

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for THEA 14

BAY AREA THEATRE

Effective: Fall 2008

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

THEA 14 — BAY AREA THEATRE — 4.00 units

Appreciation of theatrical performances through reading, evaluating and attending live productions. Specific content is determined by currently available theatrical productions.

2.50 Units Lecture 1.50 Units Lab

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

Family: Theater Humanities

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	45.00
Lab Hours:	81.00
Total Hours:	126.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 2

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Demonstrate an appreciation for live theatrical performances;
- B. Describe and behave according to the standards of live theater etiquette;
- C. Describe the various elements of a play script – plot, character, theme;
- D. Describe the various production elements in a live theatrical performance - scenery, lighting, costumes, make up, sound, music, acting, directing;
- E. Effectively critique a live theatrical performance in oral discussions as well as in writing;
- F. Read a play and envision what its incarnation on stage might look and sound like;
- G. Evaluate and compare a written script with its live theatrical production;
- H. Describe and differentiate between various styles and purposes of theater.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Attendance at live theatrical performances
 1. College productions – Las Positas, Chabot, Cal State East Bay
 2. Community theater productions – Pleasanton Playhouse, Role Players Ensemble, Chanticleers, Diablo Light Opera Company, Contra Costa Music Theatre
 3. Professional theater production – A.C.T., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco Mime Troupe, American Musical Theatre of San Jose
- B. Back stage tours of theaters (when possible)
- C. Talk-back sessions with the actors (when possible)
- D. Elements of a script – plot, character, theme
- E. Reading and analysis of play scripts
- F. Reading and analysis of scripts and scores of musicals
- G. Elements of a production – scenery, lighting, costumes, make up, sound, music, acting, directing
- H. Styles of theater – classic plays, contemporary plays, musicals, comedies, dramas, combinations of drama and comedy, political theater, theater to entertain, theater to enlighten, etc.

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Class and small group discussion 1. Elements of play scripts and play production 2. Discussions of plays before seeing performances, including thoughts on what the performance might look and sound like 3. Discussions after seeing the performance
- C. Reading of plays outside of class
- D. Attendance at live performances of plays and musicals (being studied)
- E. In-class listening of music from musicals
- F. Written assignments – reviews, compare and contrast papers, tests
- G. In-class reading of scenes from plays

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Read Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of our Teeth* and be prepared to discuss in class the differences in tone, plot and theme between each of the three acts. B. Attend a performance of *Twelfth Night*. C. Write a critical review of the performance of *Twelfth Night*.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Quizzes
3. Papers
4. Class Participation
5. Other:
 - a. Methods
 1. Attendance at performances
 2. Participation in class discussions
 3. Test on elements of play production and script analysis
 - a. Sample questions: List the various creative personnel involved in creating the production of a musical and describe their functions. List and describe three types of plot structure.
 4. Quizzes and tests on the plays read
 - a. Sample questions: (Given on the day reading assignment is due.) In *The Skin of our Teeth*, in Act 1, what people do Mr. Antrobus let into his home to get warm? In Act 2, what does Henry do that gets him in trouble? In Act 3, where does Sabina want to go?
 5. Written assignments
 - a. Sample assignment: (Written after the production of the play has been seen.) What differences were there between the production of *Twelfth Night* that you saw and what you imagined the production would be like after reading it? How were specific characters different from what you imagined they would be?

B. **Frequency**

1. Frequency
 - a. Quiz for each play read on the day reading assignment is due
 - b. Written review or comparison paper due after each performance seen

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Scripts of plays being studied/seen. Plays determined by available local productions.
2. Libretti and recordings of musicals being studied/seen
3. Handouts on the elements of plays and the productions of plays (supplied by instructor)
4. Handouts on the writing of critical reviews (supplied by instructor)

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Ticket(s) to theatrical performances (As much as possible, shows should be chosen that have free performances or where student discounts are available.)
- B. Transportation to theatrical performances