THEA 3400: Theatre for Young Audiences

Production | Performance | Pedagogy

Fall 2026

MW 2:20pm-4pm, RTFP 130

Instructor Contact

Name: Zoe Settle
Office Hours: by appointment only
Email: zoe.settle@unt.edu

Course Description

Recognition and examination of the history and philosophy, production and performance of theatre for young audiences. Focused inquiry on the practical problems that arise in the selection and performance of dramatic texts, original collective creations, and adaptation of selected literature. Course designed for those who advocate theatre as a stimulus for learning, whether they are specializing in classroom teaching or seeking careers in professional theatre.

Course Structure

This 15-week course will be taught face-to-face. There are three units in the course, each of which will address contemporary topics within the world of TYA production, performance, and pedagogy. This course is intended to introduce you to the academic study of and practice of play production for young people. Classes will include a mixture of lectures, discussions, and interactive activities that will help you to develop your own unique style as a TYA practitioner.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have knowledge of:

- The process of devising theatre
- Local and national TYA organizations
- Modern approaches to teaching theatre in the classroom
- Challenges impeding the growth of Theatre for Young Audiences

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate skills and methodology for bringing theatre to young people
- Develop and implement an original performance concept
- Plan and implement an original STEAM lesson plan
- Create multicultural awareness as a theatre artist
- Engage in oral discussion reflecting on written and performed works
- Create and implement age-appropriate drama activities

Required Texts

All reading materials for class will be uploaded to Canvas via PDF.

Communication

Generally, I am quick to respond to emails. However, I do not look at my email on evenings or weekends. If you email during these times, I will make best efforts to reply on the next business day. I also ask that you give me at least 24 hours to answer your email prior to sending me a follow-up.

Some things to be mindful of when emailing your professors:

- To make sure that your message gets seen in a timely manner, please use my UNT email, *not* Canvas messages
- Use your resources: Make sure the answer to your question is not already on Canvas or in the syllabus. Read assignments carefully, consult a classmate, and Google your question if necessary. Then, if you still have a question, email me.
- If it is within 24 hours of a due date, please do not count on getting a reply from me in time.
- I am not tech support. If you are having problems accessing Canvas or elements in the course, please try the following before contacting me:
    - General Canvas Help Guides (Searchable): https://community.instructure.com/en/all-guides
    - UNT Tech Support (FAQ, Phone Number, and Chat): https://techsupport.unt.edu/students.html
    - Submit a Helpdesk Ticket: https://unts.servicenowservices.com/unt?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=bb9a0fd91b02f090b6111f47b04bcbde

If you have an extenuating circumstance preventing you from attending class or submitting assignments on time, please reach out to the Dean of Students for support. They are here to advocate on your behalf.

ADA Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.

Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website.

Please contact me at the start of the semester to discuss your accommodation letter so that we are on the same page about how you will engage with the course.

Student Obligation to Academic and Production Work

Dance & Theater students are expected to budget and organize their time in order to meet both their academic and production commitments satisfactorily and on time. Production assignments, including tech week, are *not an acceptable excuse for missing class or failing to turn in assignments.*

Class Conduct

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

View UNT's Code of Student Conduct to learn more.

The University of North Texas prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Please see additional UNT policies and procedures on the Student Support Services & Policies page.

Academic Integrity

UNT Honor Code: *"I commit myself to honor, integrity, and responsibility as a student representing the University of North Texas community. I understand and pledge to uphold academic integrity as set forth by UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003. I affirm that the work I submit will always be my own, and the support I provide and receive will always be honorable."*

See UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the submission of AI-generated work is not accepted in this course. *Any violation of this will result in a full loss of points for the assignment*. See UNT AI policy and FAQs

Sexual Assault Prevention: UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Sensitive Subject Matter: In this course sensitive subject matter may be discussed. Everyone is expected to treat these moments with the sensitivity and respect they deserve. Racist, misogynistic, homophobic, or any other form of hateful language is disruptive and will not be tolerated.

All discussions should be civil and courteous. Disagreement and debate is welcome; however, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom environment. Anyone who finds it difficult to act respectfully toward their classmates or professor and the subject matter being discussed may be asked to leave the class.

Student Perceptions of Teaching: Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Attendance and Tardies

The following policy is consistent within the department: students are allowed no more than a total of **three** absences during the semester. Additionally, every third tardy will equate to one absence for attendance grading purposes. A tardy of more than fifteen minutes is recorded as an absence. A **fourth** absence is grounds for the student to earn an F for the course. The professor's rollsheet is the official record of absences and tardiness.

Class Participation

As a member of this class, you should arrive having read and reflected on the week's materials. You have a perspective unique from your classmates, and it is expected you will bring this to all class discussions and activities.

To earn full participation points each week, you must be present and have completed all work expected of you by the time you enter the classroom. While technology will be necessary at times for class activities or recording lecture notes, I respectfully ask that you refrain from excessive use of your phones or other devices. When teaching, I am giving you my undivided attention. I am not on my phone or working on things for other classes during my time with you, and I ask that you extend both me and your classmates the same courtesy.

If something comes up that requires you to be on your device for an extended period of time, please excuse yourself to the hallway to take care of the issue and rejoin when you are able to do so distraction-free.

I encourage you all to enter class with an open mind to learning new things and experiencing different perspectives. I also hope to see a willingness to step outside your comfort zone, as well as interact with peers in an equitable and respectful way.

Late Work Policy

In extremely rare cases, extensions will be granted for extenuating circumstances. Any request for a due date extension *must be made 12 hours before the deadline* to be considered. Any extension request received within 12 hours or later of a deadline will not be acknowledged.

If you are using your ODA accommodation for occasional extensions of due dates on an eligible assignment, please provide notice of your intention to apply the accommodation at least 12 hours before the assignment deadline. If you have questions about how to use this accommodation in this course or which assignments are eligible, please refer to the course plan on file with ODA or reach out to me via email.

Grading
Unless otherwise stated, all written work must be typed and double spaced using black, 12-point font in either Times New Roman or Arial. AI-generated work, in whole or in part, will receive a 0.

Individual rubrics will be given in Canvas for class assignment, and assignments range from weekly work (10-15 points) to larger projects (25 points). Participation and attendance are cumulative grades that will be assessed at the end of the semester.

Your final grade in the class will depend on the following:

- Competent, disciplined rehearsal and classwork
- Thorough preparation for class
- Timely and successful completion of homework and projects as assigned
- Regular, faithful attendance
- Reliable, collegial partnering in group projects

Readings
Unless otherwise stated, all readings assigned for this course can be found via Canvas. The reading material assigned is not busy work. Selections were chosen with intention and care in order to best serve the objectives of this course.

A note on time commitment: the average person can read 40-50 pages in an hour, or 200-300 words per minute. For a 3 credit hour class, it is assumed you will spend around 9 hours a week dedicated to that particular course. Subtracting our time together in class, as well as the time commitment estimated for other class assignments, I have chosen weekly reading accordingly so as to not overstep this approximate time commitment.

If you find that you are consistently committing more than 9 hours a week to this class, reach out to me so that we can discuss your progress.

Please note that the professor reserves the right to give a pop quiz over the day's assigned reading at any point in time.

Course Schedule

Reading and written assignments/presentations are due for class discussion on the day they appear on the schedule. This schedule is subject to minor changes.

Unit 1 - Folk Tales & Creative Drama

Major Assignment: Leading a Creative Drama Lesson

Weekly Assignments: Mini Lesson Plan, View of Children in Media, Word Wall

Topics Covered:

- What is Theatre for Young Audiences? Who all is included in “young audiences”?
- The practice and process of creative drama
- Improv in the drama classroom
- Applications of SEL in theatre education

Monday, 8/17

Syllabus review and class introductions

Discussion (Canvas):

- What do you think of when you hear “Theatre for Young Audiences”? Respond with your first impressions in around 150 words and reply to a classmate by 8/17 at 11:59pm

Wednesday, 8/19

Read:

- *You Know, for Kids: Transcending the TYA Stigma* by Emma Halpern
- *The Importance of Creative Dramatic Activities/Games in the Classroom*
- *The Arkansaw Bear*

Assignment:

- Play Reflection: *The Arkansaw Bear* due by 2pm
- Complete the activities in the *Arkansaw Bear* reading guide and bring to class
- Word Wall Submission: print and bring to class

In-Class Activity:

- Leading a Creative Drama Lesson

Monday, 8/24

Read:

- *Wiley and the Hairy Man*
- *A Concise Introduction to Viola Spolin*

Assignments:

- Play Reflection *Wiley and the Hairy Man* due by 2pm
- Theaters for Young Audiences Research Writeup

In-Class Activity:

- Looking at Bloom's Taxonomy
- Creative Drama Lesson (Instructor-Led)

Wednesday, 8/26

Read & Listen:

- *A Year with Frog and Toad*
- *How to Create Drama that Appeals to Children and Teenagers*
- *Significance and Practice of Creative Drama Education* by Xu Ping

Assignments:

- Play Reflection *A Year with Frog and Toad* due by 2pm

In-Class Activity:

- Producing Plays vs Musicals
- Creative Drama Lesson (Instructor-Led)

Monday, 8/31

Read & Listen:

- *Seussical*
- *Arts Education & Social Emotional Learning Framework*

Assignment:

- Play Reflection *Seussical* due by 2pm
- Creative Drama Mini Lesson Plan Writeup

In-Class Activity:

- Exploring SEL and applying it in the theatre

Wednesday, 9/2

Read: Enriching Academics with Musical Theater in Primary Grades

Assignment: View of a Child due by 2pm

Monday, 9/7

LABOR DAY - NO CLASS

Wednesday, 9/9

Read: *¡Bocon!*

Assignment: Creative Drama Lesson #1

**All students not teaching are expected to submit a Play Reflection as usual*

Monday, 9/14

Read & Listen: *Honk! the Musical*

Assignment: Creative Drama Lesson #2

**All students not teaching are expected to submit a Play Reflection as usual*

Wednesday, 9/16

Read: *A Thousand Cranes*

Assignment: Creative Drama Lesson #3

**All students not teaching are expected to submit a Play Reflection as usual*

Monday, 9/21

Read & Listen: *Tuck Everlasting the Musical* (TYA Edition)

Assignment: Creative Drama Lesson #4

**All students not teaching are expected to submit a Play Reflection as usual*

Unit 2 - UIL, Educational Theatre, and Drama Processes

Major Assignment: Theatre Study Guide, Realizing a Devised Piece

Weekly Assignments: Design a UIL Set, Research UIL Plays, Reader's Theatre Activity

Topics Covered:

- Explore regional, national, and global TYA organizations
- Learn about UIL theatre and look at most popular plays produced
- Discuss the TEKS standards for K-12
- The process and practice of devising and its place in TYA
- Expanded applications of TYA

Wednesday, 9/23

Read:

- Chapter One of Amanda Gigurre's *Shakespeare and Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook for Educators*
- Detailed summary of *Comedy of Errors*
- Explore the Shakespeare and Violence Prevention Website

In-Class Activity:

- Spotlight on: Shakespeare and Violence Prevention with Colorado Shakespeare Festival at CU Boulder
- Making a Theatre Study Guide

Monday, 9/28

Read:

- *Drama-Based Pedagogy*
- *What is Pedagogy in Education?*
- *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

Assignments:

- Pedagogy Discussion (Canvas)
- Play Reflection *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* due by 2pm

In-Class Activity: UIL Crash Course

Wednesday, 9/30

Read:

- *A Monster Calls*
- *The Taboo of Sadness*

Assignments:

- UIL Theatre Research
- Play Reflection *A Monster Calls* due by 2pm

In-Class Activity: Building a UIL set (final design due Friday 10/2 by 11:59pm)

Monday, 10/5

Read: Look over the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Theatre

In-Class Activity: TEKS Crash Course, Reader's Theatre

Wednesday, 10/7

Assignment: Bring Theatre Study Guide Rough Draft to Class

In-Class Activity: Presentation and Peer Critique of Study Guides

**Final Draft due 10/9 11:59pm*

Monday, 10/12

Read:

- Devising Drama Resource Pack
- Frantic Assembly - A Guide to Devising

Watch:

- National Theatre Masterclass on Devising (11 mins)

In-Class Activity:

- Devising as Pedagogical Practice

Wednesday, 10/14

In-Class Activity: Applied TYA

Monday, 10/19

In-Class Activity:

- Devising a Performance Stimuli with be posted at 2PM
- You have the full class period to complete the devising portion of this assignment

Wednesday, 10/21

In-Class Activity: Rehearsing and Performing a Devised Piece

Unit 3 - Contemporary Topics in TYA

Major Assignment: Culturally Responsive Pitch of a Play

Weekly Assignments: Mission Statement, Teaching Philosophy, Discussion Board

Topics Covered:

- Culturally responsive education
- Talking about the "taboo"
- Exploring identity in TYA
- What needs to be considered when choosing a theatre season?
- Examine recent trends in TYA production

Monday, 10/26

Read:

- "Battle Royale" (end at "he whispered fiercely; then he died.")
- *All American Boys*

Assignment: Play Reflection *All American Boys* due by 2pm

In-Class Activity: Play Study

- What needs to be considered to turn a book into a play? Into a TYA play?
- How did reading the source material first inform your reading of the play?
- Is it necessary to be familiar with the source material in order to appreciate a stage adaptation?

Wednesday, 10/28

Read:

- *Anti-Racist & Anti-Oppressive Futures for Theatre for Young Audiences*
- *The Importance of Diversity & Multicultural Awareness in Education*
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Assignments:

- Written Response: After reading the articles, write an advocacy statement explaining the necessity of cultural responsiveness in education. Then explore how you as a teacher can bring culturally relevant pedagogy to the classroom.

Monday, 11/2

Read:

- *Think of the Children: When Theatres Cross the Line*

Assignment: Take an Implicit Association Test (linked in Canvas)

In-Class Activity: Culturally Responsive Education & Personal Cultural Identities

Wednesday, 11/4

Read: *The Wolves*

Assignment: Play Reflection *The Wolves* due by 2pm

Monday, 11/9

Read: *Theatre for Young Audiences - State of the Field*

In-Class Activity: Follow-up to the 2024 TYA study

Wednesday, 11/11

Read:

- *Let the Right One In*
- *Theatre Accessibility: How to Improve Your Program*

Assignment: Play Reflection *Let the Right One In* due by 2pm

Monday, 11/16

Read:

- Cultural Autobiography
- What is a Teaching Philosophy?

Assignment: Answer the questions posed in the Cultural Autobiography

In-Class Activity: Writing a Teaching Philosophy statement

Wednesday, 11/18

Read:

- *How to Write an Effective Mission Statement*
- *Mission Creep: How Nonprofits Can Stay True to Their Missions*

In-Class Activity: Crafting the Mission of a Theatre Program

11/23-11/27 | Thanksgiving Break

Assignment: Live Performance Reflection due by **11/29 at 11:59pm**

Monday, 11/30

Final Project Presentations: Attendance is REQUIRED for both presentation days

Wednesday, 12/2

Final Project Presentations: Attendance is REQUIRED for both presentation days