

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: THEATRE

Good writing in the field of Theatre requires the ability to communicate interpretations of theatrical history and dramatic texts. Such writing does not mandate that the student advocate an “authentic” or “correct” interpretation, but the student should be able to support an informed opinion regarding the research and writing of history or to articulate the rationale for the conceptual foundations of performance. Students are to acquire awareness of theatrical and dramatic conventions, knowledge of the historical contexts that produced those conventions, and clear language in which to discuss creative work.

Writing assignments in the field of Theatre cover a broad range of potential topics, including case studies, biographical research, performance critiques, dramaturgical findings, and interpretive analyses required for production. Good writing in all these contexts will have the following features:

1. The writing is clear: there are no leaps of logic or presumed connections between evidence and argument; the language used is reasonably free of jargon; and any essential technical terms are contextualized or explained.
2. The writing is precise: the paper contains few or no “Dirty Dozen” errors and no contextual errors (i.e., “then” for “than”) or misspellings.
3. The writing is concise: regardless of length, the writing contains no unessential cataloguing, listing, or other “filler.” All materials presented are on point and do place primary focus upon theatre.
4. The writing is correct in tone: research is presented with formal (not conversational) constructions, opinions are identified and supported without qualifications (i.e., “in my opinion”).
5. The writing is properly documented: source materials (both print and electronic) are to be cited as directed within the assignment. Within writing enrichment courses, such documentation will usually follow MLA standards.
6. The writing is creative: interpretive and research writing contains more than a listing of evidence or facts. Some assignments may include problem solving in relation to production, determining a solution, not the solution.

Style Guide for Research Papers: MLA

Procedures

Within the Theatre major, THE311 and THE312 (Theatre History and Literature I and II) are designated as writing enrichment courses. The following procedures will apply to these courses.

1. Enrollment will be limited to 15 students.
2. Only full-time faculty will teach these courses so that students may confer with instructors about their writing.
3. Each course will require a minimum of 8 typed, double-spaced, analytical and/or interpretive prose.
4. 20-40% of the final grade will be determined by writing done for the course. The current syllabus requires a research paper and a pragmatic issue project.
5. Students will be allowed to revise their writing within a reasonable period of time.
6. Written work will be assessed according to the attached rubric.

Grading Rubric for THE311/312 Research Papers and Projects

Clarity: There are no leaps of logic or presumed connections between evidence and argument, the language used is reasonably free of jargon, and any essential technical terms are contextualized or explained.

20 18 16 14 12 10 8 6 4 2 0

Precision: There are few or no “Dirty Dozen” errors and no contextual errors (i.e., “then” for “than”).

20 18 16 14 12 10 8 6 4 2 0

Conciseness: There is no unessential cataloguing, listing or other “filler.” All evidence and discussion is on point and places primary focus on theatre.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Tone: Research is presented in formal construction (not conversational), and opinions are identified and supported without qualification (“In my opinion...”).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Documentation: Source materials are cited within the document as per MLA standards.

20 18 16 14 12 10 8 6 4 2 0

Creativity: Discussion extends beyond the listing of facts.

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