**New York City College of Technology**

**Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Course Review Form**

**DATE:** May 5, 2024

**REVIEWER:** Laureen Park

**COURSE TITLE & NUMBER:** LAW3000ID, *Theatre of Law*

**PROPOSED BY:** Prof. Marissa Moran

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3

**PREREQUISITES:** ENG 1101 and (COM 1330 or COM 1340 or THE 2180 or department permission)

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

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

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

**PROPOSED STRUCTURE (e.g., co-taught, guest lecture, LC, other):**  Guest lecturers minimum 20%

**CREDIT DISTRIBUTION** (if co-taught): Not applicable

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

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

Formerly, the course was designated THE3000ID/LAW3000ID, but the current syllabus leaves out the THE3000ID designation due most likely to the fact that Prof. Moran who is a professor of law and paralegal studies is now the main teacher. Formerly she co-taught the course with Prof. Standing of Humanities. The benefit of having Prof. Moran be the main teacher is that she has had previous experience teaching the course, and is probably very familiar with the material. The downside is that Prof. Standing was the half of the teaching team that represented the gen-ed side, which I think is important in supporting the learning objectives of the course. Another potential downside to the requested change is that the guest lecturers that are slated to teach are both from English which are related to theater, but it seems to me that the approaches between it and theater/dramaturgy are distinct. The topics and assignments that they are scheduled to lecture in has been modified from the original syllabus that was approved by the committee in 2020, but the main assignments and the majority of the topics seem to remain the same. Is it possible that Prof. Moran is able to support students in creating, writing, and performing a drama based on law cases, which constitutes the final project? I’m sure she has learned a lot from past experiences with the class. But my opinion is that it is probably best left to a professor trained in the theory and performance of theater to support that process. Perhaps the solution is simply to convert the main project to one that embodies the two fields now represented in this course: Law and English.

**DESCRIBE & EVALUATE THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STRUCTURE?**

The course will be taught by guest lecturers from the English Department.

**DOES COURSE MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION?**

The course meets all of the technical requirements.

**STRENGTHS:**

The current syllabus of LAW3000ID largely contains the same topics and objectives as the previous syllabus from 2020 (one may find a copy in the openlab site in “past applications”). It seems to have the same goals – integrate, synthesize, transfer knowledge and skills by working collaboratively and by recognizing various perspectives, etc.

**WEAKNESSES:**

More changes should be considered given that the guest lecturers are now English professors. The English professors are slated to teach in weeks 3, 5, and 7, and the topics and assignments in those three class sessions have changed from the previous syllabus. But perhaps the larger assignments, like the final project should change too, and reflect the crossroads of Law and English as well. As it is, the final project is the same. It is notable that the more granular weekly assignments in the current syllabus has changed quite a bit from the one in the application in 2020, again reflecting the change from a co-taught course to one mainly taught by a law and paralegal studies prof. I note some of the changes here:

There were a number of theater-related assignments/readings that were in the original 2020 syllabus that are missing from the current syllabus. I list the assignments that were in the original, and then in bold I note what those previous assignments were replaced with in the current syllabus. I’m not an expert in either field, but I do wonder to what extent the theater side is represented. The new assignments seem heavily weighted towards the legal field.

Week 2 (2020) “Readings from Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life;* Cantrell, *Acting in Documentary Theatre;* and Schechner, *Introduction to Performance Studies*.”

**Replaced in current syllabus with “Writing Assignment Discussion Board (DB) Post Due Week 4: Examine and analyze the Homeboy Industries and EJI websites.”**

Week 3 (2020) “Readings from Read, *Theatre and Law.* Read selected scenes from *Zoot Suit, It’s True, It’s True, It’s True*, and *Gross Indecency.*”

**Replaced in current syllabus with watching *12 Angry Men*.**

Week 5 (2020) Write character analysis and do “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.”

**Replaced in current syllabus with just the character analysis.**

Week 6 (2020) Using Blackboard Observe and comment on witness’ scenes from “*A Few Good Men*.”

**Replaced in current syllabus with: “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).”**

Week 7 (2020) “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.”

**Replaced in current syllabus with: “Homework Due: Week 9”**

Week 12 (2020) “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?”

**Replace in current syllabus with: “Writing Assignment Discussion Board Post: Judicial Case Studies**

**1. If you were the judge in these**

**cases, would you have decided the**

**matter in the same way each of the**

**judges did so?**

**Why or Why Not?**

**2. After learning about the judge's**

**perspective in each case, retold**

**as a story, do you have a different**

**view of the work of a judge?”**