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A Digital Class for an In-Person Discipline: Creating an Online Class for Introduction to Theatre

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A Digital Class for an In-Person Discipline: Creating an Online Class for Introduction to Theatre

A Peer Review of Teaching Project Inquiry Portfolio

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*Show pictures are from Agravio, directed by Ian Borden, photography by Doug Smith, used with permission.*
“I liked the course a lot! It was well-paced, and organized well, and it was nice to be able to do everything in the comfort of my own dorm room at my own pace.”

“I learned much more than I ever expected, and also ended up loving the class even more than planned.”

Introduction

This portfolio addresses the problems and solutions in developing a large-scale fully online class for THEA 112 Introduction to Theatre in the Spring Semester, 2018. The class is three credits and has previously been taught in multiple sections: smaller classes dedicated to Theatre and Film and New Media majors and groups of scholarship students from the university at large, and larger general studies sections of 100 to 250 students.

This inquiry asks a most basic question: “Can theatre effectively be taught through an online class?” The inquiry also focuses on the continued development of an Introduction to Theatre course designed to be fully online, with no face-to-face interaction between students and the professor. The class that is the focus of this inquiry is the second iteration of an online Introduction to Theatre class. In 2017, the fully online class debuted with a Summer Semester version. That class had been limited to 85 students. The Spring Semester class was set at 200.

The class development came about with the assistance and encouragement of the Dean and the Dean’s Office of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska. Introduction to Theatre falls under the auspices of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. There is one other fully online class in the College, and no others in the Carson School.

Several problems immediately came to the forefront as potential difficulties for developing the class. The most obvious is that studying theatre has traditionally involved students going to see live theatre, and suddenly we could not expect students to do that. Not all students enrolled for a fully online class will be present on campus. In fact, in the Summer Semester version of the class, at least one student took the course while in China, and another took it during his time in India. I needed to find an alternative to live theatre.

A second major problem was that making the class efficient as an online vehicle meant greatly increasing the number of students in the class. However, without teaching assistants or graders available, the methods of assessment needed to be analyzed. Not only did the assessment need to be efficient to grade, there was also the difficulty of creating a more objective form of assessment for a very subjective discipline. How do you ask objective questions about feelings and opinions?

In fact, this last aspect is one that made me leery about the whole project. Theatre, in many ways, is a personal art form. The audience gathers together in the auditorium. They come face to face with live actors. They experience the journey of the play as a collective of audience
and performers. Moving the class entirely online is antithetical to that frame of experience. If I could overcome that obstacle, I would have truly succeeded.

Finally, without the Canvas course website already employed by the university, the venture would have been beyond my means. Additionally, I had already created a digital textbook, *Introduction to Theatre* by Ian Borden and Sarah Imes, that made creating the online class much easier. The textbook turned out to be instrumental in the successful creation of the class.

This Inquiry discusses how problems were addressed and how the course functioned in terms of student success and feedback.
Creating Access to Content

One of the most difficult discussions concerned how students would be able to see theatre, and one that involved the Carson School, the Dean’s Office and the Nebraska Repertory Theatre. A fully online course meant that students did not have to be present on campus. If they were not on campus, they could not be asked to see the University or Nebraska Repertory Theatre productions. The obvious solution is to have them view videos of staged plays. But this obvious solution had some surprising problems associated with it.

In the traditional form of this class where students are on campus and able to attend live productions, they do just that. In fact, a student fee attached to the class streamlines the process, and student tickets are made available with no extra cost. In turn, these fees are considered revenue for the theatre and help cover the cost of production.

The simple solution appeared to be to apply this fee to some form of streaming service, such as the recently created Digital Theatre Plus or BroadwayHD. Another option would be to have students watch videos through the Canvas site as an extension of Library Reserves (I had successfully employed streaming content through Library Reserves on Canvas for another class, THEA 234 Scripts in Production). However, problems arose with each option.

The existing student fee could not be altered and applied to a streaming service. Creating a new student fee is a cumbersome process at Nebraska, and would not be completed in time for the course. As students would also not be attending live theatre, this meant that the student fee had to be dropped from the online section of the course, potentially creating a drop in revenue for the Nebraska Rep.

Using the Canvas site more extensively set up other difficulties. While there are copyright issues at play, if the university holds a copy of the material and provides a streaming version only to University of Nebraska students in a limited format, copyright is not a significant limiting issue. The bigger problem is simply a lack of available content in a form available to the library. Professional theatre has always had tight restrictions on the recording and dissemination of video of performances. When plays have been performed for camera, it most often has not been a staged version, but rather a TV studio version of the play, which takes away the essence of the live performance. I would also suggest that most theatre practitioners who view these find them disappointing, at best, and would never recommend them as a way of getting people to appreciate the art of theatre.

New streaming services such as BroadwayHD are therefore a goldmine for an online class. In the last decade especially, a wealth of new options for plays performed on stage and recorded on camera have been made available. Suddenly, streaming services focused on theatre make an online class possible. Unfortunately, a streaming service is expensive and figuring out how students could pay for it had become a challenge. This is the first instance where having a digital textbook streamlined the creation of the course.

The textbook publisher, Great River Learning, was able to negotiate with BroadwayHD so that students who bought the textbook would also gain access to BroadwayHD for the duration of the semester. While this added to the overall cost of the textbook, BroadwayHD accepted a reduced rate for students in the course, so that the increased cost actually remained less than the original student fee.
A Trio of Websites

The home base for the course is the Canvas course website. Canvas is a highly functional online tool that facilitates many classroom activities, such as communicating with students and posting grades. Instructure, the company that created Canvas, describes their website as “a way to simplify teaching and learning by connecting all the digital tools teachers use in one easy place.” However, making this course work required more than one website, and it wasn’t perfectly easy.

One of the difficulties with studying theatre is that most of the material to be studied has some sort of copyright protection. It is illegal to simply make a video or copy a play and make them available through Canvas. There are fair use doctrines that allow library reserves to make content available, and it is possible now to have streaming content available on Canvas that is connected to the Library Reserves. As I mentioned in the previous section, though, there is not a great deal of live theatre available in the DVD format required by the library. BroadwayHD was the perfect solution for many of the difficulties in setting up the class. The content was already available and cleared for copyright. In addition, students could watch the required videos from anywhere. Another traditional aspect of theatre is reading plays. These too, of course, are subject to copyright. Fortunately, the digital textbook already had a carefully selected anthology designed to balance canonical needs and student interest.

As well as providing plays, Great River Learning incorporated the capacity for assessment in their textbook platform. Tests can be created easily with a technical assistant and help for student is readily at hand. I could have written tests for inclusion in Canvas, but I was leery to do so. For starters, I find the test creation matrix in Canvas to be one of the less functional features of the platform. I also have had bad experience with other platforms, notably Blackboard, where students found it easy to cheat on the tested material. Using the textbook became the preferred and more effective means of assessment, and was used for all video and reading responses, as well as the four exams.

This meant that there needed to be three websites for the course, Canvas, the Textbook, and BroadwayHD. Normally, I might have simply used the hyperlink feature of Canvas to make it easier to navigate between websites. But the need to log in independently to each website made that impossible.

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No Lectures

Having taught a variation of Introduction to Theatre for over 15 years at three different universities, I had an expectation that creating content would be relatively easy. In many ways it was, but I quickly made a radical decision: I would not include videotaped lectures.

When I saw examples of most the standard formats for recording lectures, I was appalled at the idea of making my students watch a talking head with relatively poor sound recording, poor lighting, and generally low video quality. When we watch professional documentaries, there’s a reason that the narrator or interviewee is frequently intercut with other video imagery, that the person is often moving, and even when they show a still image, they make that image move on the screen. Without the ability to make video of decent quality (which despite being in a school of theatre and film I didn’t have) I decided not to include videos of lectures.

Virtually all of the material was already available in written form in the textbook. And students would already be watching an enormous amount of material in the form of streamed plays and documentaries. It was enough.
ACE

THEA 112 Introduction to Theatre is designed as an ACE 7 class. The university of Nebraska ACE program, or Achievement Centered Education, is the university’s general education program, that guarantees students learn a variety of subject disciplines:

Created for 21st century students, UNL’s Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) general education program is built on student learning outcomes that answer the fundamental question, “What should all undergraduate students - irrespective of their majors and career aspirations - know or be able to do upon graduation?”

The ACE program has 10 different topic areas or “outcomes.” These are:

ACE 1: Writing
- Write texts, in various forms, with an identified purpose, that respond to specific audience needs, integrate research or existing knowledge, and use applicable documentation and appropriate conventions of format and structure.

ACE 2: Communication
- Demonstrate competence in communication skills in one or more of the following ways:
  - by making oral presentations with supporting materials,
  - by leading and participating in problem-solving teams,
  - by employing communication skills for developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships, or
  - by producing and/or interpreting visual information.

ACE 3: Mathematics
- Use mathematical, computational, statistical, logical, or other formal reasoning to solve problems, draw inferences, justify conclusions, and determine reasonableness.
  - Build knowledge of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world through the study of mathematics, sciences and technologies, histories, humanities, arts, social sciences, and human diversity.

ACE 4: Science
- Use scientific methods and knowledge to pose questions, frame hypotheses, interpret data, and evaluate whether conclusions about the natural and physical world are reasonable.

ACE 5: History
- Use knowledge, historical perspectives, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and the standards of evidence appropriate to the humanities to address problems and issues.

ACE 6: Social Science
- Use knowledge, theories, and research methods appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate social systems or human behaviors.

ACE 7: Fine Arts
- Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context and significance.
  - Exercise individual and social responsibilities through the study of ethical principles and reasoning, application of civic knowledge, interaction with diverse cultures, and engagement with global issues.

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2 This quote comes from UNL’s ACE website: https://ace.unl.edu/ (May 18, 2018)
ACE 8: Ethics
- Use knowledge, theories, and analysis to explain ethical principles and their importance in society.

ACE 9: Diversity
- Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.
  - Integrate these abilities and capabilities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities.

ACE 10: Capstone
- Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.

Each ACE designated course must include an assignment specified for the ACE Assessment Outcome of the course. The rubric for that assignment is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACE 7 Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context and significance.</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Deficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Demonstrate exemplary ability to understand works of art by interpreting appropriate social, cultural, psychological, historical, and or environmental aspects of the work.</td>
<td>Demonstrate acceptable ability to understand works of art by describing appropriate social, cultural, psychological, historical, and or environmental aspects of the work.</td>
<td>Demonstrate developing ability to understand works of art by summarizing social, cultural, psychological, historical, and or environmental aspects of the work.</td>
<td>Demonstrate deficient ability to understand works of art by recalling social, cultural, psychological, historical, and or environmental aspects of the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td>Demonstrate exemplary ability to compare theories relevant to the art form under study to understand their context and significance.</td>
<td>Demonstrate acceptable ability to discern theories relevant to the art form under study to understand their context and significance.</td>
<td>Demonstrate developing ability to define theories relevant to the art form under study to understand their context and significance.</td>
<td>Demonstrate deficient ability to name theories relevant to the art form under study to understand their context and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Demonstrate exemplary ability to evaluate methods appropriate to the relevant art form to understand their context and significance.</td>
<td>Demonstrate acceptable ability to distinguish methods appropriate to the relevant art form to understand their context and significance.</td>
<td>Demonstrate developing ability to explain methods appropriate to the relevant art form to understand their context and significance.</td>
<td>Demonstrate deficient ability to identify methods appropriate to the relevant art form to understand their context and significance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The designated ACE Assignment for the class, is the Final Assignment. A random sample of 5 submissions created these results according to the rubric:

- In the category of Knowledge, 3 scored Exemplary, 2 scored Acceptable.
- In Theories, 4 scored Exemplary and 1 Scored Acceptable.
- In Methods, 2 scored Exemplary, and 3 scored Acceptable.
- The overall average was 10.4 points out of a possible 12.

This shows that the course is meeting one of its prime learning objectives, ACE Outcome 7. This is very important to the continued success of the class, so this is gratifying to see.
Course Material

The course is divided into five sections. The first four have an assortment of chapter readings, plays and videos to read and watch, responses to write, and an exam at the end of each section. The chapters in the textbook cover a wide variety of topics, from general theatrical knowledge and theatrical history, to how the various jobs in theater are done. The scripts that students read are chosen to present both historically important plays, and plays that are designed to appeal to students of multiple backgrounds and ethnicities. Students watch videos of both straight plays and musicals as well as three documentaries about the making of theater. All of the plays that are read and watched, as well as the documentaries, require a response completed through the textbook. The responses consist of five multiple-choice questions, and a short opinion paragraph. The exams are 25 multiple-choice questions, also completed through the textbook.

In addition to this material, there are extra credit options throughout the course. Students have the option to read or watch additional material, and write more detailed responses to it. Each extra credit assignment completed results in a 1% bonus added to the overall grade at the end of the course. Students may collect a maximum of a 10% bonus to the overall grade, the equivalent of one letter grade.

The final assignment is the designated ACE Seven assignment. This assignment is an essay question, recommended to be answered in 3 to 5 pages. The basic question is simple, “what is good theater?” However, students must complete the response by using examples from the material read and watched over the course of the semester. This demands an understanding of the work they have done, and the ability to put that work in context.

Shown below is a table of the course schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Topics and Assignments</th>
<th>Assignments and Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Jan 12   | 1. Read Chapter 1 – Theatre and Audience  
2. Watch BroadwayHD - Billy Elliott | 1. Billy Elliott Response |
| 2    | Jan 19   | 1. Read Chapter 2 – People, Architecture and Organization  
2. Read The Importance of Being Earnest | 1. The Importance of Being Earnest Response |
| 3    | Jan 26   | 1. Read Chapter 3 – Dramatic Genre, Structure, Theory  
2. Watch BroadwayHD – Ernest Shackleton Loves Me | |
|      | Jan 26   | **TAKE MODULE I EXAM** | |
| 4    | Feb 2    | 1. Read Chapter 4 – Theatre Origins  
2. Read Oedipus the King in the textbook | 1. Oedipus the King Response |
| 5    | Feb 9    | 1. Read Chapter 5 – The Rebirth of European Theatre  
2. Watch on BroadwayHD: A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Directed by Julie Taymor) | 1. A Midsummer Night’s Dream Response |
| 6    | Feb 16   | 1. Read Chapter 6 – Theatre in Renaissance Europe  
2. Read Chapter 7 – Centuries of Change  
3. Read Othello in the textbook | 1. Othello Response |
|      | Feb 16   | **TAKE MODULE II EXAM** | |
| 7    | Feb 23   | 1. Read Chapter 7 – Coming to America  
2. Watch via Canvas: Broadway: The American Musical Chapters 1-4  
| 8    | Mar 2    | 1. Chapter 8 – The Twentieth Century  
2. Watch on BroadwayHD: Oklahoma! | 1. Oklahoma! Response |
| 9    | Mar 9    | 1. Read Chapter 9 – World Theatre  
2. Read Ruined | 1. Ruined Response |
| 10   | Mar 16   | 1. Read Chapter 10 – North American Perspectives  
2. Read Los vendidos in the textbook  
3. Watch on BroadwayHD: Indecent | 1. Los vendidos Response  
2. Indecent Response |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>No exam date given by registrar</th>
<th>Final Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Take Module III Exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12     | Mar 30   | 1. Read Chapter 12 – The Art of the Actor*  
2. Read Sky in the textbook  
3. Watch via Canvas: Every Little Step | 1. Sky Response |
| 13     | Apr 6    | 1. Read Chapter 13 – Bringing the Stage to Life  
2. Read Polygraph in the textbook  
3. Watch on BroadwayHD: The Woodsman | 1. Polygraph Response  
2. The Woodsman Response |
| 14     | Apr 13   | 1. Chapter 14 – Guiding the Performance  
2. Read Stop. Kiss.  
2. Memphis Response |
| 15     | Apr 20   | 1. Chapter 15 – Risk and Reward  
2. Watch via Canvas: Showbiz: The Road to Broadway |                 |
| 16     | Due Exam Date | Take Module IV Exam | Final Assignment |

Here’s another way of looking at it:

Module 1 –
Chapters:
- Theatre and Audience
- People, Architecture and Organization
- Dramatic Genre, Structure, Theory

Scripts: *The Importance of Being Earnest*
Videos: *Billy Elliot*

*Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*

Module 2 –
Chapters:
- Theatre Origins
- The Rebirth of European Theatre
- Theatre in Renaissance Europe
- Centuries of Change

Scripts: *Oedipus the King*
*Othello*

Videos: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Directed by Julie Taymor)

Module 3 –
Chapters:
- Coming to America
- The Twentieth Century
- World Theatre
- North American Perspectives

Scripts: *Ruined*
*Los vendidos*

Videos: *Broadway: The American Musical* Chapters 1-4
*Broadway: The American Musical* Chapters 5-6
*Oklahoma!*
*Indecent*
Module 4 –
Chapters:
The Art of the Actor
Bringing the Stage to Life
Guiding the Performance
Risk and Reward
Scripts: Polygraph
Stop. Kiss.
Videos: Every Little Step
The Woodsman
Memphis
Showbiz: The Road to Broadway

Module 5 –
Final Assignment

For most students, the schedule for the course seems to have been about right. Some complained of busy work, some of too much material, but most comments fell into this vein:

- The work load was just the right amount and the tests were clear and precise about what they wanted.
- I liked how I spend a lot of time in a topic in order to learn each weeks chapter material
- We could take it at our own pace and we were given the opportunity to watch professional shows and give our input on it.

The next version of the class will probably have a slightly lighter workload and clearer instructions for when things are due.
Assessment

There were four main avenues for assessment in the course.

1) Responses to reading scripts and watching productions and documentaries
2) Four exams that measured general knowledge
3) an Essay question that measured students’ ability to put their knowledge in context (the ACE 7 designated assignment)
4) Extra Credit questions on scripts and videos

Responses: The Response questions in large part were to make sure that students completed the required viewing and reading. Because of the large class size and number of response for the course (18 total), combined with the lack of TA or grading support, the questions needed to be partially automated. Each response began with five multiple choice questions that made sure students carefully watched the video or read the script. The multiple choice questions were recorded and scored by the textbook at ten points each. A sixth question asked for each student’s opinion in a short paragraph answer. Originally, I had intended to grade each of these individually, but that proved to be too large a task in a semester where I was already teaching an overload and a member of several heavy-workload committees, including chairing a faculty search. Instead I reverted to a previous class where I had simply given full points for each response, “if they were answered with care and attention.” This allowed me to save my sanity, although the large majority of grades did not appear until the last week of the semester. Even the transfer of scores from the textbook to the gradebook in Canvas takes an inordinately long time when dealing with 200 students. However, I was satisfied that students were still being measured on what they had read and watched, and the variety of scores in response confirmed this thought.

In the syllabus, the Response questions were described as follows:

Reading and Video Responses: For each play we read or watch there is a response required. Each response will be 5 10-point multiple choice questions on the play, followed by a paragraph question. For the paragraph response section, this is a subjective discipline, so there will be no absolute right or wrong answer -
- answers that respond with thought and care, back up the answer with an example and argument, and are written without spelling or grammatical errors will receive 40-50 points
- answers that fail to back up the argument, or that are hampered by spelling or grammatical errors will receive 30-39 points
- answers that show little thought or care, or are hampered by significant errors, will receive 20-29 points
- anything below university standard will receive a zero
These are informal responses, and while you are expected to use proper grammar and spelling, a formal essay format is not expected or desired. One paragraph should be fine.

Here is an example of the multiple choice questions and short answer in the Response Question for the play, Ruined. The play is set in the early 2000s in war torn Democratic Republic of Congo, and the women who are the central figures of the play end up working in Mama Nadi’s whorehouse. The play won a Pulitzer Prize for its depiction of these women.
## Ruined Response

Ruined takes place in a war zone in which country?
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Afghanistan
- Chile
- United Arab Emirates

At the beginning of the play, what special item does Christian bring Mama Nadi?
- A tube of lipstick
- A diamond
- A dress
- A gun

What does Mama Nadi make Osembenga do before she'll serve him?
- Take the bullets out of his gun
- Put his pants back on
- Make a deposit of $50 at the bar
- Shoot the leopard that's been prowling around

What happens to Salima immediately after she is reunited with Fortune?
- She dies
- She gives birth to his baby
- A soldier attacks her with a machete
- She is placed in an insane asylum

What symbolic action do Christian and Mama Nadi take to show their relationship has grown romantic?
- They dance
- They run away together
- They adopt Sophie
- They rename the bar

### Paragraph question:
Is Mama Nadi a good person? Why do you say so?

The final question is always designed to make students put the play in context and to use an example from the play to complete the answer. Below are three responses to the final question from the *Ruined* Response:

I do not believe Mama Nadi is a good person. Yes, she takes in helpless women like Sophie and Salima that have been victims of war violence and rape, but she also offers up women as objects and for money in her business. She, herself, as we later found out, is "ruined" as well. You would think that this would give her the ability to empathize with the women she takes in and to a certain degree, it probably does. However, her actions do not always show that she values a woman's body or mind any more than the military men do. Perhaps, taking in these women is her way of distracting herself and...
redirecting her energy into something positive to overcome the negative feelings she had due to her own experiences. However, in retrospect, I think it was strange how she originally wanted nothing to do with Sophie once she found out about how she was ruined. Wouldn't she understand her situation and be more willing to help, rather than acting judgmental and dismissive? I suppose as the play went on, her actions got a bit better-she did her best to help Salima avoid confrontation with her husband. But, she still went as far as slapping Sophie when she wouldn't entertain the men. I don't care about the circumstances, I simply cannot get over the way she made the women attend to the men in the bar at their every beck and call, that's just sickening to me!

This is a tough decision to decipher, because at moments that she seems like a good person, you have to wonder if she actually is doing these things from the bottom of her heart or for different, selfish intentions. Sometimes I feel she is, and other times not so much, and the fact that she runs a whorehouse where men take advantage of young women who have nowhere else to go, doesn't scream good person tome. However, there's one part when Christian brings girls to Mama and she picks out Sophie, but Christian tells Mama that she's ruined but she will be a good worker and should stay here. But Mama doesn't want a broken girl in her whorehouse because it is not good for business and believes it to be bad luck, but she is convinced to give her another look over again, and when she talks to her, something changed her mind and allowed her to stay because she's smart, has a cute face, and can sing. That would be a moment where I believe she is doing the favor for Christian because not only does she care for him, but she also sees potential in Sophie and felt sad for her because of the terrible things she's been through because she is a women. But on the other hand, towards the end when Fortune shows up wanting his wife, Salima, back, Mama refuses to let that happen. She tells Salima that he will love her that one night, but then when he starts asking her questions about what happened to her and what she has been doing, he won't be able to bear it and leave her once again, she brings up the fact that he has left her once again for dead, and will do it again, to try and convince Salima that she is right and doing good by not allowing them to see each other. But you do have to wonder if she is really doing it because she cares for Salima and wants the best for them, or if she is doing it because she doesn't want to lose a girl, which would be bad for business. A major part of me is leaning to the fact she doesn't want her business to fail and she doesn't care so much about Salima getting hurt again. So for me I feel like across the board Mama isn't that great of a person, but she is DEEP down inside, and only something awful happening will bring it out for her to put other needs in front of her business needs. An example of that would be when Osembenga wanted to take Sophie to the back but she wasn't having it, but Mama did not care if that man had 'slit her mother's throat' or who he was to her, she was to go back there and please the man. That shows her nasty side, even when she called it business, Christian was very thrown off from that and offended that she didn't seem too care more about these girls. But then she wants to pay for Sophies operation and get her settled into the city and a new life with the money from the diamond, which was very nice and unexpected. But she admits she is ruined at the end, and basically lets Christian in, stops running, so she can have a life and be the good person she wants to be and stop being so mean spirited.

I do genuinely believe that Mama Nadi is a good person. The essence of a good person is someone who strives to create peace and prosperity while also putting other people's needs above your own. Throughout the play we see Mama Nadi put other people's needs above her own. For example, when Christian comes to her at the beginning of the play with the girls Mama only wants Sophie because she is much more beautiful than the others. When Christian tells her about the girls and she knows they really have nowhere else to go she brings them in even though economically she has to feed two more people. Mama Nadi also works to create peace between the two side (rebels and government) by providing a place that serves both sides. Mama Nadi knows that this
creates conflict between the sides but they both still come to the bar. Mama Nadi also gives up her “insurance policy” for Sophie so she can have the surgery to repair her. Mama Nadi even stands up to Osembenga and tells him to leave his bullets at the bar so that no conflict will arise. In conclusion, Mama Nadi is a good person. She puts others need above her own and always works to preserve the peace in the bar and strive towards peace of the nation, and Mama Nadi puts her own economic success second to the needs of Sophie and Salima.

These responses show that students take the time to put things in context, and to weigh in on a script or production in a thoughtful and reasoned manner.

**Exams:** The exams are also taken through the textbook and are also multiple choice. Each exam is 25 questions, most of which are focused on the chapter readings for that module. There are a few questions in each exam on the scripts and videos assigned for the module, as well. In the syllabus, the exams are described as follows:

**Exams:** There are four exams designed to be taken at the end of each 3-4 week module. The exams are found in the textbook. Each exam is 25 multiple choice or true/false questions, and must be completed within an hour. The scores may not be posted immediately.

I was most worried that if students were tempted to cheat, it would be on the exams. However, the range of scores on the exam, and the survey responses suggesting very low rates of cheating reinforce the idea that if cheating occurred, it was not common. The hour long time frame combined with taking each student needing to take the exam within their own textbook domain may have made it difficult enough that cheating did not become a problem.

**Final Assignment:** The Final Assignment is the ACE 7 Designated Assignment. This is an essay question that requires students to look at the body of work they have studied, to use examples constructively, and to put the work in a larger context of theatre as a discipline. The question is shown on Canvas as follows:

The Final Assignment is a single essay question -

What is good theatre?

In 3-5 pages describe what you feel is good theatre. You must use examples from the readings, plays and/or video we watched to illuminate your argument.

This is an opinion question, so there is no absolute right or wrong answer. In the simplest terms, I am asking what you liked and why. But to score high on this assignment, I expect you to provide well-thought-out arguments, good use of evidence, and strong analysis.

Formal essay structure applies, so please include an introduction and a conclusion.

Submit your assignment as a Word document or PDF on Canvas.
The students submitted the assignment directly into Canvas. I was generally very pleased by the submissions. I believe the written response at the end of each assignment helped student be able to think constructively about what they had seen and put it into context. The average score, even with zeroes for those students who did not turn in an assignment was 84.2/100. With the zero scores removed, the average was 90.7/100. Needless to say, I was surprised and very pleased by the quality of the responses.

**Extra Credit:** The final assessment for the class is the Extra Credit Assignments. There are ten of these available over the course. Students are able to earn up to 10 points of extra credit, the equivalent of one letter grade. However, they must complete these as the course progresses, rather than waiting until the last minute. I have found that this prevents a rash of extra credit assignments appearing on the last day of the semester.

The extra credit assignments are actually relatively vigorous. Students must watch a production or read a play and answer fairly in-depth questions. Here are two examples. The first are questions for the script of the play *Agravio*, an adaptation of the Spanish siglo de oro play, *Valor, agravio, y mujer*. The second is for a production by Fuerza Bruta, a dance theatre company from Argentina now based in New York.

Please read the play in the textbook and answer the following questions. Submit your document on Canvas ONLY as a Word doc or PDF. There is no specific length limit. Write as much as you need to in order to thoroughly answer each question.

1) Many of the characters talk about the concept of honor. How does the concept of honor motivate the major male characters and Leonora?
2) If this is a play about Leonora, why is it important for us to watch Don Juan defeat the thee bandits?
3) What is the role of the clown characters, Tomillo and Flora, beyond simple comic relief?
4) Does the ending of the play, where everyone is matched up as a couple, feel satisfying to you? Why or why not?

Fuerza Bruta does not perform traditional, narrative driven theatre, so for this extra credit assignment, choose THREE of the moments from the show, and discuss each of them in the following way:

In your mind, what does the moment represent? Why do you think that? How does the staging support that idea? How does this moment connect to the rest of the events in the show?

Submit as a Word doc or PDF only.

The extra credit points are earned by the time students watch or read a play and answer these questions. They are not designed to boost grades, but rather enrich the lessons students are studying at that point of the semester.
The assignment breakdown looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Responses:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams:</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Assignment:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This means that each Video Response is worth 2.8% of the total, each Reading Response 3.13%, and each exam, 10%. Every Assignment is graded out of 100 and then weighted.

The grade breakdown is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-61%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-77%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
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Everything is kept on a 10-point scale. Of course, this means that at the end of the semester I am inundated with emails from students asking if I round up.
Problems and Solutions

The largest lesson learned was how much bureaucratic work the course would require. Managing 200 students in an online setting is in many ways more difficult than 200 in a large lecture. Announcements do not necessarily get through, students have vastly different abilities in accessing digital material, they are affected by their ISP, and messages get lost when they are coming a mile a minute. To add to that confusion, I was on an overload for teaching and taking part in several demanding committees, all with deadlines. I was not able to be as attentive to the course as I wanted to be, and allowed grading to slide while I dealt with more pressing matters. This became the greatest criticism from students, although I had already recognized it as my biggest mistake over the semester. Many students were angered by the fact that most of their grades appeared in the last month of the semester. When I am working on a course, I often refer to my own experience as an undergrad, which in the 1980s at a liberal university meant that students were often left unguided. Most students today are perturbed when things are not laid out – for instance, one student complained that he did not know that he needed to do extra credit until it was too late because I did not return his grades early enough. That is something I never thought of when I was an undergrad.

I have realized that without grading assistance of some sort, whether assigned graders or teaching assistants, it is impossible for one person to effectively grade all the material for a class this large. While most of my assessment is multiple choice and graded by the textbook, even inputting those grades to Canvas became extraordinarily time consuming. Add to that reading and grading 200 to 800 written responses every week, and the task proved too onerous.

In a previous class, Scripts in Production, I had given 100% for responses that were submitted with care and thought. I decided to do that here, as the written responses were all opinion answers, rather than having a true right or wrong. However, I hedged a little, and gave all written answers a 45 out of 50, knowing that if I were to grade them, this is likely as high as I would ever go, being a person who feels that assignments are almost never perfect. Several students complained that they never received 100 percent on their responses. Again, I find myself flummoxed that there is an expectation of a perfect score with this generation of students, something that simply did not happen in my own experience. I realize though, going forward, I need to adjust and amend the grading of the responses for efficacy, accuracy, and speed of return.

“Gotta have the FAQs!”

The most simple and effective solution for the course came through an Advanced Peer Review meeting, where I was complaining that I was constantly having to tell students how to access the three websites and how to find the course material. The answer I was given: create a Frequently Asked Questions page. I did, and also made a “Where do I find it?” page. Immediately, 2/3 of the emails went away. I will now include these two pages for any class that has an online component.
Survey Results

Two sets of surveys were taken for this class, the official UNL student evaluations, and a separate survey I set up using Survey Monkey that focused more particularly on the needs of this portfolio. The UNL survey had 42 respondents out of a possible 196 students. Survey Monkey received 54 responses. As angry students are often the most likely to complete a course evaluation, having only about 20%-25% of the students respond was somewhat worrisome. However, the Survey Monkey responses were generally positive. The UNL evaluation was slightly more mixed, but the numerical scores still averaged 3.38 out of a possible 5, a positive result. This was encouraging.

One of the difficulties with the UNL survey is that the questions often did not apply at all to the course:

1. For technical theatre courses, film and new media courses: Please describe how your artistic and technology skills have improved or failed to improve as a result of your enrollment in this course.
2. For performance-oriented courses: Please describe how your vocal, movement, or other performance-related skills improved or failed to improve as a result of your enrollment in this course.
3. Did the instructor treat students with respect?
4. Did students treat the instructor with respect?
5. How many times were you absent from class during the run of this course?
6. What did you like best about this course?
7. If a friend asked me about this course, I would (as if this course were an elective) probably…?
8. How clear were the goals and requirements of the course?
9. How effectively was class time utilized?
10. Were course objectives met?
11. How was the instructor’s knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject?
12. How clear and well-organized was the instructor’s presentation of the subject matter?
13. Was the instructor responsive to the needs of the students?
14. Which of the following best describes the instructor’s attitude toward the course itself?
15. How would you describe the instructor’s efforts to create a comfortable atmosphere and a set of circumstances conducive to learning?
16. Were the instructor’s examinations and grading policies fair?
17. How would you rate the instructor’s speaking ability?
18. Did the instructor seem interested in whether or not the students understood the course material?

Questions 1, 2, 5, 9 and 17 do not apply to the course being taught. In contrast, the survey I created for the course asked the following questions:

1. You were able to access and complete the online responses and exams easily.
2. The guided written responses were a better way to respond to the readings than multiple choice.
3. The plays we read were enjoyable.
4. I never cheated on any of the assignments.
5. The multiple choice questions on the readings were too difficult.
6. The workload was too large for a 100 level course.
7. It angered me that the instructor didn’t post my grades quickly enough.
8. I cheated on the exams.
9. The multiple choice questions on the videos were too difficult.
10. I was able to keep up with the pace of the class working on my own online.
11. The guided written responses were a better way to respond to the videos than multiple choice.
12. The amount of work for the course was just about right.
13. The videos we watched were enjoyable.
14. Having three different websites for the course was difficult.
15. I learned a lot about theatre.
16. What comments would you like to say about the course?

This gave me feedback that is much more precise. I was especially pleased to see that students answered almost exclusively that they had not cheated. As I stated previously, that was one of my biggest fears. One student addressed this in his additional comments:

I really liked the course. I thought it exposed me to a lot of different aspects and types of theater. Concerning the cheating questions, do you consider using the material provided while doing the assignment/exam as cheating? Because I would often refer back to the plays or to the chapters during assignments or tests, but I never sought help from other people. If you don't want us to use the material, especially for tests, you would have to make them proctored.

I fully expected that some of this kind of referencing would happen, and decided that using the material in context is more important than rote learning, and in that, the survey results suggest the class was effective.

Other survey answers commented on the course structure, and mostly affirm that the amount of content is about right. Nearly 63% of the students were either neutral or disagreed in the answer to Question 6, “The workload was too large for a 100 level course.” Several comments confirm this notion, as these two responses indicate:

It was well structured, I think that everything went smoothly.

I liked the course a lot! It was well paced and organized well, and it was nice to be able to do everything in the comfort of my own dorm room at my own pace.

Those that did not feel the structure worked well may have had unreasonable expectations, or not been able to effectively compare the online class to the normal classroom experience. When one student wrote that “6+ hours a week for a 100 level elective is a little much,” he failed to recognize that he was missing the normal three hours of being in class, so that really there was only three hours of additional homework, actually less than most classes assign. Another said that “it’s a bit much to give readings, a video and response and a reading and response all due in the same day for a 100 level course.” For convenience and clarity in the schedule, the assignments are all listed as due by the Friday of each week. So that means that over seven days the student had to read two to three short chapters, read a play and respond to it, and watch a video and respond to it. This is a perfectly reasonable amount of work.

Other comments addressed grades, and especially the late posting of those grades:

I would say the only things I didn't like were the fact that it took so long to grade responses so you couldn't really know if you had a bad grade and
needed to do extra credit until it was too late. Also there was no feedback for any of the responses so you didn't know why you missed points.

I thought the course-load was very appropriate. My absolute only complaint was the grading turn-around time. I strongly believe if a class has due dates, grades should have due dates also. I feel it is unfair to have weekly due dates, but grading can happen up to months after submission, especially for the purposes of bettering my assignment responses if needed. Otherwise, I loved the course and all it had to offer.

I enjoyed the subject and the teacher was always there to keep us updated and help with questions. It will be far better if he were to grade early and show how he graded with comments so somebody can know what to do better next. Overall he is awesome.

All right, I may have included that last comment in part to stroke my ego, but these comments address what I recognized was my biggest failing, not returning grades quickly enough.

Overall, the results of the two surveys indicate that while there were problems, the class was effective and a positive, enjoyable experience for most students. The entirety of the survey results can be found in the appendices.
Conclusion

Fashioning a fully online class for the in-person discipline of theatre was a challenge. Finding access to material and developing assessment were especially difficult tasks. However, while I still value theatre as an art form that is done face to face, the survey results and the ACE 7 assignment suggest that the online version of Introduction to Theatre was effective in teaching students about theatre.

Another of the goals of the class was to ensure that the class could be passed to another faculty member or instructor. In this, I also feel I have succeeded. There are response questions and exams on file, a means of providing content is established, and many of the difficulties in grading and scheduling have been ironed out. Any qualified instructor can now easily teach the class with minimal guidance.

Finally, I am happy to say that the class fulfills the mandate set out by the Dean’s office to create an online class in theatre.
Appendix 1: Syllabus

This is how the syllabus appears on the Canvas site:

THEA 112 G
Introduction to Theatre
Summer 2017

**Class Location:** Online only
**Class Meeting Time:** Online only
**Instructor:** Ian Borden
**Office:** Temple 209
**E-mail:** iborden2@unl.edu

**Office Hours:** No office hours. Email questions and I will do my best to answer within 36 hours.

*If you have a question, check here first:*

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

**Course description:**

THE 112 will introduce students to the world of theatre by examining theatrical practices, theatre history and dramatic literature. Students will be asked to articulate responses to written plays, staged productions, writing about theatre, and video of and about theatre through written responses and exams. The course is designed to not only excite students about the possibilities in theatre as a craft, but to improve students' understanding of their place in the world and history through theatrical art.

**ACE 7:** Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context and significance.

Students have opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the learning outcome particularly in the lectures, videos, and readings.

To succeed at this outcome, students must demonstrate the ability to understand works of art by interpreting appropriate social, cultural, psychological, historical, and environmental aspects of the work. They must also demonstrate the ability to identify and compare methods and theories of theatre practice to understand their context and significance.

The Final Assignment will be the signature assignment used to assess ACE Outcome 7.
Required Texts:

*Introduction to Theatre*

by Ian Borden and Sarah Imes

*Note: This is an on-line publication, and you will be purchasing an access code.*

*You may purchase the book online at: [http://www.grtep.com/](http://www.grtep.com/*Links to an external site.)*

*Please be aware you cannot use your N-Card when purchasing directly from the publisher*

Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will have a general understanding of the history and function of film and theatre, as well as the basic craft of the theatre practitioner, allowing them to answer questions about theatre craft and scholarship:

- What is it we do?
- Who do we do it for?
- How do we do it, or who does what?
- To what end do we do it?

Major topics:

Readings and video will include –

- Theatre history, genres, style and theatrical structure
- Vocabulary, definitions and roles within a production
- Theory of production and theatre (and theatre in juxtaposition to camera-oriented performance)
- Diversity of historical and ethnic cultures as seen through theatre

Policies:

- Students must have access to the Canvas system.
- Late papers and presentations will not be accepted, and will receive a grade of zero. Late responses will not be accepted under any circumstances, including those turned in only a short time after class. If you are having trouble submitting an assignment on time, Email me a copy so there is a time stamp that the work has been completed.
- All work must be typed and follow MLA format guidelines. Use Times New Roman Font, size 12. For more information, see writing guidelines posted on the course Blackboard site.
- Academic Fraud, plagiarism and other breaches of the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. Students who are found to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct will receive a minimum penalty of an "F" for the course. The incident will also be reported to the Dean of Students. For further information consult section 4.2 of the Student Code on Academic Dishonesty. **CUTTING AND PASTING FROM A WEBSITE WITHOUT CITATION IS PLAGIARISM.**
- While not mandatory, students with learning or physical disabilities are encouraged to contact Professor Borden within the first few days of the summer semester for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To
receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration Building (Phone: 472-3787).

**UNL (SSD) Services for Students with Disabilities (copied from UNL web site).** Students with disabilities, who qualify, are provided with note-takers, testing accommodations, interpreters, taped textbooks, and other accommodations necessary to allow full access to the educational opportunities offered at NU (http://www.unl.edu/ssd/). Students are encouraged to meet with the director of SSD in advance to begin the accommodation planning process and make arrangements to secure services.

**Assignments and Extra Credit:**

**Reading and Video Responses:** For each play we read or watch there is a response required. Each response will be 5 10-point multiple choice questions on the play, followed by a paragraph question. For the paragraph response section, this is a subjective discipline, so there will be no absolute right or wrong answer -

- answers that respond with thought and care, back up the answer with an example and argument, and are written without spelling or grammatical errors will receive 40-50 points
- answers that fail to back up the argument, or that are hampered by spelling or grammatical errors will receive 30-39 points
- answers that show little thought or care, or are hampered by significant errors, will receive 20-29 points
- anything below university standard will receive a zero

These are informal responses, and while you are expected to use proper grammar and spelling, a formal essay format is not expected or desired. One paragraph should be fine.

**Exams:** There are four exams designed to be taken at the end of each 3-4 week module. The exams are found in the textbook. Each exam is 25 multiple choice or true/false questions, and must be completed within an hour. The scores may not be posted immediately.

**Final Assignment:** The final assignment is a single essay question that asks you to put your experience in the class to the test. A formal essay structure is expected. This assignment is due Monday, April 30, although you are free to turn it in earlier. You will need to upload your response as a Word document or a PDF. This assignment will be the assignment used in assessing the ACE 7 objective.

**Extra Credit:** There are 10 extra credit opportunities available. Note that these will not be available throughout the semester, but rather each assignment has a specific due date. Students must watch an additional video or read an additional play and then answer five response questions. These responses are much more extensive than the reading and video responses discussed above. Each extra credit assignment may add up to 1 point of credit to a student's overall grade, but students may do all ten, thereby gaining up to 10 percentage points added to the overall grade. You will need to upload your response as a Word document or a PDF.

**Grading:** Students will be grade by percentage -

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-91%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-81%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>60-61%</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>59-60%</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>58-59%</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Base Questions item 3

1. For technical theatre courses, film and new media courses: Please describe how your artistic and technology skills have improved or failed to improve as a result of your enrollment in this course.

- I am not sure if this class improved my artistic and technology skills at all, the class did not hurt my skills though.
- Helped a great amount when doing online assignments such as the weekly responses
- I know more about theatre, the work behind it and the themes that are translated through the use of stage, song, and audience interaction.
- I have learned all the ins and outs of theatre through this course, something I never would've learned hadn't I taken this course.
- after taking this course i am able to appreciate artistic and technology skills more than i was before
- My skills have not improved while taking this course.
- I would like to think that I had already had a good knowledge of theatre before this class, but by taking this class I have learned many new things about the history of theatre and why certain aspects of the stage are the way they are and why some are different than others.
- This online class helped my technology skills.
- I don't think they have failed nor improved
- Technology skills have improved by watching these videos, just because what they have to do and how they set up. How it all works and how its set up.
- I learned new things about theatre I never knew existed.
- I learned a lot about technical terms of the theater, and I've learned to appreciate different aspects of theater that I hadn't thought of before.
- I became more exposed to different forms of theatre.
I think I now have a better understanding of the history of theatre and how musicals work. The book and documentaries were really helpful with this.
I didn't know all of this stuff that we have learned about actually had to do with theatre so I learned a lot more things taking this class.
I don't think they have changed at all
I have gotten better at using my computer.
Haven't seen a change.
I thought that this course really opened my eyes to the world of theatre. I believe that I have a new found appreciation for it as well.
This course definitely got me more familiar with theatre but not much else
n/a
This showed me how to appreciate the work that goes into a theatre production.
They improved the results of the class because it allows me to take this class completely online.
This is the best course ever!
I don't believe that they have improved based on the limited curriculum that is offered.
they have improved because i have got to learn about so many different aspects of theatre that I nev er knew about.
My artistic skills have greatly improve, especially in paying attention to the smallest detail that can make the difference in the project.
They have improved by having me watch and read various forms of theatre and evaluate what made them good, bad, or unique.
All of the insightful question improved my artistic and technology skills.
I don't really feel as though they have. I might have a slightly better understanding of what goes into productions but that is about it.
This course was easy to access all online plays and the online textbook.
I have learned, I hope, what good theatre is, and I also learned a lot about everything that goes into theatre.
My technology skills have not changed.

Base Questions item 4

2. For performance-oriented courses: Please describe how your vocal, movement, or other performance-related skills improved or failed to improve as a result of your enrollment in this course.

I took this course online, I don't think it affected my vocal, movement, or other performance related skills.
Neither improved nor failed due to the class being strictly online without having to go to plays around the community to see live theatre performances.
N/A
i have improved on my own performance skills by taking into account the information i have learned in this course
This course was online, but having read to play and watched the musicals it broadened my horizons of what is possible in performance of theatre.
it was online, I did not improve on anything
I feel like they might have improved after watching the plays, they were very interesting and fun to watch.
N/A
N/A
- **Online**
- I've learned a lot more about vocal performances and what they all have to deal with.
- I wouldn't say they changed.
- No change.
- I can't say that any of my performance related skills improved with this course.
- No improvement
- n/a
- It was hard for them to improve considering it was an online class.
- This skills had nothing to do with this class.
- My vocal, movement, and other performance related skills didn't improve since this was an online class and didn't have the chance to exemplify these qualities.
- My vocal, movement, and other performances I think have improved
- not applicable
- N/A
- Failed to improve probably because it was an online class.
- N/A
- I took it online.
- None

**Base Questions item 5**

3. Did the instructor treat students with respect?

- **Yes**
- **N/A... online only class.**
- **yes**
- **Yes**
- **yes**
- **Yes**
- **Yes**
- **yes**
- **Yes**
- **Yes**
- **Yes**
- **Yes**
- **Yes**
- Usually, there were a few instances when I felt like he had a "that's too bad" attitude and wasn't very cooperative with students
- any questions that were emailed to him he would reply, usually saying to look at the syllabus when answers were not always there
- **yes.**
- The instructor is far away and does a poor job responding to emails.
• Absolutely
• Sure.
• yes
• yes
• he was respectful but not willing to help me when asked
• Yes
• n/a
• Yes
• Yes
• Emails seemed respectful but because it was online I don't feel as though I have enough experience to speak on.
• Yes
• He was very respectful and fair with me.
• Yes

Base Questions item 6

4. Did students treat the instructor with respect?

• Yes
• N/A... online only class.
• I hope
• Yes
• yes
• Yes
• Yes.
• yes
• idk it was online
• Yes.
• Yes.
• Yes
• Yes
• I would not know--the class was online.
• I think so yes. I've reached out to him a few times being nice and patient and still he fails to put grades in.
• Yes.
• Yes
• Since it was online, I'm not positive but I assume so.
• Yes
• n/a
• yes.
• yes
• No idea, it was online.
• Yes.
• yes
• N/A
• not applicable
• yes
• na
• Yes
- Yes
- Not sure.
- Yes
- It was an online course.
- Yes
- I wasn’t subject to see how students treated him as there was no interaction with any classmates.

**Base Questions item 8**

5. How many times were you absent from class during the run of this course?

- None, I took it online.
- 0., online only class and completed every assignment each week.
- Online, so all the time
- I took it online.
- none
- I took this class online.
- None. The class is online.
- it was online
- it was online
- It was online.
- N/A
- It was online
- Online
- Not applicable. The class was online.
- Online course.
- 0.
- None. It was online.
- N/A
- N/A
- 0
- n/a
- Never, it was online.
- never, it was online.
- Online.
- Once, due to a family emergency that wasn’t considered an emergency from the instructor.
- this was an online course
- It was an online class.
- not applicable
- never
- na
- None
- N/A
- 0
- it was online
- This was an online class.
- 0
- None. It was an online course.
This was an online course.

Base Questions item 9

6. What did you like best about this course?

- The work load was just the right amount and the tests were clear and precise about what they wanted.
- I liked how I spend a lot of time in a topic in order to learn each weeks chapter material.
- Online.
- The wide range of plays we watched.
- I enjoyed the open ended questions for each play, this gave me an opportunity to express my thoughts regarding the play and my take aways from it.
- I liked watching plays.
- That we could take it at our own pace and that we were given the opportunity to watch professional shows and give our input on it.
- I'm not interested in this subject.
- you could work with other people.
- How nice the teacher was.
- The access to all the plays online and the practice quizzes.
- I liked that it was online, but that I also got to see/read some cool plays on my own time.
- The overall systematic way it ran.
- Watching all of the plays/musicals.
- Learning more about theatre.
- It was all online and could be done on my own time as needed.
- The videos.
- It was online.
- Did not have to attend class every week.
- I really enjoyed the plays that we watched.
- A few of the plays were interesting/thought-provoking.
- it was an online course so being able to do things from home was helpful. Also what was assigned to us was interesting.
- I liked being able to watch plays on BroadwayHD.
- it was all online.
- It was easy.
- Nothing.
- getting to become familiar with theatre.
- I like the fact that we got to watch actual broadway online and got to experience what the audience was somewhat experiencing through the shows.
- watching the plays online.
- watching plays on my own time.
- it was online.
- Being able to learn new aspects of theatre and what it entails.
- All the different plays and musicals I got to watch.
- N/A.
- Watching the plays on the Broadway website.
- Watching the musical plays.
- The ability to stay connected with theater because I was involved in theater in high school.
The only thing I liked about this class was being able to watch some interesting musicals. Although these were hard to enjoy with the unfair and ridiculous standards behind them.

Base Questions item 10

7. If a friend asked me about this course, I would (as if this course were an elective) probably...

- I would recommend taking it because it does not have a heavy workload and you learn about theatre in a way you might not of known before.
- Tell them it was relatively easy, but would have liked it better if we were able to go to a near by community play performance to see life action rather than watch every play weekly.
- Tell them it was online and interesting/not too hard
- Recommend it if they were okay with putting in a lot of time watching plays.
- Probably tell them to enroll in the course.
- Say to take it for a GPA booster.
- Tell them that this is an excellent course to get a taste of the theatre world. It tells you the history of it and all the technical and performance things as well.
- Tell them to take it.
- Say do not take it online bc it was so much more work
- I would tell them to take it, because it's interesting.
- Suggest against taking in online. I heard it was a fun and easy course, but the online version wasn't that great. There was a lot of busy work and the class was very unorganized. The mechanisms for grading the assignments were unclear and I never received over a 90% on any assignment.
- Recommend it to them if they are interested in theater or need an ACE credit.
- It's a good class to expose yourself to more theatre if that's what you're interested in.
- Say to only take it if you like watching a lot of musicals and are ready for the huge workload. Also, the grading is really slow.
- Don't take it online but take it in class.
- Say take it!
- Tell them not to take it online.
- Tell them to take it.
- Say to take it! I thought this course was very fun and interesting.
- Probably suggest to take it
- It is a good class and I would take it.
- Recommend taking it
- Take it to fulfill your ACE and get it over with.
- I would probably not waste my time with this course because of the instructor.
- Recommend
- It is good, they just need to keep up with the due dates for homework.
- I would suggest avoiding it only because of the instructor, the course as a whole is great.
- I would recommend this class
- Say to take it
- Recommend it.
I would say to take it in person instead because there were a lot of technological issues that caused me to miss assignments or have a poor understanding of the expectations the instructor had for me.

Recommend the course to them.

Say that it is a fun class to take, but you should take it in person.

Tell them to take the in-class THEA 112G course because the online one is way more work.

I would tell them to not take this course with Professor Borden as it was completely unfair and ridiculous. Professor Borden is incredibly rude and has unfair expectations of students. He does no teaching whatsoever and has no understanding either.

Base Questions item 12

| 8. How clear were the goals and requirements of the course? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Never Stated (1) | Confusing (2)    | About Average (3) | Clear (4)          | Outstanding (5) | N/A () | mean | mode | Std. Dev. |
| 1                | 5                | 10              | 22              | 4               | 0      | 3.55 | 4    | 0.92     |

Base Questions item 13

| 9. How effectively was class time utilized? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Never (1)       | Rarely (2)      | About Average (3) | Effectively (4) | Outstanding (5) | N/A () | mean | mode | Std. Dev. |
| 0                | 0                | 2               | 13              | 1               | 26              | 3.94 | 4    | 0.44     |

Base Questions item 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Some were</th>
<th>About Average (3)</th>
<th>Well Met (4)</th>
<th>Outstanding (5)</th>
<th>N/A ()</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>mode</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
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</table>
10. Were course objectives met?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>3.62</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>0.94</th>
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**Base Questions item 16**

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<th>Above Average (4)</th>
<th>Outstanding (5)</th>
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<th>mean</th>
<th>mode</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>11. How was the instructor's knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject?</td>
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<td>0.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. How clear and well-organized was the instructor's presentation of the subject matter?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Was the instructor responsive to the needs of the students?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.25</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.12</td>
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<td>-----</td>
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<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Which of the following best describes the instructor’s attitude</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toward the course itself?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How would you describe the instructor’s efforts to create a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>comfortable atmosphere and a set of circumstances conducive to learning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Were the instructor’s examinations and grading policies fair?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. How would you rate the instructor’s speaking ability?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Did the instructor seem interested in whether or not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
not the students understood the course material?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Set Statistics</th>
<th>3.38</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1.21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Appendix 3: Survey Monkey Focused Course Survey

Q1 – You were able to access and complete the online responses and exams easily.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>12.96%</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2 – The guided written responses were a better way to respond to the readings than multiple choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.26%</td>
<td>20.37%</td>
<td>31.48%</td>
<td>25.93%</td>
<td>12.96%</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3 – The plays we read were enjoyable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>9.26%</td>
<td>31.48%</td>
<td>37.04%</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4 – I never cheated on any of the assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9.26%</td>
<td>40.74%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5
The multiple choice questions on the readings were too difficult.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>9.26%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6 – The workload was too large for a 100 level course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.96% 7</td>
<td>29.63% 16</td>
<td>20.37% 11</td>
<td>22.22% 12</td>
<td>14.81% 8</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q7 – It angered me that the instructor didn’t post my grades quickly enough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>14.81% 8</td>
<td>25.93% 14</td>
<td>44.44% 24</td>
<td>14.81% 8</td>
<td>3.59</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q8 – I cheated on the exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51.85% 28</td>
<td>35.19% 19</td>
<td>12.96% 7</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9 – The multiple choice questions on the videos were too difficult.
Answered: 53

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.43% 5</td>
<td>64.15% 34</td>
<td>15.09% 8</td>
<td>7.55% 4</td>
<td>3.77% 2</td>
<td>2.32</td>
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</table>

Q10 – I was able to keep up with the pace of the class working on my own online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.85% 1</td>
<td>5.56% 3</td>
<td>12.96% 7</td>
<td>57.41% 31</td>
<td>22.22% 12</td>
<td>3.93</td>
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</table>
Q11 – The guided written responses were a better way to respond to the videos than multiple choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>DISAGREE</th>
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<th>AGREE</th>
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<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Q12 – The amount of work for the course was just about right.

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<th>AGREE</th>
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<td>10</td>
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Q13 – The videos we watched were enjoyable.

<table>
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<th>DISAGREE</th>
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<th>AGREE</th>
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<td>4</td>
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Q14 – Having three different websites for the course was difficult.

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<th>AGREE</th>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
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</table>

Q15 – I learned a lot about theatre.

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<th>AGREE</th>
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<td>48.15%</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
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Q16 – What comments would you like to say about the course?
Answered: 35
Skipped: 19

- I really enjoyed it.
- There was too many assignments due every week.
- I enjoyed it!
- this class is way too much work for a 100 level class, not enjoyable work, just unnecessary busy work for students that are just taking this class for an ACE requirement. Would strongly Not recommend this class
- Regarding the workload, it's a bit much to give readings, a video and response and a reading and response all due in the same day for a 100 level course.
- I enjoyed the subject and the teacher was always there to keep us updated and help with questions. It will be far better if he were to grade early and show how he graded with comments so somebody can know what to do better next. Overall he is awesome.
- No
- I did not like that sometimes there were two plays assigned in one week. It was a lot to get done on top of my other courses. Also the weeks when we had an exam, I think that it would have been nice not to have a play. I understand that it is an online course and you have to keep up the pace of a normal class, but it was a lot sometimes. Otherwise, I enjoyed watching the plays and learning about theatre.
- I had a lot of problems accessing the plays on BroadwayHD. They would consistently pause for long periods of time and I would eventually be spending an extra hour and a half trying to watch an already two hour play.
- I liked the course a lot! It was well paced, and organized well, and it was nice to be able to do everything in the comfort of my own dorm room at my own pace
- I was angered that the instructor did not post my grades and my grade did suffer because of this.
- Lots of videos, but enjoyable to learn about theatre
- 6+ hours a week for a 100 level elective is a little much
- Loved it. I don't have many complaints except the time it took for the professor to get grades in.
- I think that, in comparison to the in-class THEA 112G course, the online course required too much work.
- I enjoyed this class and learned a lot about theatre
- Overall was a fun course. I enjoyed a lot of the plays and musicals we got to watch. I wish the instructor would post grades sooner so i would know if it was needed to do the extre credit assignments. Now I'm stuck between an A- and an A depending on my final assignment grade. Also, maybe more grade count towards the reading/watching video responses rather than just the exams. Thank you for a fun course online. I'm glad I took this.
- I liked it better when the plays were on canvas because they were easier for me to access and it did not give me trouble. The Broadway movie site was a hit or miss for me and sometimes I just had to take the test
after doing some research of my own and that caused me to score really low. the response section freeked me out because it would not give me a grade and it alwayed said 0/50. I did not know what to do until I finally Emailed the professor because I needed to know what I was doing wrong only to find out he gave out the scores. I think that part should be explained a little but otherwise I did not mind reading the book online.

- I enjoy the course
- None.
- I think in the end of this semester, we have 2 assignment a week. I think it is too many for me.
- I enjoyed taking this class online and the outline of the class!
- The course was alright but the workload was just too much for intro class and the exams were somewhat difficult.
- Very enjoyable and easy for someone to take online!
- I would recommend taking theater online to nobody. I did not enjoy the class online. I would rather take it in class.
- I really believe that I could have done a lot better in this class if grades were entered way quicker. I like to base what my prior grades on assignments are with how I need to alter what I am doing wrong/right for future assignments. I don't believe we should be downgraded on assignments later in the class as we did not get any valuable feedback on what needed to be corrected for improvement. This makes me quite angry, as I emailed the professor 3 different times asking about grades and no valuable answer was given. Thanks.
- Hope he can reply emails and help students with online problems.
- I would say the only things I didn't like were the fact that it took so long to grade responses so you couldn't really know if you had a bad grade and needed to do extra credit until it was too late. Also there was no feedback for any of the responses so you didn't know why you missed points.
- In the syllabus it said that as long as the written responses on each play were thought out you would get a good grade. The questions were always opinion based and I still never received a 100 on a play even after getting all of the multiple choice questions correct. I think that the written responses should be omitted or graded more fairly because there is no way multiple plays in a 100 level class had a high grade of 95 on canvas. It should not be that difficult to receive full credit on a weekly assignment when writing an opinionated response.
- It was enjoyable
- It was well structured, I think that everything went smoothly
- I thought the course-load was very appropriate. My absolute only complaint was the grading turn-around time. I strongly believe if a class has due dates, grades should have due dates also. I feel it is unfair to have weekly due dates, but grading can happen up to months after submission, especially for the purposes of bettering my assignment responses if needed. Otherwise, I loved the course and all it had to offer.
- Have the assigned chapter readings and quizzes count for some points
- Have the assigned chapter readings and quizzes count for some points
Appendix 4: FAQ Page

Frequently Asked Questions

How to I log in to the textbook and BroadwayHD?
Click here for a PDF of Instructions:
Registration to WebCOM and BroadwayHD.pdf

If I have a problem with the textbook, what do I do?
The instructor doesn’t have access to the textbook website, so you need to contact Web Support at Great River:
http://unl.grtep.com/index.cfm/introtheatrebhd/General/systemSupport

When are assignments due?
Look on the syllabus page and scroll to the bottom – all the assignments are listed there with due dates.

Where do I find the plays and videos?
Click here to find a list of where everything is located:
Where do I find it?

Where do I do the responses to the plays and video?
The responses are all done through the textbook.
Where do I do the exams?

The exams are done through the textbook.

Is there extra credit?

Yes, there are extra credit assignments throughout the semester. Look on the syllabus and click on the extra credit assignment. That will take you to the page for that assignment and the instructions will be there. You then upload your answer as a file to Canvas.
Appendix 5: Where do I find it? Page

Where do I find it?

These plays are READ in the textbook:
- The Importance of Being Earnest
- Oedipus the King
- Othello
- Ruined
- Los Vendidos
- Sky
- Polygraph
- Stop. Kiss.

These plays are WATCHED on BroadwayHD:
- Billy Elliot
- Ernest Shackleton Loves Me
- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Oklahoma!
- Indecent
- The Woodsman
- Memphis

You WATCH these videos on Canvas:
- Broadway: the American Musical (Parts 1-6):
  - Broadway: The American Musical
- Every Little Step:
  - Every Little Step
- Showbusiness: The Road to Broadway:
  - ShowBusiness: The Road to Broadway