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# HANDS-ON THEATRE HISTORY: ANTI-REALISM

## Instructor

WENDY-MARIE MARTIN

## Materials

Video modules, Handouts, Transcripts, MP3 Files, PDF of Powerpoint Slides, Completion Certificate

## Course length

11 modules  
1 hours, 41 minutes of video  
3 credit hours

## Course Description

This course is a mix of individual and group activities requiring students to use both their analytical and creative mind. It gives students an overview on the Anti-Realism movement of the late-19th and early-20th century, and introduces them to some key theorists, playwrights, and theater makers involved in this movement.

Together we will guide students through the wild world of the “isms,” more specifically Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Expressionism and Absurdism. We will introduce students to various manifestos and theories as we track the characteristics of each of our five “isms.” As we combine analysis and creative exercises, students bring their entire self to process and prepare to design an ISM Theme Park project, which they will share with the class at the end of the course.

## About the Instructor

Wendy-Marie received her MFA in Playwriting from the Playwrights Lab at Hollins University and a BFA in Acting from Marymount Manhattan College as well as a certificate in theatre performance from the Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA). She also holds a graduate certificate in Directing New Work from Hollins University and is wrapping up a graduate certificate in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Ohio University. Between her undergrad and graduate studies, she spent ten years in Germany teaching, performing, creating/directing original theatre, having children, doing stand up comedy, playing the accordion, writing novels & plays and generally enjoying life abroad.

Since returning to the States in 2007, Wendy-Marie has continued to work with emerging artists, helping them find their path as a singer, actor or writer while acting as Business Manager of a multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art performing arts center in California and teaching theatre history at the Pacific Conservatory Theatre/Allan Hancock College. In 2018 she moved to Ohio and began her PhD in Theatre History & Playwriting through the Interdisciplinary Arts department at Ohio University. Wendy-Marie finds her life to be full of wonderful people and experiences ...and never, ever boring!

## Course Curriculum

### Lesson 0: Introduction 13:17

The introduction gives an outline of the course and explains how each lesson will cover a different topic, culminating in a final project.

### Lesson 1: Historical Foundations & Cultural Contexts 11:38

This lesson focuses on the historical and cultural context of the 19th into early-20th century, a time ripe with “isms” and the manifestos that created them. We’ll look at the role realism & naturalism play in our American theatrical tradition and causes for the historical shift from realism to Anti-realism.

### Lesson 2: Symbolism 7:25

This lesson has a focus on Symbolism, including investigating The Manifesto of Symbolism by Jean Moreas to help inspire students to write their own short manifestos. The characteristics of Symbolism are further explored in Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck’s iconic symbolist play, *The Intruder*.

### Lesson 3: Dadaism 10:44

This lesson introduces Dadaism, using *Ubu Roi* as a jumping off point. Two manifestos are studied and students learn how to write a Dada poem of their own.

### Lesson 4A: Surrealism Part 1 14:31

This lesson introduces surrealism, using Breton’s 1924 Manifesto, a game of *Exquisite Corpse*, and costume and set designs by Picasso.

### Lesson 4B: Surrealism Part 2 5:32

This lesson includes an introduction to Antoine Artaud’s version of surrealism called the Theater of Cruelty. Students can explore themes outlined by Artaud in his manifesto and use this exploration to create their own short surrealist play.

### Lesson 5A: Expressionism Part 1 12:20

This lesson explores expressionist theater, starting with its German roots and as well key players in the movement and the characteristics connected to this form of theater.

### Lesson 5B: Expressionism Part 2 7:06

This lesson shifts the perspective from the Expressionist movement in Europe to the movement in the United States, with a focus on Eugene O’Neill’s expressionistic masterpiece, *The Hairy Ape*.

### Lesson 6A: Absurdism Part 1 11:29

This lesson looks at Martin Esslin’s crucial essay, “Theater of the Absurd,” and focus on five iconic absurdist playwrights: Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter and Edward Albee.

### Lesson 6B: Absurdism Part 2 3:58

Lesson 06B is a celebration of the work students began in Lesson 06A. Here they will share their playwright bios as well as scenes from *The Zoo Story* by Edward Albee, *Rhinoceros* by Eugène Ionesco, *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, *The Balcony* by Jean Genet and *The Homecoming* by Harold Pinter.

### Lesson 7: Final Project 3:34

The final combines creativity with analytical thought as students connect ideas and concepts with their imagination in order to create a theme park that embodies all five of the “isms” we’ve covered in this course: Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Expressionism, and Absurdism.

# Standards Connections

## National Core Arts Standards

### Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr4.1.6.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

### Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cn10.1.HSI.a - Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Proficient

TH:Cr1.1.HSI.c - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Accomplished

TH:Cr1.1.HSII.a - Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

### Perceive and analyze artistic work - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Re7.1.HSIII.a - Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

### Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade 6

TH:Cn11.1.6.a - Identify universal themes or common social issues and express them through a drama/theatre work.

### Organize and develop artistic ideas and work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cr2.1.HSI.a - Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in a drama/theatre work.

### Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade 6

TH:Cn11.2.6.b - Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

### Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade 7

TH:Re9.1.7.b - Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.7.c - Identify how the intended purpose of a drama/theatre work appeals to a specific audience.

### Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Re9.1.HSI.b - Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

### Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Cn11.2.HSI.a - Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using theatre research methods.

TH:Cn11.2.HSI.b - Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

### Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Cn11.2.HSIII.b - Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

## Common Core

### Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

### Reading: Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### Reading: Informational Text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

## California VAPA Standards (2019)

### 6.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr4.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

### Prof.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

Prof.TH:Cr1.b - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

### Prof.TH:Cn10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Prof.TH:Cn10 - Investigate how cultural contexts, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.

### Acc.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas

### **and work.**

Acc.TH:Cr1.a - Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

### **Adv.TH:Re7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.**

Adv.TH:Re7 - Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

### **6.TH:Cn11.1 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**

6.TH:Cn11.1.a - Identify universal themes or common social issues and express them through a drama/theatre work.

### **Prof.TH:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.**

Prof.TH:Cr2.a - Explore the function of history and culture in the development of a dramatic concept through a critical analysis of original ideas in drama/theatre works from western or non-western theatre traditions.

### **6.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**

6.TH:Cn11.2.b - Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

### **7.TH:Re9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.**

7.TH:Re9.b - Identify how the intended purpose of a drama/theatre work appeals to a specific audience.

7.TH:Re9.c - Analyze and evaluate the aesthetics of the technical theatre elements in a drama/theatre work.

### **Prof.TH:Re9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.**

Prof.TH:Re9.c - Analyze and evaluate the aesthetics and effect of the technical theatre elements in a drama/theatre work.

### **Prof.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**

Prof.TH:Cn11.2.a - Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, using research methods.

Prof.TH:Cn11.2.b - Use basic research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

### **Adv.TH:Cn11.2 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**

Adv.TH:Cn11.2.b - Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

## **Florida Sunshine State Standards**

### **Critical Thinking & Reflection**

TH.912.C.1.6 - Respond to theatrical works by identifying and interpreting influences of historical, social, or cultural contexts.

### **Historical & Global Connections**

TH.912.H.1.1 - Analyze how playwrights' work reflects the cultural and socio-political framework in which it was created.

TH.912.H.1.4 - Interpret a text through different social, cultural, and historical lenses to consider how perspective and context shape a work and its characters.

TH.912.H.2.1 - Research the correlations between theatrical forms and the social, cultural, historical, and political climates from which they emerged, to form an understanding of the influences that have shaped theatre.

TH.912.H.2.4 - Research the intent of, and critical reaction to, artists in history who created groundbreaking, innovative, or controversial works.

### **Skills, Techniques & Processes**

TH.912.S.2.8 - Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations.

## **Georgia Performance Standards - Theatre Arts**

### **Grade 6 - Connecting**

TA6.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Identify similarities between theatre and other art forms., b. Draw conclusions about the relationships between theatre and life., c. Define tasks associated with a theatre production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

TA6.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Describe the origins of theatre., b. Identify and analyze ways in which theatre influences and reflects the culture of a society., c. Utilize a multi-disciplinary approach to research, create, and support artistic choices., d. Examine the relevance of cultural and historical context.

### **Grade 7 - Connecting**

TA7.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Examine theatre development throughout history., b. Identify and analyze cultural influences on theatre., c. Utilize multi-disciplinary research skills to obtain cultural and historical information to justify artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play)., d. Draw conclusions about the influence of theatre on society.

### **Grade 8 - Connecting**

TA8.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content., a. Investigate and prove common themes and structure among theatre and other disciplines., b. Defend how theatre reflects life., c. Incorporate multi-disciplinary aspects into theatre performance., d. Identify and analyze professions associated with different forms of production (e.g. director, stage manager, designer, technician, playwright, actor).

TA8.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Compare and contrast how theatre evolves through time., b. Examine how culture is defined through theatre and other media., c. Apply advanced research skills to obtain appropriate cultural and historical information to rationalize artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play)., d. Discuss theatre's role in reflecting the culture of a society.

### **Grades 9-12 - ADVANCED DRAMA LEVELS I-IV -Connecting**

TAHSAD.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Explore the impact of theatre on the quality of life in various societies.

### **Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Connecting**

TAHSFT.CN.1 - Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content., a. Examine how

theatre reflects real life., b. Analyze how theatre employs aspects of other art forms and disciplines to effectively communicate with a live audience., c. Demonstrate awareness of the discipline, knowledge, skills, and education required for careers in theatre., d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion).

TAHSFT.CN.2 - Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context., a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures., b. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre., c. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development., d. Interpret cultural and historical research for use in a production.

### **Grades 9-12 - TECHNICAL THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Connecting**

TAHSTT.CN.1 - Connect technical elements of theatre., a. Explore and understand the collaborations between designers and directors to develop design elements., b. Investigate the history of theatre architecture, stage technology, and other technical elements., c. Understand technical theatre career options and various industry unions (e.g. International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Actor's Equity, United Scenic Artists, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, League of Resident Theatres)., d. Explore connections with other disciplines associated with technical theatre (e.g. scientific principles behind technical theatrical practices, physics of electricity and sound, basic structural engineering, load ratings, working load limits)., e. Connect design themes with historical and social relevance using dramaturgical research and an understanding of historical and cultural artistic movements (e.g. expressionism, realism, Kabuki, Sanskrit Drama).

### **Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Creating**

TAHSTL.CR.1 - Develop original theatre literature., a. Compare and summarize theatre literature from various historical periods, cultures, and styles., b. Examine and outline the steps and conventions involved in the creation of a theatre text., c. Develop original texts using theatre techniques (e.g. improvisation, adapting non-theatre literature, playwriting exercises).

### **Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Connecting**

TAHSTL.CN.1 - Connect theatre literature to its dramaturgical contexts and other disciplines., a. Trace the development of theatre from earliest forms to contemporary forms., b. Identify and summarize contributions made to the development of theatre literature by different cultures and traditions., c. Research and explain how cultural and historical factors have influenced playwrights and theatre literature., d. Identify the elements, influences, and contributions of other art forms and content areas to theatre literature.

## **North Carolina Essential Standards Beginning High School Standards - Culture**

B.CU.1.1 - Use theatre arts to explore concepts in world history and relate them to significant events, ideas, and movements from a global context.

### **Intermediate High School Standards - Analysis**

I.A.1.2 - Evaluate the works of theatre artists for strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.

## **Proficient High School Standards - Culture**

P.CU.1.1 - Understand the role of theatre arts in United States history as a means of interpreting past eras within an historical context.

## **Advanced High School Standards - Culture**

A.CU.1.1 - Interpret theatre arts from personal, cultural, and historical contexts.

## **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts**

### **MS 117.211 LI - Historical and cultural relevance**

C.4.A - demonstrate the role of theatre as a reflection of history, society, and culture through participation in dramatic activities.

### **MS 117.212 LII - Historical and cultural relevance**

B.4.A - demonstrate knowledge of theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures.

### **MS 117.213 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

B.1.E - apply knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

### **MS 117.213 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance**

B.4.A - demonstrate theatre as a reflection of life in particular times, places, and cultures through performance.

B.4.B - explore theatre heritage such as historical and cultural influences as it is preserved in dramatic text, traditions, and conventions.

### **HS 117.316 LII - Historical and cultural relevance**

C.4.A - analyze historical and cultural influences on theatre.

C.4.C - analyze and evaluate the impact of live theatre, film, television, and electronic media in contemporary society.

C.4.D - research the influences of world drama and theatre and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

C.4.E - research the influences of the multicultural heritage of drama and theatre in the United States and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

### **HS 117.317 LIII - Historical and cultural relevance**

C.4.A - evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

### **HS 117.318 LIV - Historical and cultural relevance**

C.4.A - evaluate historical and cultural influences on theatre.

C.4.D - research the influences of world drama and theatre and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

C.4.E - research the influences of the multicultural heritage of drama and theatre in the United States and identify key figures, works, and trends in dramatic literature.

## **Alberta, Canada**

### **Theatre Studies Drama 10 (Greek, Medieval or Elizabethan, and Canadian)**

- 1 - recognize theatre has evolved as a traditional art form
- 2 - recognize innovations in the theatre

### **Theatre Studies Drama 30 (Early or Middle or Late drama)**

- 4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play

- 5 - recognize elements of tragedy and comedy
- 6 - recognize realism and selected other significant theatre styles

### Junior Orientation

- recognize that there is an historical and cultural aspect of drama/theatre
- share ideas confidently with others
- support positivity the work of others

### Junior Goal I Objectives

- develop the ability to initiate, organize and present a project within a given set of guidelines
- develop the ability to interact effectively and constructively in a group process

### Theatre Studies Level II - Intermediate (Theatre History)

- 4 - recognize that drama exists in every culture
- 5 - recognize that "theatre is a mirror of society".
- 6 - show awareness of selected periods and playwrights

### Senior Goal I Objectives

- demonstrate a sense of inquiry and commitment, individually and to the group
- demonstrate a sense of responsibility and commitment, individually and to the group
- demonstrate the ability to contribute effectively and constructively to the group process
- demonstrate the ability to initiate, organize and present a project within a given set of guidelines
- develop a sense of inquiry and commitment to learning

### Senior Goal II Objectives

- participate in the theatrical style of realism as a basis for further exploration of theatrical styles

### Orientation Drama 10

- demonstrate effective use and management of time
- demonstrate self-discipline, self-direction and a sense of responsibility
- listen to self and others
- positively support the work of others
- share ideas confidently
- work cooperatively and productively
- work with abstract concepts

## British Columbia (2018)

### GRADE 6 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

### GRADE 7 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

### GRADE 8 - ARTS - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts

### GRADE 9 - DRAMA - Exploring and creating

Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental in relation to drama

### GRADE 10 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Examine the influences of social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal context on drama

### GRADE 11 - DRAMA - Connect and expand

Explore the impacts of dramatic works on culture and society

### GRADE 12 - DRAMA - Reason and reflect

Evaluate the social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal contexts of dramatic works

## Ontario, Canada

### Grade 8 - Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

B3.2 - identify and describe a wide variety of ways in which drama and theatre make or have made contributions to social, cultural, and economic life in a variety of times and places

### Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Context and Influences

C.2.1 - identify ways in which dramatic expression and performance reflect communities and cultures, past and present (e.g., the prominence of socially and/or politically powerful characters in the drama of pre-industrial societies; the use of boy actors for female roles in Shakespearean theatre; the emphasis on religious themes in the drama of many cultures in different eras)

C.2.2 - describe how drama is used for various purposes in a range of social contexts (e.g., to express or celebrate group or community sentiments or values in street theatre or parades; to mark important historical or religious anniversaries of a country or culture; to raise awareness of social, environmental, and political issues; to explore personal relationships or social arrangements)

### Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Concepts and Terminology

C.1.1 - identify the drama forms, elements, conventions, and techniques used in their own and others' drama works, and explain how the various components are used, or can be used, to achieve specific effects, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., how a comic drama form can be used to convey a serious message, how setting and time period can be used to sharpen the focus on a moral dilemma, how characters can be used to vary the mood within a drama)

### Grade 12 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - The Critical Analysis Process

B.1.2 - analyse a variety of contemporary and historical drama works to explain and evaluate how they communicate themes and dramatize issues