**New York City College of Technology**

**Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Course Review Form**

**DATE:** 3/12/19

**REVIEWER:** Denise H. Sutton

**COURSE TITLE & NUMBER:** **Theatre of Law THE 3000 LAW 3000**

**PROPOSED BY:** Prof. Sarah Ann Standing and Prof. Marissa J. Moran

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3

**PREREQUISITES:** ENG 1101; and *either* COM 1330 or COM 1340 or THE 2180 (or one other course that satisfies the oral communication requirement)

**COURSE IS:**  Existing x New In development

**PROPOSED COURSE DESIGNATION**: x College Option elective Capstone other:

**DEPARTMENT HOUSED IN:** Humanities and Law & Paralegal Studies Department.

**PROPOSED STRUCTURE (e.g., co-taught, guest lecture, LC, other):**  co-taught

**CREDIT DISTRIBUTION** (if co-taught): 50/50

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

*Catalogue Description*

A comparison between law and theatre / performance studies via the creative process that begins with written analysis of a script and the opening/closing arguments of a trial, and includes the learned skills required to convey character on stage or courtroom, as well as oral storytelling. Argument and the courtroom are also investigated as enactments of theatre and performance.

*Course Description*

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

**DESCRIBE & EVALUATE HOW COURSE MEETS INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITERIA?**

Neither theatre nor law exist in a vacuum, and so an interdisciplinary approach offers an extremely broad and rich opportunity to explore relevant topics and make connections (well-described in this proposal). The way this interdisciplinary course constructs the study of law *and* theatre narrows the fields so that students focus on the courtroom as a performance space as well as“the use of theatrical techniques in the presentation of legal arguments.”The performative aspect of opening and closing arguments in actual legal cases, for instance, has an impact on real lives. And the study of convincing and logical argument brings up a variety of ethical issues. Students will have the opportunity to explore how theatre and specific legal cases help us think about complex issues as well as how they help us consider perspectives beyond our own.

**DESCRIBE & EVALUATE THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STRUCTURE?**

This course will be co-taught by faculty members from Law & Paralegal Studies (School of Professional Studies) and Humanities (School of Arts and Sciences). A combination of co-teaching and solo instruction will be used.

**DOES COURSE MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION?** Yes.

**STRENGTHS:** This course takes a different approach to understanding the dynamics at play in a court of law through theatre and performance art (as opposed to the more standard “Law & Society” or “Philosophy of Law” courses). Through research that includes actual trial transcripts and cases that represent pivotal moments in legal history, students will be exposed to complex issues and will be encouraged to consider (and perform) multiple perspectives. Students will gain insight into distinctions between a “real” court case/trial and a case that has been edited/re-written or fictionalized for the theatre. I especially like the assignment in which students are required to write a short play (based on actual court transcripts), as well as cast, direct, and perform the play. Interesting assignments overall and great opportunities for place-based learning.

**WEAKNESSES:** None.