

**History of the Theater I**  
**THTR 3001, Section One**  
**TEMPLE UNIVERSITY – Fall 2025**  
**MWF – 4:00-4:50 pm**  
**Tuttleman Hall, Room 306**

**Instructor:** Peter Schmitz  
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**Office Hours:** (See below, under Contact Me)

**Contact Me**

The best way to contact me is by email ([tuk45963@temple.edu](mailto:tuk45963@temple.edu) or [peter.schmitz@temple.edu](mailto:peter.schmitz@temple.edu) ). However I will hold Sunday evenings open for video conferences with students. As a policy, I will respond to all emails sent to me during regular working hours on weekdays. I will always check all emails again between 7 and 8 pm on weekdays and on Sunday evening. (For messages sent between 10 pm and 8 am please do not expect an immediate response. This also applies to the hours between 2 pm and 5 pm on MWF when I am either traveling to campus, or teaching.) Other online or in-person meetings can be scheduled on request

**Course Description**

**This course studies the development of theatrical modes of presentation, playwrights, plays, architecture, actors, producing agents, and audiences from the beginnings of theater to 1800. Relationships are drawn between the developing theater and the political and social history of the times.**

During the semester, we will engage with various world cultures and historical periods, in order to explore how the people of those places and times expressed themselves through theatrical performance. Specifically included in our study will be the drama of Ancient Greece and Rome, early China and India, medieval Europe and Asia (including puppetry and dance), and then the theater of Japan, Persia, and Europe from 1500 to 1800.

Some world performance traditions, though we will look at them briefly, are not dealt with in depth in this course. I write that with some regret, but our time together is limited and the amount of material to explore is vast. I am hopeful, at the very least, that the methodologies and concepts we utilize this semester will foster your skills and provoke your curiosity about theater history. I further hope that you will continue to explore the fascinating depth and breadth of this art form during your future studies and in your chosen careers.

We will NOT use a standard Theater History textbook in this course. Instead, we will for information from open-source playscripts, videos, audio podcasts, and online resources. Many class sessions will be in lecture form, with me talking and showing slides. However, almost every week, we will sit down together to do live readings of classic plays. During the semester, students will also

undertake individual and group projects, in order to interact with theater history in a creative way.

In addition to developing an understanding of individual periods and plays, we will consider broader questions in Theater History, such as how world theater cultures borrow from each other, how theater is used to protect and to challenge social power structures, and how theater is shaped by religion and spiritual practices. The overall goal is to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the art form - so that whether one is on the stage or in the audience, the historical context informs both artistry and enjoyment. *Theater History is Fun!*

## **Learning Goals**

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

- Demonstrate knowledge of historic theatrical practices, theories, and texts.
- Analyze theatrical texts and practices within their historical contexts.
- Use the text of a play or elements of a performance to gather information and draw conclusions about the historical time and space in which that play or practice existed.

## **Course Materials**

This course has been redesigned with support from the [Textbook Affordability Project](#) at [Temple University Libraries](#). To help keep course materials expenses to a minimum, this course uses publicly available information and resources, at no cost to you.

Therefore will NOT be using a standard Theater History textbook as our main reading source. Instead, we will look for information from open source playscripts, videos, audio podcasts, and online resources. Links to these materials are on Canvas, and are listed in the Course Calendar.

Most class sessions will be in lecture form, with me talking and showing slides. All of my own personal lecture notes and slides will be shared on Canvas for you to read and study BEFORE class.

Almost every week, we will sit down together to do live readings of classic plays. I will share .pdfs on Canvas, but only script copies - that I will print and distribute - will be used during these readings.

## **Attendance, Participation, Punctuality**

Please come to every class, and I expect you to be in the room and ready to work at the top of the hour. The TA will take attendance every day. If something prevents you from coming to class, try to let us know about your issues ahead of time - but even so, not every issue merits an Excused Absence (which means illness, death of a loved one, jury duty or observance of religious holidays).

It is your right to observe religious holidays without impacting your opportunity to learn and succeed in this course. Please reach out to me at the start of the semester so that deadlines can be reviewed in advance of your religious observations. You will still be held responsible for course content and any assignments, but you will not lose points for attendance and participation on days important to your faith.

In August 2025, the Theater Department announced the following attendance policy: "Leaving class early counts as an absence for that class session. Students are allowed (1) unexcused absence. For each additional absence, **absence penalties are taken from your grade at ½ a letter grade**. You are permitted one unexcused absence before it affects your grade. Absences after that absence are considered "unexcused" absences. Four unexcused absences constitute failure of the class."

I will give out Class Attendance and Participation grades for each student after the Fifth, Tenth, and Fifteenth weeks of the class. Attendance will be taken every day - but these scores are also qualitative, to some extent. I will occasionally ask questions during lectures. If I note that a student is present in class but is obviously not paying attention, or is unable to answer even the most basic questions about the assigned materials, I will take that into account. These three grades will then be combined for a final Attendance and Participation grade. (See Grading, below.)

In terms of assignments, even in best of time students may have problems with stress, overwork and scheduling. Canvas will always note the exact time that an assignment is due. If you're having trouble completing an assignment, get in touch with me *before the deadline*. Let's discuss a timeframe for you to complete the work. In my experience, we can usually work something out.

### **Additional Class Rules**

**1) Unless you have a specific accommodation, put your laptops and phones under the desk.** I advise using paper and pen to take notes. Since I am distributing my own lecture notes to you, you can even doodle as you listen to lectures. **2) Students MAY NOT wear headphones or earbuds during class.** Take them off and pay attention. **3) On those occasions when I show a video during class, even students with accommodations must close laptops.** All eyes should be on the classroom screen.

### **Play Readings**

At various point in the semester, each student will sign up for at least THREE of nine group play readings. I will supply the texts for these readings, either of full plays or of selected portions of dramatic texts. See the Calendar for dates, and use your own knowledge of your schedule about which groups you'd like to sign up for. I will share a Google Doc with everyone for the sign-up. You get full credit if you participate in three readings - and are in the 'audience' for five others.

### **Reading Review Quizzes**

Over the semester will be fourteen review quizzes on Canvas to help you reinforce concepts and facts that are covered in the podcasts, videos, and lectures. Do these outside of class time, but you can take them as many times as necessary until you complete all the answers correctly. Quizzes will **not** count towards your final grade, but I highly recommend you take the time to engage with them, every week. They will serve as memory reinforcement - and as study guides for the Final Exam.

### **Midterm**

At the end of Week Eight, a Midterm Canvas Discussion Post must be completed.

## Final Project

Each student will have a "poster and paper" theater history project individually assigned to them at the end of the semester. If students elect to do so, they can submit their work for this project as part of a 'renewable assignment' for future Theater History classes.

## Final Exam

There will be a Final Examination covering all the material and readings over the semester. It will take the form of an interactive group exercise. It is scheduled during the Final Exam Period.

## Grading

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Class Attendance and Participation | 30%         |
| Play Readings                      | 20%         |
| Reading Review Quizzes             | UNGRADED    |
| Midterm Discussion Board Post      | 10%         |
| Final Research Project & Poster    | 20%         |
| Final Exam                         | <u>20%</u>  |
|                                    | <b>100%</b> |

## Academic Credit (from the Undergraduate Bulletin) – How Much Work You’ll Have

“A credit hour is a measure of the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. A credit hour is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates: (1) not less than one hour of classroom instruction or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester of credit or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities such as laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.”

(Translation: We have 2.5 hours of class time per week, so you should budget about five hours per week for studying outside of class. Some weeks will be more busy than others)

## Expectations for Class Conduct

**PHYSICAL HEALTH:** The best way to maintain a safe and focused learning environment is for everyone to get vaccinated against COVID-19, flu, and other infectious diseases. Wear masks whenever you think it might be advisable. You are completely encouraged to wear a mask during class if you feel it is the best choice for you.

**MENTAL HEALTH:** Our mental health needs are just as important as our physical health needs - I am a fierce advocate of this policy. Take advantage of Temple's mental health services, and be in touch with me if you are experiencing difficulties that are preventing you from completing assignments.

**SOCIAL HEALTH:** It is important to foster a respectful and productive learning environment that includes all students in our diverse community. That doesn't mean unanimous groupthink. I do not expect you to always agree with my opinions, and I am interested in hearing yours even if they do

not align with mine. Our differences will add richness to this learning experience. Therefore, individual opinions and experiences will be received in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse.

Let me be clear, however, that racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic language - or statements scornfully disparaging a religious or ethnic group - necessarily create a hostile environment for learning, and are inherently harmful to that very academic discourse. I will do my best to provide both a healthy social experience and a productive space of intellectual inquiry for everyone.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without properly attributing them to the source. This includes podcasts, videos, printed books and periodicals, or internet sources. Please refer to the MLA Guide for instructions on proper citation methods, and to Temple's Student Policies ([http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/responsibilities\\_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtml](http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/responsibilities_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtml)) for more information. Plagiarism will result in your receiving a grade of F for the assignment at a minimum, and could lead to your failing the class, as well as being reported to your advisor, your department head, and your dean.

### **AI POLICY:**

In previous semesters I allowed some limited applications of AI in my syllabus, but upon consideration I have changed this policy.

Increasingly, I feel that there is no justifiable use for AI in this class - it is bad for the environment, it undermines academic integrity, and is antithetical to our artistic field. It gets in the way of training your mind to *think* - which is why you are going to college in the first place.

I deeply caution anyone using AI functions to conduct research. Since AI programs draws from databases of already published texts, it takes people's work without their consent. Furthermore, though it *can* generate factually accurate answers to any given query or prompt, AI does not *care* about the truth. It is a predictive text generator, and has a well-demonstrated tendency to "hallucinate" and, frankly, to generate bullshit. Lastly, it can be manipulated by people whose motives are not in your best interest. You don't know what you are NOT being told.

*The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Bard, Dall-E, etc.) is not permitted in the course for the following activities:*

- Impersonating you in classroom context, such as using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you.
  
- Composing a draft of a writing assignment without acknowledging the fact that AI was used. Any submission that attempts to utilize, rewrite or disguise AI-generated text is not acceptable, and will result in a grade penalty of 50%.
  
- Generating sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments, and submitting them as your own work.

## **Resources and Support**

I encourage you to utilize the Student Success Center, which provides free academic support for all Temple students. More information is available at [studentsuccess.temple.edu](https://studentsuccess.temple.edu), by calling 215-204-0702, or by emailing [sscdesk@temple.edu](mailto:sscdesk@temple.edu). The Student Success Center's core academic support services - Academic Coaching, Language Tutoring, STEM Learning Lab, and Writing Tutoring - are open to Temple University students enrolled in courses on any campus, including online. Detailed information about each of the services and how to access them is available at [studentsuccess.temple.edu](https://studentsuccess.temple.edu). If you have questions about any of the services, don't hesitate to contact the SSC at [sscdesk@temple.edu](mailto:sscdesk@temple.edu) or 215-204-0702.

Sometimes the biggest factors impacting student success are things happening beyond the scope of the individual classroom. Temple provides a wide array of resources both to help you overcome academic challenges and those not directly related to the educational challenges of the course. Please reach out to me if you need help deciding which resources might be right for you. If you are experiencing food insecurity or financial struggles, Temple provides resources and support. Notably, the Temple University [Cherry Pantry](#) is in operation as well as a variety of resources from the [Division of Student Affairs](#).

## **Disability Statement**

Any student who has a need for accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability or medical condition should contact Disability Resources and Services (DRS) located in the Howard Gittis Student Center South, 4th Floor at [drs@temple.edu](mailto:drs@temple.edu) or 215-204-1280 to request accommodations and learn more about the resources available to you. If you have a DRS accommodation letter to share with me, or you would like to discuss your accommodations, please contact me as soon as practical. I will work with you and with DRS to coordinate reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities. All discussions related to your accommodations will be confidential. Students can learn more about the accommodation process and pre-register on the [DRS website](#). Students may register at any time during the semester, but accommodations are not active until you register, so I recommend doing so as early in the semester as possible.

## **Technology Usage Policy**

Read Temple University's Technology Usage policy which includes information on unauthorized access, disclosure of passwords, and sharing of accounts. The policy (#04.71.11) can be accessed at <https://secretary.temple.edu/sites/secretary/files/policies/04.71.11.pdf>

Any recordings permitted in this class can only be used for the student's personal educational use. Students are not permitted to copy, publish, or redistribute audio or video recordings of any portion of the class session to individuals who are not students in the course or academic program without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Distribution without permission may be a violation of educational privacy law, known as FERPA as well as certain copyright laws. Any recordings made by the instructor or university of this course are the property of Temple University.

## **Technology Specifications**

To participate in this course, you will need the equipment, software, and internet access necessary to reliably use Canvas.

Limited resources are available for students who do not have the technology they need for class. Students with educational technology needs, including no computer or camera or insufficient Wifi access, should submit a Student Technology Assistance Application located in TUPortal and linked from the [Dean of Students Support and Resources webpage](#). The university will endeavor to meet needs, such as with a long-term loan of a laptop or Mifi device, a refurbished computer, or subsidized internet access.

Note that there are technology resources available for students, including on-campus computers available for student use, [the Tech Center](#) computer labs and free [laptop and battery borrowing](#) at Charles Library, software that is available for free download and other specialty software that may be available for remote access through ITS.

## **The Spiritual Foundation of the Department**

The Department of Theater embraces the spirit of creative community both in the classroom and on stage. Theater is by nature a uniquely collaborative art form. During your time here as a student, you are in every respect called to be a supportive, contributing member of a large resident ensemble, committed at every level of endeavor, regardless of the task, to achieving artistic excellence in our work as a company.

## **CPCA Statement**

As a CPCA faculty member, I am committed to serving diverse backgrounds and perspectives in this class and I believe that the diversity each individual brings to our time together is a resource, strength and benefit to us all. In this class, I will present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity. As a member of the Temple community, I will not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or veteran status. Please let me know if there are ways that I may improve the inclusivity of this course for you personally or for other students or student groups. I value your suggestions.

## Course Calendar:

| Date   | Topic or Activity   | Assignments (on Canvas)              |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Week One: Origins</b>                             |   |                                      |
| Monday, August 25                                    | Course Overview   | Syllabus                             |
| Wednesday, August 27                                 | Origins of Theater  | Podcast: <i>The Triumph of Horus</i> |
| Friday, August 29                                    | Origins of Theater, cont.   | Video: "What is Theater?"            |
| <b>Week Two: Ancient Greece</b>                      |   |                                      |
| Monday, September 1                                  | LABOR DAY - NO CLASS  |                                      |
| Wednesday, September 3                               | Dionysus  | Videos: Dionysus & Dionysia          |
| Friday, September 5                                  | Tragedy   | Video: Intro to Greek Tragedy        |
| <b>Week Three: Ancient Greece, cont.</b>             |   |                                      |
| Monday, September 8                                  | <i>The Bacchae, Euripides</i>                                     | Podcast: "The Bacchae" <i>I.O.T.</i> |
| Wednesday, September 10                              | Old Comedy  | Video: "Ancient Greek Comedy"        |
| Friday, September 12                                 | New Comedy  | Podcast: <i>Old Cantankerous</i>     |
| <b>Week Four: Ancient Rome</b>                       |   |                                      |
| Monday, September 15                                 | Theatrum Romanum  | Video: "Roman Theater"               |
| Wednesday, September 17                              | <i>The Eunuch, Terence</i>  |                                      |
| Friday, September 19                                 | Theatrum Romanum, cont.   | Video: <i>Ancient Rome Live</i>      |
| <b>Week Five: Ancient and Medieval Asian Theater</b> |   |                                      |
| Monday, September 22                                 | Early India and China   | Videos: Sanskrit Theater             |
| Wednesday, September 24                              | Asian puppetry traditions   | Videos: Asian puppetry               |
| Friday, September 26                                 | <i>Snow in Midsummer, or The Injustice Done to Dou E, Hanqing</i> |                                      |

| <b>Week Six: Medieval Europe</b>                   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Monday, September 29                               | Liturgical drama   | Podcast: "Theatre & Worship"   |
| Wednesday, October 1                               | Vernacular drama   | Video: "Medieval Drama"  |
| Friday, October 3                                  | <b><i>Master Pierre Pathelin</i></b>                             |  |
| <b>Week Seven: Medieval Japan</b>                  |  |  |
| Monday, October 6                                  | <i>Noh</i> drama   | Videos: <i>Brief Introduction to Noh &amp; Behind the Scenes</i>     |
| Wednesday, October 8                               | <i>Noh</i> , continued   | Video: <i>Noh Documentary</i>  |
| Friday, October 10                                 | <b><i>Noh reading: Atsumori</i></b>                              | Video: <i>Atsumori</i>   |
| <b>Week Eight: Early Modern Italy</b>              |  |  |
| Monday, October 13                                 | <i>Commedia dell'arte</i>  | Video: CCT - "Commedia"  |
| Wednesday, October 15                              | Stages and scenery   | Video: "The Arched Spectacle"  |
| Friday, October 17                                 | <b>FALL WELLNESS DAY<br/>NO CLASS</b>                            | <b>Midterm Discussion Board<br/>Post due</b>                         |
| <b>Week Nine: Early Modern England</b>             |  |  |
| Monday, October 20                                 | Tudor drama and Marlowe  | Video: "NOT Shakespeare"   |
| Wednesday, October 22                              | Will Shakespeare and Ben Jonson                                  | Podcast: <i>The Sights, Sounds and Smells of Elizabethan Theatre</i> |
| Friday, October 24                                 | Jacobean Era - video in class                                    |  |
| <b>Week Ten: Spain and the <i>Siglo de Oro</i></b> |  |  |
| Monday, October 27                                 | El Siglo de Oro  | Video: "Spanish Golden Age"  |
| Wednesday, October 29                              | El Siglo de Oro, cont.   | Video: "Pre-Columbian Theater"                                       |
| Friday, October 31                                 | <b><i>The Divine Narcissus, and Fuenteovejuna (excerpts)</i></b> |  |

| <b>Week Eleven: French Neoclassicism &amp; Moliere</b>    |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Monday, November 3  | 17th Century French drama            | Video: "French Neoclassicism"            |
| Wednesday, November 5                                     | Moliere, et al.                      | Video: "Moliere"                         |
| Friday, November 7  | <i>The Precious Ladies, Moliere</i>  |  |
| <b>Week Twelve: Restoration Era - and what came after</b> |                                      |  |
| Monday, November 10                                       | Restoration theater                  | Podcast: <i>Aphra Behn</i>               |
| Wednesday, November 12                                    | <b>Restoration Era Play (TBA)</b>    |  |
| Friday, November 14                                       | 18th C. Middle Class Morality        | Podcast: "Early Philly Theater"          |
| <b>Week Thirteen: 17th-19th Century Asia</b>              |                                      |  |
| Monday, November 17                                       | Ta'ziyeh                             | Video: <i>The Troupe</i>                 |
| Wednesday, November 19                                    | Kabuki                               | Videos: <i>Bunraku</i> and <i>Kabuki</i> |
| Friday, November 21                                       | Kabuki, continued                    | Video: <i>Kanjincho</i>                  |
| November 24 -30<br><b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>              |                                      |  |
| <b>Week Fourteen: 18th Century Europe - Revolutions</b>   |                                      |  |
| Monday, December 1  | 18th Century French and German drama | Podcast: <i>Olympe de Gouge</i>          |
| Wednesday, December 3                                     | 18th Century, cont.                  | Podcast: <i>Sturm und Drang</i>          |
| Friday, December 5  | <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i>        |  |
| <b>Week Fifteen - Review</b>                              |                                      |  |
| Monday, December 8  | Final Exam Review                    |  |

**Final Exam: Friday, DECEMBER 12, 1:00-3:00 pm**

**Final Projects due: Monday, DECEMBER 15, 11:59 pm**