**New York City College of Technology  
Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Criteria for an Interdisciplinary Course**

1. **Interdisciplinary Studies Definition**

Interdisciplinary studies involve two or more academic disciplines or fields of study organized around synthesizing distinct perspectives, knowledge, and skills. Interdisciplinary study focuses on questions, problems, and topics too complex or too broad for a single discipline or field to encompass adequately; such studies thrive on drawing connections between seemingly exclusive domains. Usually theme-based, interdisciplinary courses intentionally address issues that require meaningful engagement of multiple academic disciplines. Pedagogical strategies focus on, but are not limited to, inquiry or problem-based learning.

Although many academic disciplines, such as African American Studies and Engineering, are inherently interdisciplinary, to be considered an interdisciplinary course at City Tech the course must be team-taught[[1]](#footnote-1) by more than one faculty member from two or more departments[[2]](#footnote-2) in the College. An interdisciplinary course, by definition, has an interdisciplinary theme as its nucleus. In its essence, such a course brings the analytic methods of two or more academic disciplines to bear on a specific problem or question. Thus, a course in Music History is not likely to be considered interdisciplinary, but a course in Music History from an economist’s perspective might very well lead to such a course. The application of different methods and concepts is the key to assessing whether a course is or is not interdisciplinary. The term interdisciplinary is occasionally used to identify individual projects or assignments, but these, though possibly commendable, fall short in the necessary scope for learning experiences that demand in-depth exposure to the methodologies of distinct intellectual disciplines, and the creative application of these methodologies to specific problems.

Studies show that interdisciplinary courses improve student learning (Elrod & Roth, 2012; Klein, 2010; Lattuca, 2001; Lattuca, Voigt, & Fath, 2004; Project Kaleidoscope, 2011). To foster interdisciplinary learning, the Interdisciplinary Committee has identified goals and outcomes that students taking interdisciplinary courses should be able to achieve.

**Learning Outcomes of Interdisciplinary Courses**

Students will be able to:

* Purposefully connect and integrate across-discipline knowledge and skills to solve problems
* Synthesize and transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries
* Comprehend factors inherent in complex problems
* Apply integrative thinking to problem-solving in ethically and socially responsible ways
* Recognize varied perspectives
* Gain comfort with complexity and uncertainty
* Think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively
* Become flexible thinkers

**New York City College of Technology**

**Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Application for Interdisciplinary Course Designation**

Original Submission Date: **February 7, 2019**

Revised Submission Date: **March 10, 2020**

Submitted by **Prof. Sarah Ann Standing and Prof. Marissa J. Moran**

**Department(s) Humanities Department and Law & Paralegal Studies**

1. **Proposal to Offer an Interdisciplinary Course**

1. Identify the course type and title:  
  
🞎 An existing course\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
**X A new course** **Theatre of Law THE 3000 LAW 3000**

🞎 A course under development \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Provide a course description

*Catalogue Description*

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

*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.

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3. How many credits will the course comprise? **3 credits** How many hours? **3 hours/per wee**

4. What prerequisite(s) would students need to complete before registering for the course? Co-requisite(s)?

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

5. Explain briefly why this is an interdisciplinary course.

The practice of law has existed in conjunction with the practice of other disciplines throughout history, and is especially tied to the dynamic, embodied, live, communication of theatre. Aspects of law may be found in cross-disciplinary efforts such as “Philosophy of Law,” “Law Through Literature,” and “Law and Society.” This interdisciplinary course investigates the dynamic and embodied live communication common to both theatre and law. Discursive and oral arguments are essential components of both legal studies and theatrical structure. Examining these aspects from the two disciplinary perspectives sheds further light on each.

6. What is the proposed theme of the course? What complex central problem or question will it address? What disciplinary methods will be evoked and applied?

Theme: **Is Justice Served?**

This course examines both the ideal procedure of justice and the way it operates in actuality,

posing the following questions: w*hat is justice?; how do we seek justice?; is justice blind?; why is*

*the impartiality of justice important?* Using the fields of theatre/performance studies and law we

interrogate these questions in an interdisciplinary manner; bringing forth the performance of race,

class, gender, and intersectionality in both legal and theatrical contexts. Theatre and Performance

Studies provide further insight into the role of law and its enactments in contemporary life, and a

greater understanding of the humanistic processes by which we write, read, interpret and perform legality.

7. Which general learning outcomes of an interdisciplinary course does this course address?   
Please explain how the course will fulfill the bolded mandatory learning outcome below.

In addition, select and explain at least three additional outcomes.

* **Purposefully Connect and Integrate Across-Discipline Knowledge and Skills to Solve Problems**

Students analyze plays that use actual courtroom trial transcripts (for example, *Joan*

*of Arc*; *It’s True, It’s True, It’s True*; *Gross Indecency: the Three Trials of Oscar*

*Wilde*). This use of “documentary theatre” introduces students to concepts of

artistic selection, and the narrative arc (exposition, opposing forces, conflict, escalating

tension, and resolution). Issues of power dynamics around race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, are introduced through examining specific plays and their relationship

to their socio-historical context. Examination of the degree to which a courtroom is an innately theatrical “stage” reflecting, furthering, and challenging dynamics at work in the wider world. Students investigate the nature of conflict—integral to both legal studies

and theatre—through the analysis of theatrical scripts and trial transcripts. Ultimately,

students gain the ability to discern how narrative is controlled, particularly in regard to issues of perception of impartiality and justice, within the context of theatre / performance and, more particularly, the legal courtroom*.* Use of a shared Open Lab site and shared assignments facilitates connecting and integrating aspects of theatre and law.

* **Synthesize and Transfer Knowledge Across Disciplinary Boundaries**

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| Students explore theatre texts, films of plays, and actual performances, as  well as legal transcripts, footage of actual courtroom procedure, and possible  courtroom visits to compare and contrast the dynamic qualities of argument and  presentation used in each. For example, use of theatrical exposition can be  correlated with setting-up background context in legal studies. Theatre’s use of  “inciting incident” can be compared and contrasted with the “introduction of  evidence” to shed light on ‘change elements’ in both legal studies and theatre.  Additionally, students work on embodied storytelling and presentation from both  legal and theatrical perspectives (through acting out scenes from Courtroom  Dramas, actual courtroom transcripts, and moot court sessions), in order to  generate effective oral communication (utilizing both logos and pathos) with an  audience. |
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* **Comprehend Factors Inherent in Complex Problems**

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

* **Recognize Varied Perspectives**

Both theatre and law use structures that inherently recognize, and publicly present, varied perspectives. Through the common use of structured, formalized,

dialogue each discusses and embodies varying perspectives of complex issues. High-profile and non-obvious court cases are complex by definition. Theatre and law can both teach about an individual’s character, background, motivation, and objectives. Additionally, and further from personal needs and wants, examining theatre and law in their distinct socio-historical and cultural contexts shows a wider variety of factors at work in influencing complex problems. Enacting theatrical Courtroom Dramas teaches students to listen to, present, sometimes embody, reflect on, and respond to different sides of complex issues. to provide further insight into the role of law in contemporary life, and achieve a greater understanding of the humanistic processes by which we write, read, interpret and perform legality.

* **Think Critically, Communicate Effectively, and Work Collaboratively**

Students will not only analyze scripts, embody them in performance, but actually research their own court transcript and synthesize it into a short theatrical script. Thus, students need to understand the difference between the “real,” unedited, performance

that is a trial, and the more tightly scripted plot that makes up theatre. They will then

need to work collaboratively (in small groups) to cast and direct these performances.

Thus, students need to learn effective communication in their teams, as well as how to communicate effectively with an audience.

**General Education Learning Goals for City Tech Students**

* **Knowledge:** Develop knowledge from a range of disciplinary perspectives, and hone the ability to deepen and continue learning.
* **Skills:** Acquire and use the tools needed for communication, inquiry, creativity, analysis, and productive work.
* **Integration**: Work productively within and across disciplines.
* **Values, Ethics, and Relationships**: Understand and apply values, ethics, and diverse   
  perspectives in personal, professional, civic, and cultural/global domains.

8. How does this course address the general education learning goals for City Tech students?

**GENERAL EDUCATION Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment of Outcomes:**

**Upon completion, students should have the ability to:**

* *Knowledge: describe the similarities and differences between law interpretation/ argumentation/performance and theatre interpretation/argumentation/performance.*

Assessment: The final paper requests students to analyze a trial in terms of its

theatrical (i.e.: acting or technical) elements. While doing so students will also analyze issues of justice and how they are framed at trial to determine how well justice is served

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| * *Skills: recognize various parts of oral presentation and advocacy (including preparation, speaking extemporaneously, speaking impromptu, and improvisation) and differentiate between acting in theatre and in the courtroom.*   Assessment: In-class exercises and prepared delivery of court proceedings and  scripted plays.   * *Skills: gather primary and secondary research, analyze texts, and synthesize material into a paper, play, and presentation.*   Assessment: The final paper, play, and presentation, require students to gather research, analyze information, and synthesize results into a finished product.   * *Integration: discern how meaning is created in law using theatre and performance studies (e.g.: through costumes, tone of voice, gesture, status, ritual, and legal precedent).*   Assessment: The final paper, play, and presentation demonstrate the ability to create meaning and make connections through the use of performance elements.   * *Values, Ethics, and Relationships: advocate for themselves and others when faced with injustice. Concomitantly, students gain a greater sense of their responsibilities as ethical citizens and see how their behavior contributes to a just, moral, and ethical society—not only for themselves and people they know—but as citizens of a larger body.* Assessment: Students demonstrate through in-class presentations, exercises, discussions, Blackboard and Open Lab posts, the ability to be advocates for others on social justice issues providing further insight into the role of law and its enactments in contemporary life, to achieve a greater understanding of the humanistic processes by which we write, read, interpret and perform legality. * *Values, Ethics, and Relationships: contextualize larger concepts and concerns around race/class/gender/age/sexual orientation.*   Assessment: Students will respond orally and in writing to specific questions/inquiries  based on observations made while viewing various media based presentations.  Additionally, students will analyze issues of justice and how they are framed in the  plays and transcripts they read, and also compare how well justice is served. |
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9. Which department would house this course[[3]](#footnote-3)? **Humanities and Law & Paralegal Studies Departments**

Would all sections of the course be interdisciplinary? **Yes**

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| Would the course be cross-listed in two or more departments?  **Yes**  **This course will be listed in both the Humanities and Law & Paralegal Studies Department.** |

* 1. How will the course be team-taught[[4]](#footnote-4)? **X Co-taught** 🞎 Guest lecturers 🞎 Learning community  
       
     If co-taught, what is the proposed workload hour distribution?

**50% Humanities Professor and 50% Law & Paralegal Studies Professor**

* 1. X Shared credits 🞎 Trading credits   
     If guest lecturers, for what approximate percentage of the course? 🞎 Minimum 20%[[5]](#footnote-5) 🞎 other: \_\_%  
       
     Please attach the evaluation framework used to assess the interdisciplinarity of the course.[[6]](#footnote-6)

***Please see “Evaluation******Framework,” listed on page 7***

* 1. What strategies/resources would be implemented to facilitate students’ ability to make

connections across the respective academic disciplines?

Theatre of Law provides students an opportunity to explore the interrelationship between law and performance. The course employs Theatre and Performance Studies theories, courtroom transcripts, plays in written form as well award-winning performances of “Courtroom Theatre.” Additionally, the course hopes to make use of place-based-learning in the form of theatre performances in New York City and courtroom visits in order to facilitate learning. Additionally, a scaffolded research paper, and scaffolded performance project, encourage students to make connections in various stages over time.

***Please see sample “Assessment Exercise,” listed on page 8.***

10. Would the course be designated as:

**X** a College Option requirement[[7]](#footnote-7)? 🞎 an elective? 🞎 a Capstone course[[8]](#footnote-8)? 🞎 other?

* The course meets the New York state definition of a liberal arts and science course as it is comprised of the following components: Humanities;Theater (dramatic interpretation, dramatic literature, dramaturgy, history of drama, playwriting, and theory of theatre and performance); Introductory elements of Criminal Justice; Communication (interpersonal, mass, public speaking, and rhetoric).

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**Evaluation Framework**

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| ***Professor***  ***Department and***  ***Contact Information*** | ***In- Class Delivery of Instruction*** | **Faculty Classroom Observation** | **Student Evaluation of Teaching** |
| Professor *Marissa J. Moran*  Law & Paralegal Studies  mmoran@cityech.cuny.edu | Co-teach Weeks 1, 2 and 15  Solo Instruction Weeks  4, 6, 8, 10, 12 & 13  Probing Questions reflecting course theme explored throughout lectures/discussions/ assignments/assessments. | Faculty from Law & Paralegal Studies Department will evaluate and note as ID Course | Students will be asked to compete two (2) forms one for each professor. |
| Professor *Sarah Ann Standing*  Humanities  sstanding@citytech.cuny.edu | Co-teach Weeks  1, 2 and 15  Solo Instruction Weeks  3, 5, 7, 9, 11 & 14  Probing Questions reflecting course theme explored throughout lectures/discussions/ assignments/assessments. | Faculty from Humanities Department will evaluate and note as ID Course | Students will be asked to compete two (2) forms  one for each professor. |

**(Potential) Assessment Exercise/Final Paper Assignment**

Theatre is a unique form of art because plays (as well as the shows and movies which claim theatre ancestry), incorporate both acting and technical aspects with traditional storytelling. Analyzing *acting* elements includes character motivation and analysis, dialogue, tone, breath, inflection, projection, gestures, and acting choices. Analyzing *technical* elements include scenery and set design, costumes, makeup, props, lighting, video, and sound/music. All of the above elements add to the traditional literary elements of plot, setting, genre, conflict, structure, and character to create a distinctive theatre experience.

**Choose one of the trials** we discussed/read about this semester and **first analyze and then discuss how either acting elements or technical elements help you understand the trial as a piece of theatre, in the context of traditional literal elements of structure**. What do these dramatic choices reveal to you about the trial/play/movie? How do they help you understand the main theme(s) and messages of the trial/play/movie/?

**Your analysis should examine these elements carefully and thoughtfully, with specific examples from throughout the trial/play/movie. You should also, through this analysis, discuss the overall meaning gleaned from the trial-play, and how that meaning is conveyed through the use of theatrical elements**.

**Example Thesis**:

*With the use of careful technical elements such lighting, set/scenery, props, and costuming in 12 Angry Men, Sidney Lumet highlights the jury deliberations in a capital murder trial of an 18 year old in order to reveal the truth and larger societal issues of responsibility, bias, prejudice, fairness, and justice in jury trials.*

**First Draft due: Week 10**

**Review/Revise Final papers: Week 12**

**Final Paper due: Week 13**

**Readings will be selected from among the following plays, and others:**

*A Few Good Men* (David Brown; Aaron Sorkin)

*Execution of Justice* (Emily Mann)

*Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* (Moises Kaufman)

*Inherit the Wind* (Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee)

*It’s True, It’s True, It’s True.* (Stevens and Barrett) (re: Artemesia Gentileschi)

*Libel!* (Edward Woll)

*Measure for Measure* (William Shakespeare)

*Night of January 16th (*Ayn Rand)

*Nuts* (Tom Topor)

*The Anastasia Trials in the Court of Women* (Carolyn Gage)

*The Crucible* (Arthur Miller)

*The Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, *The Eumenides*), translator E.D.A. Morshead.

Digireads.com, 2015.

*The Merchant of Venice* (William Shakespeare)

*To Kill a Mockingbird (*Harper Lee; Aaron Sorkin)

*Twelve Angry Men* (Reginald Rose)

*Witness for the Prosecution* (Agatha Christie)

*Zoot Suit* (Luis Valdez)

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Opening and Closing Arguments

<https://libraryguides.law.pace.edu/c.php?g=319373&p=2133435>

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**Resources for *12 Angry Men:***

**TV:**

Rose, Reginald. *12 Angry Men*, CBS, Studio One, 1954.

Friedkin, William.director, *12 Angry Men* (remake), Metro-Goldwin-Mayer, 1997

**Film:**

Lumet, Sidney, and Reginald Rose. *12 Angry Men*. Los Angeles: Orion-Nova, 1957.

**Play:**

Rose, Reginald; Sergel, Sherman L. [*Twelve Angry Men: A Play in Three Acts*](https://books.google.com/books?id=CDhp0EJOLnEC&dq=twelve+angry+men&printsec=frontcover) (First ed.). Chicago: Dramatic Publishing Co., 1955.

**Print:**

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* Homes, Linda. ["Amy Schumer Puts Her Own Looks On Trial"](https://www.npr.org/blogs/monkeysee/2015/05/06/404649955/amy-schumer-puts-her-own-looks-on-trial). [*NPR*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPR). Retrieved May 6, 2015.
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* *Readings on Twelve Angry Men*, by Russ Munyan, Greenhaven Press, 2000, [ISBN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [978-0-7377-0313-9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/978-0-7377-0313-9).
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* "The Dividing Line Between Preparing and Coaching a Witness for a Deposition." Virginia Court Reporters. November 29, 2016.
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**NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**HUMANITIES and LAW & PARALEGAL STUDIES DEPARTMENTS**

**SYLLABUS**

## **COURSE CODE: THE 3000ID / LAW 3000ID**

**TITLE: *THEATRE OF LAW***

## **3 Hours / 3 Credits**

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**:

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

**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.*

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Reginald Rose, Twelve Angry Men, (Acting Edition). New York: Samuel French, 1997. ISBN: 9780143104407

**RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTBOOK** (Students will be assigned selections. The book will be on Reserve in the library or excerpts of reading passages will be provided.)

**REQUIRED VIEWING**

Plays/Movies/Trials. Students are responsible for play fees.

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

You will watch plays/movies/trials film or video. All of them will be either provided to you or on reserve in the college library.

**GRADE SCALE**

Participation/Blackboard/OpenLab/In-Class Exercises 10%

Weekly Written Assignments/ Presentations 30%

Final Paper 30%

Final Presentation 30%

**Total 100%**

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**New York City College of Technology’s official grading scale**.

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| --- | --- |
| A | 93-100% |
| A- | 90-92.9% |
| B+ | 87-89.9% |
| B | 83-86.9% |
| B- | 80-82.9% |
| C+ | 77-79.9% |
| C | 70-76.9% |
| D | 60-69.9% |

**POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity Policy Statement**

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. (See pp. 73-76 in the student handbook).

**Disability/Medical Accommodations Statement**

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, please contact the Center for Student Accessibility at 300 Jay Street room L-237, 718 260 5143, or http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/ N.B., Students who miss a scheduled presentation or exam due to illness or medically-related emergencies will be referred to the Center for Student Accessibility. The CSA will review any documentation requested and give the student a letter to share with the relevant instructor if accommodations need to be made.

**Attendance Policy**

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

**Commitment to Student Diversity**

The Humanities and Law Paralegal Studies Departments comply with the college wide nondiscrimination policy and seek to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many forms and enhances our students’ ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

All written work must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced and with 1” margins. PROOFREAD for grammar, spelling, and coherence (using Spell-check and Eyeball checking)

**1. Blackboard Discussion Posts**: Written responses to weekly or biweekly content specific queries/posts. 150-300 words per post, count varies with each assignment. Graded as participation.

**2. OpenLab**: Shared Posts (150-300 words, count varies with each assignment) and Clips of Student Performances and Critiques. Graded as participation.

**3. One-page character analysis:** 1 page (two due in the semester). Answer the following questions: What did you notice in terms of your character? What actions does your character take to achieve their objectives? Graded as Weekly Assignments.

**4. Final Paper Assignment:** 1500-2000 words, First and Final Drafts.

Theatre is a unique form of art because plays (as well as the shows and movies which claim theatre ancestry), incorporate both acting and technical aspects with traditional storytelling. Analyzing *acting* elements includes character motivation and analysis, dialogue, tone, breath, inflection, projection, gestures, and acting choices. Analyzing *technical* elements include scenery and set design, costumes, makeup, props, lighting, video, and sound/music. All of the above elements add to the traditional literary elements of plot, setting, genre, conflict, structure, and character to create a distinctive theatre experience.

**Choose one of the trials** we discussed/read about this semester and **first analyze and then discuss how either acting elements or technical elements help you understand the trial as a piece of theatre, in the context of traditional literal elements of structure**. What do these dramatic choices reveal to you about the trial/play/movie? How do they help you understand the main theme(s) and messages of the trial/play/movie/?

**Your analysis should examine these elements carefully and thoughtfully, with specific examples from throughout the trial/play/movie. You should also, through this analysis, discuss the overall meaning gleaned from the trial-play, and how that meaning is conveyed through the use of theatrical elements**.

**Example Thesis**:

*With the use of careful technical elements such lighting, set/scenery, props, and costuming in 12 Angry Men, Sidney Lumet highlights the jury deliberations in a capital murder trial of an 18 year old in order to reveal the truth and larger societal issues of responsibility, bias, prejudice, fairness, and justice in jury trials.*

**First Draft due: Week 10**

**Review/Revise Final papers: Week 12**

**Final Paper due: Week 13**

**5. In-class writing.**

**6. Presenting rehearsed scenes**.

**7. Final project** (written, 10 pages). First and Second Drafts. Assignment: Find transcripts of a landmark trial that has *not* been made into a play or film but could be. Decide which portions of the transcript will be used in a short theatre piece. Students will then need to work collaboratively (in small groups) to write a ten-minute play. OpenLab will be used to support continuity of the writing process.

**8. Final Presentation Performance:** (oral) Students then cast, rehearse, and perform the scripts they have written.

**WEEK-BY-WEEK OUTLINE**

Please note that the particular selection of plays/trials on this sample syllabus reflects materials currently available in the collections of the NYCCT Library and of the course proposer. The recommended reading selections are suggestions and may be augmented or replaced as relevant scholarship becomes available.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Locating Media Materials**   * Films & Videos are on reserve in the library, unless otherwise specified. * **School, Harvard Law. “Ames Moot Court Competition 2015.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 2 Dec. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFl1IEBoFAE.** * **stanfordlawschool. “Kirkwood Moot Court Competition 2018 | Finals.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 8 Mar. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnjkgYyrYbk.** | | |
|  | **Week/Topic** | **Suggested Instructional Activities** | **Assignment** |
| 1. | **1. All the World’s A Stage** | Introduction to the course, expectations, and logistics. Review syllabus/assignments/grading criteria.  Introduce the theme of the course “Is Justice Served?” and Courtroom Drama as a genre  Watch a film (of a play) of a significant trial: *12 Angry Men* (or anypertinent and timely trial transformed into a film/play during the semester in which the ID class is offered). | Take duo-logue scenes from the above play and break into pairs, each student having chosen one character in the scene to write about and portray. Each student writes a one-page character analysis (What did you notice in terms of character? What actions does your character take to achieve their objectives? How do they seek justice in the play?) about the character selected. Rehearse the scenes aloud at home and prepare to present in class.  Paper and presentation due: Week 3. |
| 2 | **2.Court: Where There Are No Dress Rehearsals** | Analyze excerpts from select court transcripts. Focus on language/wording and how attorneys write to persuade. Compare the impact of the written word to the spoken word. Watch clips of actual courtroom trials. Discuss the thematic question “*Is justice blind?”* Use acting exercises to interpret law through all five senses. Work to use the actor’s voice to increase dramatic tension and hold the interest of the audience. Examine speaking extemporaneously versus speaking impromptu. Examining the idea of acting in everyday life and the courtroom in particular, as a performance. How is emphasis achieved? How is a jury or judge persuaded? Persuasion is introduced as the intertwining of emotion and logic. Use of the dramatic pause, the dynamic voice (both character voice and actor voice), the well-timed introduction of evidence. Investigation of the differences between the courtroom trial and theatre.  Show clips from Moot Court competitions, such as: *Abrams v. Vita* re: accommodation  School, Harvard Law. “Ames Moot Court Competition 2015.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 2 Dec. 2015, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFl1IEBoFAE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFl1IEBoFAE).  and  Stanford Law School. “Kirkwood Moot Court Competition 2018 | Finals.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 8 Mar. 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnjkgYyrYbk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnjkgYyrYbk)  Discuss what aspects make these moot court competitions effective demonstrations of performance and communication. | Writing Assignment:  Written analysis of court transcript: ‘*The cold record versus courtroom drama.’*  Readings from Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life;* Cantrell, *Acting in Documentary Theatre;* and Schechner, *Introduction to Performance Studies*. |
| 3 | **3. The Quality of Mercy is Not Strained** | Hand in one-page character analysis papers from Week 1. See scenes from Week 1. Work on acting, and creating dynamic performances, in relation to both theatre and the courtroom.  See scenes from other courtroom plays with a particular social justice theme, for example: *Zoot Suit*, *It’s True, It’s True, It’s True*, and *Gross Indecency*. Discuss the cases these plays are based on. Examine larger context of social justice and social justice theatre and what makes these plays important and effective. | Readings from Read, *Theatre and Law.* Read selected scenes from *Zoot Suit, It’s True, It’s True, It’s True*, and *Gross Indecency* and prepare to present in Week 5 |
| 4 | **4. Law Places & People: Private/Soliloquy vs. Public Thoughts/Dialogue** | Where does legal drama occur? How do venue and audience such as the courtroom comprised  of judge/jury/attorneys/ litigants/court officers /court staff/the public compare to or with law firms comprised of attorneys and clients and why or does the environment dictate word choice, language, discussion/negotiation tactics, and resolution. Ethical obligations, confidentiality and privileged information will be discussed in conjunction with the course theme by asking the questions “*How do we seek justice?”; and “Why is the impartiality of justice important?”* Introduce and discuss Library Guides or *LibGuides* to students. | Writing Assignment: Respond in writing to questions based on reading of case regarding ethics, law, and society reflecting upon course theme *Is Justice Served?* |
| 5 | **5. Some Rise by Sin, and Some by Virtue Fall** | Present scenes assigned in Week 3. Discuss discrediting the witness (*It’s True, It’s True, It’s True; Gross Indecency*) Who tells the story? How is it told? Discuss Point of View: protagonist / antagonist. Who presents the information? How is it presented? Discuss the thematic questions: “*Is justice blind?”* and “*Why is the impartiality of justice important?”* in terms of how are things “dramatized” structurally. Discuss conflict and climactic structure.  Further lecture / discussion about Courtroom Drama, including *The Oresteia*. Introduce technical elements of the theatre.  In-class work on developing a script. Break into groups for final project. Work on the concept of beginning/middle/end. Discuss the frame, and begin initial writings on final project.  **Final Project**: Find transcripts of a landmark trial that has *not* been made into a play or film but could be. Decide which portions of the transcript will be used in a short theatre piece. Students will then need to work collaboratively (in small groups) to write, cast, and direct these performances. OpenLab will be used to support continuity of the writing process. | Write a character analysis (one page) for one of the characters in the script and post on shared OpenLab site. Due for Week 7.  Reading: Rogers, Nicole. “The Play of Law: Comparing Performances in Law and Theatre.” QUTLJJ Vol  8 no. 2, 2008.  Read, Alan. *Theatre and Law*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. |
| 6 | **6. Cue the Witness: the “Supporting Role” at Trial** | What is the role of a witness in court? Who may be called as a witness? Is there more than one type of witness?  What rules/procedure direct/govern witness testimony? What is the effect of testimony that is ‘read-back’ to a jury? Why/how/when is this done? While reflecting on these questions, relate them to the thematic questions: “*How do we seek justice?” and “Why is the impartiality of justice important?”* | Using Blackboard Observe and comment on witness’ scenes from “*A Few Good Men*.”  Distribute and review/discuss expectations/timeline for final paper assignment.  First drafts of paper due Week 10 |
| 7 | **7. Virtue is Bold, and Goodness Never Fearful** | Take famous characters of trial lawyers. What are their characteristics? Can we find examples of different genders/heritages/races/sexual orientations with these same ‘heroic” characteristics? Students will examine the differences between Documentary Theatre (using actual court transcripts); Theatre of Social Justice; Theatre of the Real; and Courtroom Drama, and relate them to the thematic question: “*How do we seek justice?”* | Using the shared OpenLab site, and the characters they’re working on, students write the beginning of their play.  Readings: Sack, Daniel (ed.). *Imagined Theatres: Writing for a Theoretical Stage*. Abingdon, Routledge, 2017.  Case, Sue-Ellen and Janelle Reinelt (eds.). The Performance of Power: Theatrical Discourse and Politics. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991.  Alan Read. *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance*, London: Routledge, 1995. |
| 8 | **8. Hidden Heroes of Law** | Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) founded by Bryan Stevenson, attorney and professor is an agency which provides hope and compassion to children and death row inmates by reviewing their cases to ensure that they were administered in a fair and equitable manner in the criminal justice system and the judgments rendered are age appropriate.  Homeboy Industries founded by Gregory Boyle, SJ is an agency/company that provides work/training opportunities to former gang members living in Los Angeles who seek to leave gang life. | ‘Every person has a story’ and ‘A picture is worth a thousand words.’  Using Blackboard examine and analyze the EJI website. Read excerpts from *Tattoos on the Heart*. How do the agencies (EJI and Homeboy Industries) communicate their missions and goals? What story, graphic/statistic, and picture, in particular, moved you/spoke to you from EJI and *Tattoos on the Heart*? Why? |
| 9 | **9. Measure Still for Measure** | Students present the beginnings of their pieces. Building on the EJI and *Tattoos on the Heart* stories from Week 8, we look to examine the role of the victim/perpetrator, asking “What is justice?” | Students continue working on their plays, developing the middle section, and heightening conflict. |
| 10 | **10. View from the Bench versus A View from the Sidelines** | Convincing both judge and jury. What is a bench trial? What is a jury trial? How do they differ? Does having a bench trial or jury trial matter in terms of representing the client in court? How do attorneys select jurors? Fairness and justice for litigants/parties to the lawsuit in jury selection are examined in the context of the course theme, “*What is justice?*” Examine written juror questionnaires, listen to *voir dire,* and review court instructions to jurors and consider “*How do we seek justice?”; “Is justice blind?”; and “Why is impartiality of justice important?”* | Writing assignment: How and what (i.e. Social Media) effects/impacts juries/courtrooms and how justice is served?  First drafts of paper due. |
| 11 | **11. Truth is Truth** | Examining the role of the judge and the audience in meta-theatrical plays. Examination of positioning the audience’s attention and sympathy. | First drafts of final performance project due.  Feedback given on first drafts in class. |
| 12 | **12. The Art of Oral Argument** | Watch and listen to attorneys’ opening/closing arguments and oral arguments in select cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.  “Oral Argument - Audio File.” *Home - Supreme Court of the United States*,  [www.supremecourt.gov/oral\_arguments/audio/2018/17-290](http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/audio/2018/17-290).  Opening and Closing Arguments  <https://libraryguides.law.pace.edu/c.php?g=319373&p=2133435> | Comment/critique in writing the attorneys’ ability to argue from scripted notes and their ability to think on their feet and respond to judges’ questions (passive vs. active participation). Why are both techniques utilized in court?  Do they serve the same purpose? Why/Why Not? How do these varying techniques assist in achieving justice in a case?  Review, evaluate, and revise final papers based on feedback from first drafts of paper. |
| 13 | **13. Final Paper** |  | Final Paper due. |
| 14 | **14. Dress Rehearsals** | Rehearse the plays and discuss editing, rewriting, and honing for dramatic effect Testing the plays against the theme for the class, asking how we have engaged with the questions: “*What is justice?; How do we seek justice?”; “Is justice blind?”; and “Why is impartiality of justice important?”* Work on dramatic interpretation to convey depth of the roles, and directing to create effective composition. | Second drafts of final performance projects due. |
| 15 | **15. Performance** | Students assess each other’s contributions to the final projects. Projects are videoed and selections are placed on the shared OpenLab site. | Performances of final projects due. |

1. See “Application for Interdisciplinary Course Designation” question 9b for team-teaching options. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Exceptions are made for Departments that provide a home for multiple disciplines, such as Humanities and Social Science. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. An interdisciplinary course for the College Option requirement may be housed in a department that is not liberal arts. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Attach evidence of consultation with all affected departments. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. While an interdisciplinary course must be team-taught, there is no formal percentage requirement, but this minimum is a guideline. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In the case that a course is equally taught, include proposed plans for faculty classroom observation and student evaluation of teaching. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. To qualify for the College Option, such a course must also meet the New York State definition of a liberal arts and sciences course.  
   <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/lrp/liberalarts.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A course proposed as a Capstone course must be separately approved by the Capstone Experience Committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)