

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum: 2019

Department/Program: Theatre Department

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)
- a. To serve the University as a Fine Arts Core requirement:
 - i. Description of University Arts Core: (<http://www.bc.edu/sites/core/requirements/arts.html>)

"The need to make, experience, and comprehend art has been one of the essential, defining human activities since history began. The arts are thus integral to human experience and expression, the development of critical interpretive skills, an understanding of creative processes, and the fostering of imagination and empathy. The critically engaged practice of the arts, arrived at through rigorous training, uniquely nurtures creativity and innovation. Anchored in experimentation and creative problem-solving, the arts challenge students to make connections across traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Three credits of coursework in art history, studio art, film, music or theater are required and will address some combination of the following criteria: students will acquire a greater understanding of the technical skills required to create works of art; students will gain knowledge of the aesthetic questions raised by works of art; and students will understand the historical contexts in which such works were created. As a result, students will be able to engage meaningfully with art through creative work and/or to articulate their understanding of art in oral and written expression."
 - b. Departmental goals for Theatre Core courses:
 - i. To inform students about the value and nature of theatre in and of itself in the hope that they will be able to enjoy theatre in the future; it is also to encourage them as playgoers and future supporters of the arts in general.
 - ii. To learn to approach variety of types of plays from a theatre perspective analytically, introduce students to the fundamentals of theatre practice, all with an eye toward providing a foundation upon which more advanced theatre classes can be built.
 - iii. To build an audience for our own Theatre Department productions via Intro student attendance at our productions.
 - iv. To encourage non-theatre students to take additional theatre courses here, perhaps even consider pursuing theatre as a major or minor.
- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

www.bc.edu/core for university goals

These Core Theatre Department outcomes are not published but the overall learning outcomes are published at <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/theatre/about/learning-outcomes.html>

Learning Outcomes:

A graduating Boston College Theatre major will be able to:

- analyze dramatic texts, theatrical events, and experimental forms with critical intelligence;
- articulate an understanding of the role of theater in culture and society and how each shapes the other over time;
- collaborate with others and solve problems in the planning and production of theatrical events;
- exhibit creativity and imagination in making theater—in attitude, process, and ability;
- demonstrate proficiency in one or more of the following disciplines: acting, directing, design, playwriting, stage management, and technical production.

3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

The survey, which has been consistent from year to year, will be sent next year. [See Addendum A on page 4 for the 2018 results].

Course evaluations from this this academic year were used to as insight into students learning. Taking their comments verbatim from the forms, it demonstrates that they are achieving the learning outcomes we intended. Here are some selected comments from the course evaluations spanning all sections.

- “The strengths of this course are the collaborative nature of the projects. Practicing theater in the different roles, director, acting, producing, made this class interesting.”
- “This course opens up your eyes to a subject matter I honestly would have never thought much about. I took this course on advisement of my cousin Aaron Tveit, who is a famous Broadway/movie actor. His brother, Jon, went to BC and said he loved his theater, and honestly I’m not disappointed. I actually loved attending class and learning.”
- “The course teaches a broad understanding of the history and development of the theatre while applying this to a variety of interesting plays.”
- “The exposure to different cultures and social norms throughout history that influenced theater over the years worked well.”
- “The assignment where we had to write a critique and attend a theater production→ found how much I loved it and ended going to all the theater productions during the semester.”
- “She taught us how theater truly touches all academic disciplines. She did not shy away from things that can be controversial topics at BC like race.”
- “I really liked exploring the historical, cultural, and social background behind important plays. I also really enjoyed learning about the process of writing, directing, producing, and designing plays. I also enjoyed when we watched performances because it was helpful to see the scripts we read acted out. It was great to learn about all of the aspects that go into a production, and I have a greater appreciation for theatre now than I did before.”
- “It can cultivate student how to appreciate the world.”
- “I took it for an arts core, but really enjoyed the plays we read and watched. It changed the way I watch things and analysis performances now.”
- “It teaches you to be creative and to think outside the box. It makes you look at art in a unique manner.”
- “This course covered an overview of many theatre concepts and allowed me to see how the different components work together to create productions. It was also very good at getting us to get out of our

comfort zones and do some acting and writing. It was a fun, challenging, socially conscious, and interesting class!”

- “This course did a good job of connecting theater to things I was interested in ex. my major/future profession. Seeing different types of theater (democratic, guerilla, etc.) was also very interesting.”
- “Students will learn the very interesting history behind many of the plays that shaped our cultural background.”
- “Students will learn how look beyond the words written and analyze what they mean and how the history shaped a character's actions/thoughts/ and feelings.”

4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Chairperson and the Assistant Chairperson will evaluate the data at the end of the academic year. If changes are warranted, they will be discussed with all of the teachers of the core courses at the beginning of the academic year or earlier if necessary.

It is the consensus of the Chair, Crystal Tiala, and the Assistant Chair, Luke Jorgensen, that these are very positive results. We are not recommending changes at the current time.

Scott Cummings, Luke Jorgensen, Patricia Riggan and Crystal Tiala have all taught core pilot courses in the past but there are no plans at this time to teach another one. Megan Stahl, one of our part time teachers, had a proposal that was accepted for development for a Theater Core course within the new initiative, Difference, Justice, and the Common Good. Her course is called “Performing the Immigrant Experience” and it will be rolled out in the Spring, 2020.

These results will be shared with all teachers of the core in Theater and their feedback will be encouraged.

5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

I encouraged my faculty to submit proposals to the DJCG initiative. Two part time faculty did and one was accepted. We will continue to monitor the outcomes and observe the progress of the core before determining any new directions. If the DJCG initiatives work well, then we can get more faculty involved. We did hire three new part time faculty, two who will not be returning because they received employment elsewhere. We are also working on creating a consistency in grading between all the sections.

6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

2013 was the most recent date for the Theatre Department comprehensive self-study and external review. We will review our program at the departmental level on an annual basis.

Addendum A

Survey results from 2018. The questions address the core objectives for the arts. There were 117 total responses from students for the Spring semester.

Responses:

The core class they enrolled in:

- Introduction to Theater: 97.2%
- Elements of Dance: 2.8%

Were you exposed to the art form of Theatre and the methods with which it is created?

- Definitely 92.2% (85.6% in 2017)
- Somewhat 7.1%
- Not at all 0.7%

Are you able to discern how theatre has been used through history to both teach and entertain its audience?

- Definitely 85.8% (80.7% in 2017)
- Somewhat 14.2%
- Not at all 0 %

Do you think that you are now able to have an intelligent discussion about theater and its practice?

- Definitely 61.7% (56.6% in 2017)
- Somewhat 36.2%
- Not at all 2.1%

Have found any connection between the Theater Core course and other disciplines on campus?

- Definitely 49.6% (46.3% in 2017)
- Somewhat 39.7%
- Not at all 10.6%

Do you feel your theater study has enhanced your awareness of the human experience?

- Definitely 50.4% (44.9% in 2017)
- Somewhat 40.4%
- Not at all 9.2%

Were you introduced to new concepts and methods of artistic expression through exposure to theater and theatrical practice?

- Definitely 78.0% (77.5 in 2017)
- Somewhat 19.9%
- Not at all 2.1%

Do you feel you better understand how quality theater is produced?

- Definitely 84.4% (76.7% in 2017)
- Somewhat 12.8%
- Not at all 2.8%

Do you feel your theater study has enhanced your awareness of your own culture and other cultures unlike your own?

- Definitely 50.4% (48.3% in 2017)
- Somewhat 41.1%
- Not at all 8.5%

Are you more likely now to see a play than before you took this class?

- Definitely 58.9% (53.8% in 2017)
- Somewhat 29.1%
- Not at all 12.1%

Do you feel you have gained new skills that help you creatively solve problems?

- Definitely 34.8% (27.7% in 2017)
- Somewhat 42.6%
- Not at all 22.7%

Would you have taken this course if it did not fulfill the Core requirement? (new question)

- yes 13.5% (15.1% in 2017)
- maybe 34.8%
- no 51.8%

How do you feel about what you have learned in this course? (new question)

- Very satisfied 67.3% (60.9% in 2017)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 27.7%
- Dissatisfied 5%