

EDISON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE 121S-801
INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE
3 CREDIT HOURS
Fall Semester 2026
Online — Asynchronous

Section/Term	THE 121S-801, Fall 2026
Semester Dates	August 24, 2026–December 12, 2026
Class Meeting Time	Online — Asynchronous
Location	Online — Blackboard Ultra
Required Materials	No textbook purchase is required. A free online theatre text and other readings/viewings will be linked in Blackboard Ultra.
Faculty	William Loudermilk, MA & MA, Full Professor
E-mail	wloudermilk@edisonohio.edu
Faculty Phone/Text	(937) 657-6703
Faculty Office	West Hall, Room 213
Faculty Office Hours	Mondays, 2:00–5:00 p.m. in Room 213 or the Library; Online Sundays, 9:00–11:00 p.m.; other times by appointment.

FACULTY CONTACT

When emailing, please identify yourself and include THE 121S-801 in the subject line. Students are also welcome to call or text the instructor. Individual meetings may be arranged in person or online.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Theatre has been an important way for me to explore both the world around me and myself—as a practitioner and as an avid theatergoer. I have completed extensive academic study in theatre and have directed, performed in, designed for, or otherwise participated in many productions, including numerous shows at Edison State. I also work in the related areas of music, English, and Communication. I look forward to exploring theatre with you this semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Theatre examines theatre as an art form from three broad perspectives: theatre history, theatrical values and criticism, and the work of theatre professionals. The course is designed to help students better understand, appreciate, analyze, and enjoy the diverse elements that make up theatre.

Students are not required to perform in this course. Recommended preparation: HUM 121S.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is fully online and asynchronous. There are no required regularly scheduled class meetings. Students will complete readings, viewings, discussions, quizzes, research, creative projects, production-attendance work, and other activities through Blackboard Ultra.

Because the course is asynchronous, students may complete weekly work at times that fit their schedules as long as they meet posted deadlines. Students should access Blackboard regularly throughout the week rather than waiting until an assignment is due.

Participation is demonstrated through meaningful course activity: reading, viewing, responding, researching, creating, communicating, and submitting work. Simply logging into Blackboard does not constitute significant participation.

BLACKBOARD ULTRA AND THE COURSE CALENDAR

Blackboard Ultra is the official location for current course assignments and due dates. All graded assignments and their due dates will be scheduled in the Blackboard Calendar.

- Blackboard Calendar
- Weekly/Unit folders
- Course announcements
- Edison email
- Blackboard Gradebook

The Blackboard Calendar and Weekly/Unit folders contain the most current assignment information and due dates. The instructor may adjust readings, viewings, assignments, activities, due dates, or the course sequence as needed to accommodate student learning and the particular flow of the semester. Changes will be clearly communicated and reflected in Blackboard.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND READINGS

No textbook purchase is required.

A free online theatre textbook and supplemental readings, videos, production examples, interviews, historical resources, and other materials will be linked through Blackboard Ultra. Students should use the Weekly/Unit folders and Blackboard Calendar as the primary guides to what should be read, viewed, and completed.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Define theatre as a distinct art form and explain how it differs from other arts.
- Identify important features of theatre architecture, staging, acting, directing, production, finance, and social values across historical periods.
- Recognize major playwrights and representative works from theatre history.
- Identify basic features of selected non-Western theatre traditions, including Asian theatre.
- Identify key features of major Western dramatic styles and periods.
- Analyze play scripts and productions from critical perspectives.
- Better understand the crafts of acting and directing as practiced today.
- Identify major theatre personnel and explain their roles in a modern theatrical company.
- Read and view representative plays and productions.
- Write thoughtful critiques of live and recorded theatrical performances.
- Conduct and present theatre-related research.
- Create and present original or design-based theatre projects.
- Explore connections between theatre, culture, values, identity, and everyday life.

AFFECTIVE GOALS

- Analyze personal responses to theatre.
- Predict or explain personal responses to theatrical works based on style, playwright, performer, design, or theme.
- Respect free expression and engage thoughtfully with diverse perspectives and artistic choices.

CORE VALUES

Edison State Core Values include communication, ethics, critical thinking, human diversity, inquiry/respect for learning, and interpersonal skills/teamwork. The goals, assignments, activities, and interactions in this course will reinforce these values when appropriate.

MAIN TOPIC OUTLINE

- Theatre as an art form
- Dramatic structure, genres, and styles
- Play reading and script analysis
- Theatre criticism and evaluation
- Acting
- Directing
- Playwriting
- Design: scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, props, and related elements
- The theatrical company: personnel, organization, production, and finance
- Major historical periods of theatre
- Selected non-Western theatre traditions
- Contemporary and experimental theatre
- Live performance and audience experience
- Theatre research and presentation
- Theatre, culture, identity, ethics, and social values

LARGER QUESTIONS OF THE COURSE

- What makes theatre different from other art forms?
- Why do societies create and attend theatre?
- How do playwrights, actors, directors, designers, technicians, producers, and audiences collaborate to create meaning?
- How does theatre reflect—and sometimes challenge—the values of its culture?
- How do historical styles continue to influence contemporary theatre?
- What makes a theatrical production effective?
- How do our own backgrounds and expectations shape the way we respond to performance?
- What can theatre reveal about identity, community, conflict, ethics, and human behavior?

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Specific directions and due dates will be provided in Blackboard and entered in the Blackboard Calendar. The point structure below reflects the current course design.

Assignment	Points
Introduction to the Instructor Assignment	25
Viewing and Discussion of Production One	50
Weekly Reading/Viewing Assignments, Discussions, Quizzes, and Other Unit Work (14 × 50)	700
Two Play-Attendance Planning/Approval Statements (2 × 50)	100
Short 5–10 Minute Play or Scene	100
Formal Written Review of First Live Production	200
Playbill Project	100
Theatre History or Style Research Presentation	200
Formal Written Review of Second Live Production	300
Costume Project	400
Final Theatre Synthesis Assignment	300
Regular Participation & Course Engagement	200
TOTAL	2675

BLACKBOARD GRADEBOOK

The Blackboard Gradebook will be used to record course grades. Students should review their grades regularly and contact the instructor if they believe an assignment or grade is missing or incorrect.

GRADING SCALE

Percentage	Grade
90–100%	A
80–89%	B
70–79%	C
60–69%	D
Below 60%	F

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

Weekly Reading/Viewing and Unit Assignments — 700 Points

Most weeks will include reading and viewing from the course textbook and supplemental materials, followed by one or more activities such as a discussion, quiz, short written response, research activity, or presentation. These assignments are designed to demonstrate growing knowledge of theatre and critical thinking about the art form.

Optional Midterm or Final Review/Assessment

The instructor may use a brief midterm or final review/assessment if needed. Such an assessment may be waived based on the progress and participation of the class.

Live Production Attendance and Reviews

Students are expected to attend two approved live theatrical productions during the semester and write formal reviews. One production should generally represent a more traditional theatrical approach, while the other should expose the student to a contrasting, contemporary, experimental, or otherwise different theatrical experience.

Before attending, students will submit brief planning/approval statements identifying the production and providing some background research. Students should take detailed notes on the venue, company, theatrical style, design, costumes, scenery, props, lighting, sound or music, casting, acting, directing, audience, and overall effectiveness.

If significant circumstances create a barrier to attending an approved live production, contact the instructor promptly to discuss an appropriate alternative rather than waiting until the end of the semester.

Short 5–10 Minute Play or Scene — 100 Points

Students will write a short original play or scene. The project provides an opportunity to apply course ideas about dramatic structure, character, conflict, dialogue, action, and theatricality.

Playbill Project — 100 Points

Students will create a playbill for an approved production or play. The project will be evaluated for design, clarity, completeness, appropriateness to the production, and thoughtful application of course concepts.

Theatre History or Style Research Presentation — 200 Points

Students will research an approved topic in theatre history, dramatic style, theatrical practice, or a related area and present the results in a visual presentation such as PowerPoint or another approved format. The goal is not simply to collect facts but to explain significance and make meaningful connections.

Costume Project — 400 Points

Students will select a character from a play studied in the course and develop a costume concept using principles of costume design. The project should demonstrate research, character analysis, design choices, and an understanding of how costume contributes to theatrical meaning. Specific options for creating or representing the costume will be explained in Blackboard.

Final Theatre Synthesis Assignment — 300 Points

The final assignment will bring together major ideas from the semester. It may involve analysis, reflection, comparison, criticism, research, or another format announced in Blackboard. Students should demonstrate their growing ability to think and communicate about theatre as both an art form and a cultural practice.

Regular Participation & Course Engagement — 200 Points

Participation points are based on consistent engagement across the semester rather than on a single assignment. Meaningful participation includes working through Weekly/Unit materials, completing readings and viewings, submitting assignments, participating in required interaction, communicating when necessary, and continuing to make progress.

Simply logging into Blackboard does not constitute significant participation. Significant periods of nonparticipation may result in deductions from this category.

IMPORTANT FALL 2026 DATES

Fall Semester runs from August 24 through December 12, 2026. The following dates are especially relevant to students in this full-semester course.

Date	Important Semester Date
August 24	Classes begin — Fall Semester
September 7	Labor Day — No classes day or evening; buildings closed
November 2	Last day to withdraw — Fall Semester
November 11	Veterans Day — No classes day or evening; buildings closed
November 26–29	Thanksgiving — No classes day or evening; buildings closed
December 12	Classes end — Fall Semester

TENTATIVE WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

The following schedule provides the anticipated progression of the course for the August 24–December 12, 2026 semester. It is intentionally tentative. Specific readings, viewings, activities, assignments, and due dates will appear in Blackboard Ultra.

All graded assignments and due dates will be entered in the Blackboard Calendar. The Blackboard Calendar and Weekly/Unit folders supersede this general schedule when assignments or dates are adjusted.

Week	Dates	Tentative Topic / Major Work
Week 1	Aug. 24–30	Introduction to theatre as an art form; course orientation; Introduction Assignment; viewing/discussion of Production One
Week 2	Aug. 31–Sept. 6	Dramatic structure, genre, and theatrical conventions; weekly reading/viewing work
Week 3	Sept. 7–13	Theatre spaces, audiences, and performance traditions; Labor Day Sept. 7
Week 4	Sept. 14–20	Playwriting and dramatic action; first live-production planning/approval; begin short play/scene
Week 5	Sept. 21–27	Playwriting continued; short play/scene due or completed as announced

Week 6	Sept. 28–Oct. 4	Acting: approaches, craft, rehearsal, and performance
Week 7	Oct. 5–11	Directing and interpretation; collaboration and leadership
Week 8	Oct. 12–18	Design and production: scenery, lighting, sound, props, costumes; midterm progress point
Week 9	Oct. 19–25	Theatre criticism and evaluation; First Live Production Review
Week 10	Oct. 26–Nov. 1	Theatre organizations, personnel, production, and finance; Playbill Project
Week 11	Nov. 2–8	Playbill/design work continued; theatre history; withdrawal deadline Nov. 2
Week 12	Nov. 9–15	Theatre history and world traditions; research presentation work; Veterans Day Nov. 11
Week 13	Nov. 16–22	Theatre history/style presentations; second live-production planning/approval
Week 14	Nov. 23–29	Contemporary, experimental, and non-Western theatre; Thanksgiving break Nov. 26–29
Week 15	Nov. 30–Dec. 6	Costume Project; Second Live Production Review; final synthesis preparation
Week 16	Dec. 7–12	Costume Project/Final Theatre Synthesis Assignment; course reflection and wrap-up; semester ends Dec. 12

CLASS POLICIES

Communication Policy

Use the instructor's Edison email for primary course communication. When emailing, identify yourself, include THE 121S-801 in the subject line, and clearly explain your question or concern. Students may also call or text the instructor at (937) 657-6703. If you do not receive a response to an important message, politely follow up.

Response Time

The instructor will normally respond to emails, phone calls, and texts within 24–48 hours. There may be occasional exceptions because of weekends, college responsibilities, travel, illness, or other circumstances. If the matter is important and you have not received a response, politely follow up.

Weekly Participation and Course Engagement

Significant weekly participation is expected. In this asynchronous course, participation includes accessing course materials, completing readings and viewings, turning in assignments, engaging in required online interaction, communicating with the instructor, and making continued progress in the course.

If a life circumstance interferes with your ability to participate, contact the instructor. Participation is important, but it will not be calculated through an automatic one-letter-grade penalty for a single missed week.

LATE WORK AND EXTENSIONS

All students should make a good-faith effort to submit work on time. The instructor reserves the right to not accept excessively late work. However, the primary purpose of the course is learning. Students who communicate and continue making meaningful progress will generally receive reasonable consideration.

24-Hour Emergency Extension

Any student may use a 24-hour emergency extension when needed. You do not need to provide a lengthy explanation for a short emergency extension.

Extensions Longer Than 24 Hours

Extensions beyond 24 hours should be requested through Edison email. Briefly explain what has happened, what work is affected, and your reasonable plan for catching up. Do not assume that all late work will automatically be accepted. At the same time, submit the work even if it is late unless you have specifically been told not to do so.

Late Assignment Grading

Late assignments may not be graded immediately. The instructor regularly checks current assignments first. Late work may sometimes be graded considerably later, particularly near the end of the semester.

MIDTERM PROGRESS EXPECTATION

Students should have work from Weeks 1–8 substantially completed by the end of Week 9. If you are significantly behind at midterm, contact the instructor immediately to develop a realistic plan for catching up. This expectation is intended to prevent early missing work from becoming unmanageable later in the semester.

REVISION AND REDO POLICY

Learning sometimes requires another attempt. Students may generally revise or redo an assignment that earns below a C. A revision should demonstrate meaningful improvement rather than simply correct a few surface errors. Specific revision requirements and deadlines may vary by assignment. The instructor may also permit revisions or additional attempts in other situations when doing so supports student learning.

GRADING TURNAROUND

The instructor will normally grade major assignments within approximately two weeks. Some assignments will be returned sooner. Large grading loads, late submissions, or other circumstances may occasionally extend the grading period.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND SOURCE USE

Edison State expects students to submit work that reflects their own learning and appropriately acknowledges outside sources.

Students must do their own intellectual and creative work. The purpose of THE 121 is to practice reading, viewing, analysis, criticism, research, creative thinking, and communication. A person, website, or AI system should not do that work in place of the student.

Plagiarism and Documentation

Students must acknowledge material that comes from outside sources, including direct quotations, paraphrased ideas, research, websites, videos, production information, images, and AI-generated content when used. Formal research assignments will generally use MLA documentation unless otherwise stated. Direct quotations must be clearly identified and cited; paraphrased information and ideas must also be cited.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence is now part of academic, professional, and everyday life. Learning to use it responsibly is valuable.

You may use AI when it helps you learn, but you may not use AI to avoid the reading, viewing, research, analysis, criticism, or creative work an assignment is designed to develop.

AI should support your learning and creative process rather than replace it.

You Own the Work

You own everything you submit and are responsible for its accuracy, originality, citations, ethical use, and consequences.

If AI provides incorrect information, invented quotations, false citations, inaccurate production information, weak analysis, misleading claims, or biased information, you are responsible for identifying and correcting the problem. Using AI does not transfer responsibility away from the student.

Appropriate Uses of AI

- Brainstorming possible topics or research questions
- Asking for clarification of a theatre concept
- Generating study questions
- Receiving feedback on writing or project ideas you have already developed
- Identifying organizational or grammatical problems
- Exploring possible interpretations that you then independently evaluate
- Generating research terms or search strategies that you then verify
- Helping you revise work that remains fundamentally your own

Inappropriate Uses of AI

- Asking AI to write an assignment, review, script, or presentation and submitting the result as your own
- Using AI instead of completing assigned reading or viewing
- Submitting AI-generated theatre criticism or analysis that you have not independently developed and verified
- Using invented quotations, productions, sources, or citations
- Using AI to fabricate attendance at a live production, observations, research, or creative work
- Using AI in a way that prevents you from demonstrating the learning an assignment is designed to measure

Acknowledge AI Use

If AI meaningfully contributes to an assignment, acknowledge that use. Depending on the assignment, you may be asked to identify the tool used, explain how it was used, cite AI-generated content, include an acknowledgment statement, or describe what you changed, verified, accepted, or rejected.

Human Judgment Stays at the Center

The goal is not to pretend AI does not exist. The goal is to use technology where it helps while keeping human judgment, observation, creativity, analysis, and responsibility at the center of the work. The instructor may ask a student to explain or discuss submitted work when clarification about authorship or understanding is needed.

TURNITIN AND ORIGINALITY

Major written assignments may be submitted through Turnitin. Turnitin may provide textual-similarity information and AI-related indicators.

These tools are indicators and are not substitutes for instructor judgment.

Students should review their work carefully and make sure sources are acknowledged, quotations are appropriately integrated, paraphrases are genuinely rewritten, submitted work reflects their own thinking and creative choices, and AI or other assistance is acknowledged when required.

ASSIGNMENT QUALITY

Written, recorded, visual, and creative responses should be clear, thoughtful, specific, engaging, and appropriate to the assignment. Theatre criticism and analysis should move beyond simple summary or statements of like/dislike. Explain what the production or text is doing, how it is doing it, and why those choices matter.

ONLINE INTERACTION AND COMMUNITY

Some assignments may ask students to interact with classmates. Effective online interaction may include making and supporting an interpretation, connecting theatre to history or culture, agreeing or disagreeing and explaining why, asking a genuine question, adding evidence, reporting what a credible source says, or building upon another student's idea.

Avoid responses that merely say "I agree," "Good point," "Great post," or "I like this." The goal is meaningful intellectual interaction.

Civility

Students should communicate politely and professionally. Disagreement is welcome. Disrespect is not. Written online communication can sometimes sound harsher than intended, so read messages before sending them and work to communicate clearly and respectfully.

PROFESSIONALISM

Treat this course professionally, as you would a valued job or creative collaboration.

- Reading directions
- Meeting deadlines when possible
- Communicating when problems arise
- Treating others respectfully
- Asking questions
- Taking responsibility for your work
- Participating consistently
- Continuing to move forward when you encounter difficulty

Do not confuse professionalism with perfectionism.

Students will make mistakes. The goal is to learn, communicate, revise when appropriate, and continue making progress.

COURSE CHANGES

Changes may be made to accommodate student learning and the particular needs and flow of the course.

The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to readings, viewings, assignments, activities, due dates, course sequence, points, or other syllabus provisions. Changes will be clearly announced in Blackboard. The Blackboard Calendar and Weekly/Unit folders will be updated when changes affect assignments or due dates.

INCOMPLETES

An Incomplete may be considered when extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control prevent completion of the course and the student otherwise meets Edison State requirements for an Incomplete. An Incomplete is not automatic. The student and instructor must complete the required Edison State Incomplete process, identifying the work that remains and the deadline for completing it.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Edison State Community College will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who believe they may need a formal accommodation should contact the instructor privately and work with Accessibility and Disability Support Services.

Accessibility and Disability Support Services — Piqua Campus, Room 160 — Phone: 937-778-8600

Ask when you need help.

TESTING YOUR FAITH ACT POLICY

Edison State Community College is committed to providing an environment respectful of students' beliefs. Students are permitted to be absent for up to three days each semester based on their faith, religion, or spiritual belief system without academic penalty. Students seeking this accommodation must complete the Testing Your Faith Act Accommodations Form and provide a copy to their individual faculty within 14 days from the start of the course. Students should consult Edison State Registration and Records and the Student Handbook for the complete policy and current form.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For problems involving the directions or requirements of a particular Blackboard assignment, contact the instructor first.

During Business Hours

- Use the password-reset options available through Microsoft Office when appropriate.
- Email support@edisonohio.edu.
- Call 937-778-8600 and ask for the IT Help Desk.

After Hours

- Use available Microsoft password-reset tools.
- Go to the Edison State website, select the Resources area, choose IT Help Desk, and use Chat.
- Call 937-778-7957 for after-hours Blackboard assistance.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Advising Services

Career pathway advisors can help students identify an appropriate academic major, determine required courses, develop an academic plan, and navigate college requirements. Advisor information is available through MyESCC → Student Planning → Plan and Schedule → Advising. Phone: 937-778-7850.

Career and Job Services

Career and Job Services provides assistance with career exploration, résumés, cover letters, job searches, interviewing, and professional development.

Computers

Computers with Internet access are available on campus. The Library and Tutoring Center also provide access to computers and printers.

Health and Wellness Services

Edison State provides student health and wellness resources and can help connect students with appropriate campus and community support. See the current Student Resources or Student Wellness information on the Edison State website for current services and contact information.

Library Services

Students are encouraged to use the Edison State Library and OhioLINK. Library staff can help with finding sources, databases, research strategies, evaluating sources, and citation questions. Email: library@edisonohio.edu. Phone: 937-778-7950.

Mental Health Services and CARE Team

College can be stressful. Students who need support are encouraged to seek assistance. The instructor can help connect students with appropriate Edison State resources, including the CARE Team.

Student Resource Center and Charger Station Food Pantries

Edison State provides assistance with basic necessities through Student Resource Centers, food pantries, and Charger Stations.

Title IX — Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

Edison State is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Students should consult current Edison State Title IX materials for procedures and contact information.

Tutoring Services

Free tutoring and learning support are available through the Edison State Tutoring Center. Services may include in-person tutoring, online tutoring, paper review, study assistance, and academic resources. Email: tutoringcenter@edisonohio.edu. Phone: 937-778-7959.

Additional Support Services

For additional assistance, consult the ASSIST tab in Blackboard or the Edison State Student Resources materials provided in the course.

FINAL NOTE FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

Theatre is not simply something that happens on a stage. It is a way human beings tell stories, test values, imagine other lives, and understand communities. My goal is that you leave this course knowing more about theatre—but also watching more carefully, thinking more critically, recognizing artistic choices, and becoming more confident in explaining why a performance affects you the way it does.