Matthew Maguire

This course guides the student on an experiential tour of mounting a theatrical production. The role of the playwright is defined and each student will write a short scene. The function of the director is demonstrated by analyzing multiple stagings of the same text; each student will direct a scene. The actor is a primary element of theatre; each student will act a scene. We will explore the role of the designer who creates the physical world of the play; each student will conceive a design. And each week we will see a play Off-Off-Broadway.

Interwoven with the production elements will be a mini-survey of theatre history focusing on the Greek, the Elizabethan, and the contemporary theatre. Our texts will be Euripides’ *The Bacchae*, Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Suzan-Lori Parks’s *Topdog Underdog*.

Know in advance that the times we meet are changeable. When we go to the theatre we start and end later. Consider the cost of the course. Book costs are low, but you must be aware that we will go to the theatre four or five times. The Off-Off-Broadway tickets will average $15-20. I will let you know a week in advance what we will see. I need to see what opens, and then decide which production will most enhance the direction our discussion is leading.

An excellent place to purchase your books is the Drama Book Shop, the only bookstore in the country dedicated exclusively to theatre. It is a goldmine for those studying the theatre. With a friendly and knowledgeable staff, it is an independent oasis in the homogenized desert of mega-merger warehouses. It’s located at 250 W. 40th St. between 7th & 8th, 212.944.0595. [www.dramabookshop.com](http://www.dramabookshop.com).

Bring your texts for discussion. Reading the play on your phone is NOT acceptable. Read these specific versions, if possible, for ease of discussion in class. Diverse translations and different editing of line numbering make in-class discussion cumbersome.

Access the translation of *The Bacchae* we will read on Googledocs: [Bacchae New Translation by Robin Robertson.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M6g4JGfKF66X8Y0Vr7R7Wf7WVf4-E6pG/view?usp=sharing)


*Topdog Underdog*, Suzan-Lori Parks, Theatre Communications Group, ISBN 1-55936-201-4, $13.95
Grading will be based on the following:

- Attendance for discussion and outside events: Good attendance and preparedness for work is essential for a class with a standard of excellence. You are required to attend every class. There are no "allowed" absences. At my discretion, a student may be failed at mid-term (or at any point after) if he or she has excessive absences (two without a valid medical excuse), or are unprepared to work more than twice. Being unprepared is counted as an absence. Being late twice is counted as one absence. Over one unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade reduction. Excessive lateness will be regarded the same way. Missing a performance will be counted as two absences since it means that the student will be unable to participate in the discussion the following night.

- Class contribution: if you're a shy person who prefers to absorb and never speak, your grade will suffer. We all benefit when everyone is generous with ideas. For the in-class exercises no one is expected to perform at the level of a theatre artist. Theatre majors are not eligible to take the course. All that is expected is a good-faith effort to enter the spirit of the exercise.

- Two papers, the purpose of which is to hone the ability to ask questions about the theatre. The first paper will be one page long, and the second paper will be four pages. Each paper will be on a subject proposed by the student and pre-approved by Maguire. There is an option of making the second paper a performance or a play.

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<th>First paper</th>
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<tr>
<td>Second paper or performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class contribution</td>
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Course Grade

My office is in the Department of Theatre and Visual Art, room 423F. My office number is 212.636.6306. My email is matthewmaguire108@gmail.com. I have no official summer office hours, but if you email me for an appointment I will be happy to meet with you.

A site where you can look to find plays on and off Broadway:

www.tdf.com