov 29  Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 15: Read pgs.187-203 in *Dramaturgy and Performance*, by Turner and Behrndt. 
Sun Dec. 6 DUE: Section III, Area C: World of the Play
ALSO: Section IV: Visual and Textual Responses to the Playscript and Section V: Bibliography of Resources MAY be turned in this week, or if you do not need them reviewed, simply turn them in next week with the completed Protocol.
Complete Discussion Board Comments on Articles from Weeks 14 and 15/Revisit Critical Links Question

Week 16: Final Exam Week. **DUE by FRIDAY, December 11, 2015**: Dramaturgical Protocol (Final Version)

Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Access Center (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.