COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE CODE: THE 3000ID / LAW 3000ID
TITLE: THEATRE OF LAW

3 Hours / 3 Credits

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION
An investigation into the dynamic and embodied live communication common to both theatre and law. Students will read plays written about foundational cases involving actual trial transcripts, and probe the ways in which these cases have influenced society. Additionally, students will write and perform short plays based on actual court cases. Persuasive argument and the courtroom itself are also investigated as enactments of theatre and performance (examining the courtroom in terms of costume, roles, design, power dynamics, etc.).

Minimum technology requirements are a working camera and microphone. Students are to switch both on at the instructor’s request.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
An introduction to the use of theatrical techniques in the presentation of legal arguments. The disciplines of theatre and law introduce different perspectives on theme, rhetoric, persuasive argument, written and oral storytelling, and performance. These components form an integral part of the legal profession in general, and are particularly relevant to litigation and trial practice. Conversely, an examination of the representation of law in theatre through Courtroom Drama and how, using performance studies to examine acting in everyday life, the courtroom itself can be regarded as a performance space.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:
(ENG1101 or ENG1101CO or ENG1101ML) AND (COM 1330 or COM 1340 or THE 2180 or with department permission)

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED VIEWING:
Videos and films of selected trial proceedings. Access to be provided through the college library and/or online sites (Blackboard, Open Lab, LibGuide) or by instructor. Students may also be required to view a live performance of a play or court proceeding; students are responsible for theatre fees.

SAMPLE PLAYS

Note: The selection of plays/trials studied in any given semester varies. Instructors make an effort to choose outstanding plays created in a variety of styles and historical eras. In any semester, the selection of plays/trials will influence the emphasis given to sample topics.

*8 the Play* (Dustin Lance Black)
*A Few Good Men* (David Brown; Aaron Sorkin)
*A Raisin in the Sun* (Lorraine Hansberry)
*The Anastasia Trials in the Court of Women* (Carolyn Gage)
*Anatomy of a Murder* (Wendell Mayes; Otto Preminger)
*Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?* (Eric Bentley)
*Brown v. Board of Education* (Re-enactment Script)
*The Chicago Conspiracy Trial* (Ron Sossi and Frank Condon, 1979)
*The Crucible* (Arthur Miller)
*The Defamation Experience* (Todd Logan)
*Execution of Justice* (Emily Mann)
*Greensboro (A Requiem)* (Emily Mann)
*Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* (Moises Kaufman)
*Inherit the Wind* (Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee)
*Inquest* (Donald Freed)
*It’s True, It’s True, It’s True.* (Stevens and Barrett) (re: Artemesia Gentileschi)
*Joan of Lorraine* (Maxwell Anderson)
*Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer)
*The Laramie Project* (Moises Kaufman)
*Libel!* (Edward Woll)
*Measure for Measure* (William Shakespeare)
*Machinal* (Sophie Treadwell)
*Night of January 16th* (Ayn Rand)
*Nuts* (Tom Topor)

Digireads.com, 2015.

*Oyeme, The Beautiful* (Miriam Gonzales)
*Rowing to America* (The Immigrant Project)
*Thurgood* (George Stevens, Jr.)  
*The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* (Daniel Berrigan)  
*To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee; Aaron Sorkin)  
*Trifles* (Susan Glaspell)  
*Twelve Angry Men* (Reginald Rose)  
*Witness for the Prosecution* (Agatha Christie)  
*Zoot Suit* (Luis Valdez)

**Bibliography:**

Cameron, Rebecca. “A somber passion strengthens her voice”: The Stage as Public Platform in British Women’s Suffrage Drama” *Comparative Drama*, Volume 50, Number 4, Winter 2016, pp. 293-316  


Opening and Closing Arguments
https://libraryguides.law.pace.edu/c.php?g=319373&p=2133435


Tigner, Amy L. “The Laramie Project: Western Pastoral” *Modern Drama*, Volume 45, Number 1, Spring 2002, pp. 138-139 Published by University of Toronto Press


Zilliacus, Clas. “Documentary Drama: Form and Content” *Comparative Drama*, Volume 6, Number 3, Fall 1972, pp. 223-253
Resources for *Twelve Angry Men*:

**TV:**

**Film:**

**Play:**

**Print:**
TOPICS FOR INCLUSION

- Societal context of the plays/trials
- Using primary source material: courtroom transcripts
- Acting and directing elements in theatre and performance
- Technical and design elements in theatre and performance
- Technical and design elements in court
- Acting/performance in everyday life
- Artistic selection and creation
- Analyzing court as theatre/performance
- Examining the role of law in society (justice/mercy)
- Storytelling in court; storytelling in theatre
- Responding effectively to anticipated and unanticipated courtroom and theatrical drama
- Recognizing power and influence of word choice, character, and attire in court and in theatre
- Roles and voices in the courtroom and the theatre
- Viewing laws/rules through the lens of those most vulnerable/marginalized by society (Social Justice engagement)
- Creative contributions by members of particular gender, ethnic, racial, or cultural groups
- Representations of members of particular gender, ethnic, racial, or cultural groups
- Dramatic structure
- Creating dramatic impact
- Creating original student plays using court transcript elements
- Research paper investigating the ways in which the courtroom functions as a theatre/performance space

*All topics are required for this course; however, Theatre of Law faculty recognize that the amount of emphasis on any particular topic varies with respect to the specific play/trial being considered.
### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES and ASSESSMENT METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT METHODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purposefully Connect and Integrate Across-Discipline Knowledge and Skills to Solve Problems</strong></td>
<td><strong>Instructional activity and evaluation methods.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Students analyze plays that use actual courtroom trial transcripts (for example, *Joan of Arc; It's True, It's True, It's True; Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*). This use of “documentary theatre” introduces students to concepts of artistic selection, and the narrative arc (exposition, opposing forces, conflict, escalating tension, and resolution). Issues of power dynamics around race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, are introduced through examining specific plays and their relationship to socio-historical context. Examination of the degree to which a courtroom is an innately theatrical “stage” reflecting, furthering, and challenging dynamics at work in the wider world. Students investigate the nature of conflict and resolution—integral to both legal studies and theatre—through the analysis of theatrical scripts and trial transcripts. Ultimately, students gain the ability to discern how narrative is controlled within the context of theatre / performance and, more particularly, the legal courtroom. Use of a shared Open Lab site and shared assignments and Blackboard Discussion posts facilitate connecting and integrating aspects of theatre and law.

Evaluation of class participation, written assignments and presentations (e.g., Blackboard responses, Final Paper & Performance Presentation).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposefully Connect and Integrate Across-Discipline Knowledge and Skills to Solve Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students analyze plays that use actual courtroom trial transcripts (for example, <em>Joan of Arc</em>, <em>It’s True, It’s True, It’s True</em>, <em>Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde</em>). This use of “documentary theatre” introduces students to concepts of artistic selection, and the narrative arc (exposition, opposing forces, conflict, escalating tension, and resolution). Issues of power dynamics around race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, are introduced through examining specific plays and their relationship to socio-historical context. Examination of the degree to which a courtroom is an innately theatrical “stage” reflecting, furthering, and challenging dynamics at work in the wider world. Students investigate the nature of conflict and resolution — integral to both legal studies and theatre—through the analysis of theatrical scripts and trial transcripts. Ultimately, students gain the ability to discern how narrative is controlled within the context of theatre / performance and, more particularly, the legal courtroom. Use of a shared Open Lab site and shared assignments and Blackboard Discussion posts facilitate connecting and integrating aspects of theatre and law.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Evaluation of class participation, written assignments and presentations (e.g., Blackboard responses, Final Paper &amp; Performance Presentation). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synthesize and Transfer Knowledge Across Disciplinary Boundaries</th>
<th>Scaffolded paper assignment: students articulate theatrical precepts, and then apply them to discuss how meaning is created in a trial scene.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students explore theatre texts, films of plays, and actual performances, as well as legal transcripts, footage of actual courtroom procedure, and possible courtroom visits to compare and contrast the dynamic qualities of argument and presentation used in each. For example, use of theatrical exposition can be correlated with setting-up background context in legal studies. Theatre’s use of “inciting incident” can be compared and contrasted with the “introduction of evidence” to shed light on ‘change elements’ in both legal studies and theatre. Additionally, students work on embodied storytelling and presentation from both legal and theatrical perspectives (through acting out scenes from Courtroom Dramas, actual courtroom transcripts, and moot court sessions), in order to generate effective oral communication (utilizing both logos and pathos) with an audience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Comprehend Factors Inherent in Complex Problems

Theatre and law are inherently interested in addressing complex problems, albeit to distinct ultimate ends. Each example of Courtroom Drama that the course examines represents a pivotal moment in legal history (renowned either for its success or profound failure) and is a microcosm for dynamics existing in the larger socio-economic context of the time. Students thus learn the specific facts of the cases, analyze the theatricalization of the play(s) written about the cases, and engage with ideas around the presentation of conflict—interpersonal, personal, and societal. Students examine the differences between Documentary Theatre (using actual court transcripts), Theatre of Social Justice, Theatre of the Real, and Courtroom Drama in order to parse ideas about the courtroom as theatre. Performance Studies tools are used to examine the courtroom, interactions between courtroom participants, and legal precedent using readings on performance, performativity, and ritual.

| Students demonstrate, through enacting theatrical Courtroom Dramas the ability to listen to, present, sometimes embody, reflect on, and respond to different sides of complex issues. |

### Recognize Varied Perspectives

Both theatre and law use structures that inherently recognize, and publicly present, varied perspectives. Through the common use of structured, formalized, dialogue each discusses and embodies varying perspectives of complex issues. High-profile and non-obvious court cases are complex by definition. Theatre and law can both teach about an individual’s character, background, motivation, and objectives. Additionally, and further from personal needs and wants, examining theatre and law in their distinct socio-historical and cultural contexts shows a wider variety of factors at work in influencing complex problems.

| Students demonstrate (through performing scenes from Courtroom Dramas, actual courtroom transcripts, and moot court sessions, as well as writing from different characters’ perspectives), a comprehension of varied perspectives. |
Think Critically, Communicate Effectively, and Work Collaboratively

Students not only analyze scripts and embody them in performance, but actually research their own court transcript and synthesize it into a short theatrical script. Thus, students need to understand the difference between the “real,” unedited, performance that is a trial, and the more tightly scripted plot that makes up theatre. They then work collaboratively (in small groups) to cast and direct these performances.

Through this scaffolded script-writing, and final performance, students learn effective communication in their teams, as well as how to communicate effectively with an audience.
### GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OBJECTIVES and ASSESSMENT METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT METHODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:</td>
<td>Instructional activity and evaluation methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
<td>The final paper requests students to analyze a trial in terms of its theatrical (i.e.: acting or technical) elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Describe the similarities and differences between law interpretation/argumentation/performance and theatre interpretation/argumentation/performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SKILLS</strong></td>
<td>In-class exercises and prepared delivery of court proceedings and scripted plays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize various parts of oral presentation and advocacy (including preparation, speaking extemporaneously, speaking impromptu, and improvisation) and differentiate between acting in theatre and in the courtroom.</td>
<td>The final paper, play, and presentation, require students to gather research, analyze information, and synthesize results into a finished product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather primary and secondary research, analyze texts, and synthesize material into a paper, play, and presentation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTEGRATION</strong></td>
<td>The final paper, play, and presentation demonstrate the ability to make connections through the use of performance elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration: discern how meaning is created in law using theatre and performance studies (e.g.: through costumes, tone of voice, gesture, status, ritual, and legal precedent).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VALUES, ETHICS & RELATIONSHIPS
Advocate for themselves and others when faced with injustice. Concomitantly, students gain a greater sense of their responsibilities as ethical citizens and see how their behavior contributes to a just, moral, and ethical society—not only for themselves and people they know—but as citizens of a larger body.

Contextualize larger concepts and concerns around race/class/gender/age/sexual orientation.

Students demonstrate through in-class presentations, exercises, discussions, and Blackboard posts, the ability to be advocates for others and mindful of social justice issues.

Students respond orally and in writing to specific questions/inquiries based on observations made while viewing various media-based presentations.

*Theatre and Law faculty are aware that the designated Learning Outcomes in this area may be achieved through a wide variety of methodologies. While all classes will require significant amounts of oral and written communication, Instructors may substitute other assignments designed to elicit student responses to the play/trial and/or to assess student comprehension of plays/trials musicals or textual material.

SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENTS and other course requirements

VIEWING & LISTENING
- View plays/movies about trials (designated as core-viewing), listen to oral argument/mock trial/moot court presentations, and/or audio excerpts. Viewing of live play production/trial proceedings when feasible.

READING
- Weekly assigned readings

RESEARCH
- Gather sources, analyze, organize, and write paper
- Research and select trial transcript
- Create and perform script
- See play/visit court
- Review selected excerpts concerning law initiatives
- Listen to oral arguments made to the court /read court transcripts
- Assess attorney performance and the rendering of a judge/jury verdict
- Analyze agency websites

WRITING – INFORMAL may include the following:
- Blackboard Discussion Board
WRITING – FORMAL
• Final Paper
• Script for Play about a Trial
• One-Page Character Analysis Paper

ORAL
• Daily Engagement: Students will be expected to orally express ideas and pose/respond to questions.
• Presentation of Prepared Performances

CREATIVE
• Performances/Presentation
• Responding to Discussion Board Posts
• Court Commentary
• Written assignments
• Creating a script

SUGGESTED GRADE SCALE – elements and weight of factors determining final course grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Blackboard In-Class Exercises</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Written Character Analysis/1 Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POLICIES

Attendance Policy
It is the conviction of your instructors that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

Plagiarism and NYCCT Academic Integrity Policy:
“Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.” (See pp. 73-76 in the student handbook). The following are some examples of plagiarism:
• Copying another person’s actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
• Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
• Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
• Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.
• **Internet Plagiarism** includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and “cutting and pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.
• Assignments must be paraphrased into your own language and properly cited. All major writing assignments will be run through Safe Assign or TURNITIN.

http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/docs/academic_integrity_policy.pdf

**Accessibility Statement**
City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, you can leave a voicemail at 718 260 5143, send an email to Accessibility@citytech.cuny.edu or visit the Center’s website at http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/ for more information.

http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/reasonable-accomodations.aspx

**Commitment to Student Diversity**
In compliance with the college wide nondiscrimination policy, your instructors seek to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many forms and enhances our students’ ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

New ID Course, first offered Spring 2021  
Created by  
Professor Marissa J. Moran  
Law & Paralegal Studies Department  
Professor Sarah Ann Standing  
Humanities Department

Course Outline Updated April 12, 2021  
Professor Marissa J. Moran  
Professor Sarah Ann Standing