**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number: TH 130 – THE THEATRE EXPERIENCE**

**Home Department: Communication and Performance Studies (CAPS)**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Dr. James Cantrill (227-2061, jcantril@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course**: Every semester (including summer online)

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? **YES**

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

*Course Content*

The goal of TH130 is to enhance each student’s cultural aesthetic through a survey of the theatre arts. Theater is a collaborative art which includes elements of literature, language, dance, music and design. TH 130 effectively serves as an introduction to human expression on many levels and for a broad range of educational/ professional goals. In the end, we want students to (a) develop and recognize their own artistic aesthetic, by demonstrating the ability to critically analyze plays and other forms of theatrical entertainment, (b) identify and define the separate components of the collaborative process of live theatre, and (c) Identify historical periods, styles, and forms of drama, from theatre’s origins to modern times.

Component Learning Outcomes:

A. Critical Thinking: To satisfy the *Evidence* learning outcome dimension, TH 130 requires students to utilize information from text readings, in-class and/ or online lecture/media presentations, and viewing of live theatrical events to critically evaluate and appreciated aesthetics of the theatre arts.

B. Human Expression: To satisfy the *Knowledge of the role of the aesthetic* learning outcome dimension, TH 130 requires students to deeply explore their own experiences with human expression through performance art. Students are encouraged, as Shakespeare wrote “to hold as ‘twere the mirror up to nature” (*Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2), in order to develop intelligent, and at times contradictory arguments on experiences dealing with the human condition.

*Target Audience*

TH 130, The Theater Experience, has traditionally attracted students across the university spectrum from incoming freshman to graduating seniors in all majors. Student feedback on the course has been very positive. TH 130 has proven to be a very popular course in the existing Liberal Studies sequence, providing a fresh perspective on human experience to many students who have (mixed or wide-ranging backgrounds in the arts.

*Institutional Role*

TH 130 has provided a great service to the general population of NMU students by helping them recognize the importance of art in university and world culture. TH 130 has also been taught very successfully in the online format, which has allowed students from remote locations to gain knowledge of the subject. TH 130 is a required core class in the Theatre Arts and Entertainment major. We currently teach 4 to 5 sections of TH 130 each year, with a cap of 35 in each section. TH 130 has served as an excellent recruitment tool for the Theater major over the years and numerous students have elected to enroll in additional theatre courses because of their exposure to the subject.

*Additional Considerations*

The success of TH 130 is also due to the wide range of pedagogical approaches to the course. Each semester at least two professors teach separate sections of TH130. While professors adopt the same objectives and outcomes, the individual approaches allow for a variety of fresh perspectives. Professors also guest lecture in each other’s sections, in order to focus on specific topics in their area of expertise. It should also be noted that TH 130 has never had a problem “making” enrollment caps, and we regularly offer additional sections to meet student demand.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | ***Task Type:*** Examinations, quizzes, written critical reviews, and written tests, student forums, world theater subject essay.***Frequency:*** *Bi-weekly Quizzes and* Exams, Critical essays at least twice a semester.***Overall Grading weight****:* Exams 30%, Reviews 10%.***Expected Proficiency Rate:*** Because TH130 attracts students from across the university spectrum, including many of those carrying probationary status, it is not unreasonable to assume that up to 15% of enrollees will fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency. Based on twelve year of course statistics, our proficiency expectation is set at 85%. ***Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*:** Instructors will measure the extent of knowledge attained thru lecture, in-class discussion, and quality of written work, based on students responses to arguments over materials presented. Early examination and assignments are topic exclusive and focus on theatrical form, drama, and production elements. Later assignments require a broader comprehension of theater as a social tool engaging the theater artists and the audience. These assignments often require online research or production attendance, and connect what the student is learning to actual theater performance and the diverse international theater scene. The students are also assessed on their participation with others on these subjects. Students are required to participate in discussion and/ or forums, and to engage in, or to observe online theater communication exercises.  |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | ***Task Type:*** Examinations, quizzes, written critical reviews, and written tests, student forums, world theater subject essay.***Frequency:*** *Bi-weekly Quizzes and* Exams, Critical essays at least twice a semester.***Overall Grading weight****:* Exams 30%, Reviews 10%.***Expected Proficiency Rate:*** Because TH130 attracts students from across the university spectrum, including many of those carrying probationary status, it is not unreasonable to assume that up to 15% of enrollees will fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency. Based on twelve year of course statistics, our proficiency expectation is set at 85%. ***Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*:** Instructors will evaluate insight and reasoning by assessing the quality of student’s arguments in-class and in online forums and essays. The old adage “everyone’s a critic” may seem obvious here, but it is pertinent. Students have strong opinions about what constitutes quality theater, and quality art in general. It is an important goal in this class to challenge some of these strong opinions and provide generally shared standards for aesthetic appreciation. The forums challenge students to compare others’ experiences and ideas about various subjects to their own. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | ***Task Type:*** Examinations, quizzes, written critical reviews, and written tests, student forums, world theater subject essay.***Frequency:*** *Bi-weekly Quizzes and* Exams, Critical essays at least twice a semester.***Overall Grading weight****:* Exams 30%, Reviews 10%.***Expected Proficiency Rate:*** Because TH130 attracts students from across the university spectrum, including many of those carrying probationary status, it is not unreasonable to assume that up to 15% of enrollees will fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency. Based on twelve year of course statistics, our proficiency expectation is set at 85%. ***Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*:** Instructors will determine the extent of information retained by individual students through the use of scoring rubrics from exams, quizzes and written work. All assignments are intended to challenge the student to do more than regurgitate factual information. Quizzes and tests require students to examine various aspects of the evidence and make informed decisions regarding a particular arts effort or social experience. Students must then also compare those experiences to their own sense of human expression. Example: Students often discover through the section on Costumes that they make conscious social, aesthetic, political and public statements with their choices of a shirt or a haircut. Clothing is always costuming. Similarly, when the course discusses stage movement, the discussion includes individual body position, posture, and interpersonal space in social situation. These simple realizations enhance students’ ability to analyze what a group of theater artists are attempting and their relative success. It is challenging to provide students with tools they need to assess the impact of certain behaviors. Theater is a great platform from which to engage many aspects of human experience and inter-communication, especially on levels that are not literal or limited.   |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES
HUMAN EXPRESSION**

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Knowledge of the role of the aesthetic** | Demonstrate comprehension of the role of aesthetic in the human experience including artistic, literary, and rhetorical expression. | ***Task Type:*** Examinations, quizzes, written critical reviews, and written tests, student forums, world theater subject essay.***Frequency:*** *Bi-weekly Quizzes and* Exams, Critical essays at least twice a semester.***Overall Grading weight****:* Exams 20%, Reviews 10%.***Expected Proficiency Rate:*** Because TH130 attracts students from across the university spectrum, including many of those carrying probationary status, it is not unreasonable to assume that up to 10% of enrollees will fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency. Thus, our proficiency expectation is set at 85%.***Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*:** Theater is resolutely about the human experience, the social issues which govern our lives, and the artistic expression of those experiences. Students learn in TH 130 that for at least 3000 years civilizations have created, through artistic expression, performances which publicly examine the human condition. The reason theater continues to exist is, first and foremost, it reminds us all what it is to be human. Through the theatrical venue, we review the ongoing evolution of human emotions and behavioral codes. All assignments in this course assess the students’ ability to analyze their personal aesthetic to art in relation to human action and interaction. In TH 130 students learn how humanity has, in every historical culture, employed storytelling shared between the performer(s) and an audience in a social setting established for this purpose. This is a crucial aspect of the students’ understanding of the theater experience and his/ her own existence in a community. |
| **Innovative Thinking** | Create or adapt activities, ideas, or questions expressing both creativity and experience | ***Task Type:*** Examinations, quizzes, written critical reviews, and written tests, student forums, world theater subject essay.***Frequency:*** *Bi-weekly Quizzes and* Exams, Critical essays at least twice a semester.***Overall Grading weight****:* Exams 30%, Reviews 10%.***Expected Proficiency Rate:*** Because TH130 attracts students from across the university spectrum, including many of those carrying probationary status, it is not unreasonable to assume that up to 15% of enrollees will fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency. Based on twelve year of course statistics, our proficiency expectation is set at 85%. ***Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*:** In the TH 130 course, students are required to write two comparative essays, one describing an American theater tour and the other describing an international theater tour. For their U.S. tour they must “attend” (via online media) an American Shakespeare festival and 3 other theater companies in various parts of the country and with contrasting mission statements. For the international tour they must travel to 5 continents and “attend” 5 theaters which the students feels reflect regional or social perspectives. Students are also required to write two critical theatrical reviews of 2 live performances produced by NMU’s Forest Roberts Theatre or another approved theater.  |
| **Acknowledging contradictions** | Integrates alternate interpretations or contradictory perspectives or ideas. | ***Task Type:*** Examinations, quizzes, written critical reviews, and written tests, student forums, world theater subject essay.***Overall Grading weight****:* Exams 30%, Reviews 10%.***Expected Proficiency Rate:*** Because TH130 attracts students from across the university spectrum, including many of those carrying probationary status, it is not unreasonable to assume that up to 15% of enrollees will fail to achieve expected levels of proficiency. Based on twelve year of course statistics, our proficiency expectation is set at 85%. ***Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*:** This dimension goes directly to the heart of personal human expression and artistic quality judgments. Students are challenged to defend their own personal tastes based on attained experience and knowledge. Lecture materials cover the wide range of human expression in the theater arts from the Golden Age of the Greeks and the establishment of tragedy to the current Tony Award winners and the business of Broadway. Through this panoply of performance art, students gain the courage to stand up for their convictions based on analysis of human artistic expression. As the students explore the various periods of acting and the various “golden ages” of England, Greece and America, they are also exploring the evolution of the human condition. There will always be disagreement on content and style of presentation. In this survey class we view different approaches, but class and forum discussions will encourage the consideration of a broad scope of artistic expression, not discouraging disagreement, but rather, encouraging more open, less negative engagement with others’ ideas and perspectives. |

**Sample Essay Questions from Tests:**

**On Theater Environments**. This week you've been shown many different types of stages.  You've viewed excerpts from one of Shakespeare's comedies, a Disney musical, an improvised street theater performance, and a 20th century realistic play.  Based on what you've seen, which theater space do you think presents the most exciting environment for a theater experience? Why?

**On Directing.** In 2010 Michael Grandage received a Tony Award for his directing of Red on Broadway with Alfred Molina and Eddie Redmayne. Investigate this brilliant production online. I've supplied at least one site where you can view a short documentary on the play and its director in your support materials.  In a paragraph, answer the following.  First, is Grandage’s production of Red realistic or non-realistic? If you view the piece provided this should be very clear. What details either suggest that the characters are not living in an "observable reality," or that they actually are living and working in a real world? Please provide detail which defends your view. Second, according to the interview with Grandage, what does he want from the audience?  Be specific.

**On Contemporary Playwriting.**  Explore the *Playbill* site. You’ll find a number of new plays on their way to professional stages all over the United States. Select one play that with an “Opening Night” date in 2015 and in a short paragraph, defend it as a good pick for a producer. Please include the play’s genre, the playwright’s name, and any pertinent information that supports your opinion on the play’s likely success. Finally, would this play be successful at NMU? Why or why not?

**Virtual World Theater Tour Essay Guidelines**. **I hope you viewed all the recommended sites in this week’s support materials, but art is never meant to be “viewed and spewed.” The impact of a play production is much more than your recitation of how many characters were in the cast or the color of the protagonist's costume.  What I value is how you responded emotionally and intellectually to the *play’s voice, and this distinct expression of the human experience.* What surprised you?  What had you never seen before?  According to Samuel Beckett (playwright, Waiting for Godot), theater "is based on impact, not argument."**

Pretend you’re taking a world theater tour. Using the sites I’ve listed and/ or others that you find, please journal your experience. Be sure that you “attend,” …

**1. 4 different shows**, 4 **different styles,** in 4 countries, **on 4 different continents.**

**2. No opera or ballet. Theater pieces or musical theater pieces only. NO American plays or musicals.**

**3. Provide 2 online resources for each show.**

 Paragraph 1. In your first paragraph, and based on the information included in the lectures, describe what you expect the theaters you’re "attending" will have in common.  Use at least 3 examples from the sites I included in this week's materials. Then state which 4 cities you will be visiting.

Paragraph 2 – 5.  Explore theater across the continents.  Be sure you follow the following guidelines:

Paragraph 6.  Sum up your experience.  In your closing paragraph please provide your overall response to theater across the world.

**TH 130 – The Theatre Experience Course Syllabus and Schedule**

**Reading/ Drama -** Materials will be assigned the week of the related topic. The following play titles will be among the materials we'll discuss. You won't need to read all the plays for our discussions, but you should familiarize yourself with the plot and characters through an online synopsis and character description.

* The Theatre Experience. Edwin Wilson
* Oedipus the King by Sophocles. (Available at <http://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_sophocles_oedipus_king.html> )
* Antigone by Euripedes. (Available at <http://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_sophocles_antigone.html> )
* Hamlet by William Shakespeare (online at [www.william-shakespeare.info/script-text-macbeth.htm](http://www.william-shakespeare.info/script-text-macbeth.htm) or [shakespeare.mit.edu/](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/)
* Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare (online at <http://www.william-shakespeare.info/script-text-twelfth-night.htm>)
* All My Sons by Arthur Miller (online synopsis available various sites, including <http://plays.about.com/lr/all_my_sons/377251/2/>)
* God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza.
* Other playscripts, as needed.
* There will be weekly readings pertaining to the topics.

**Instructor Expectations**

The information below provides you with what you can expect from me as the instructor of this course:

In this course I will offer a lecture series on theater subjects, which will align with a manageable amount of online reading and online investigation of theater production and performance. Weekly viewing assignments will complement the subjects discussed. The ongoing theater forum for this course will give you the opportunity to hear others' ideas on these subjects and to contribute regularly. I am interested in all your comments and will try to participate in side discussions, but will grade only the assigned course forums.

**Student Expectations**

As a student in this course, you will be expected to complete all assignments and quizzes on time and to participate in the forums. For a class that meets together at regular meeting times and in a traditional classroom, an instructor may chose a regulated schedule and classroom atmosphere or keep it loose and relaxed and let the students establish the general code of behavior.

In an online course, when and where we share information and ideas is up to each individual. I would like to make a few suggestions as to online etiquette.

* In this course, for all essays and forum entries, please use English and employ traditional grammar. In other words, no text speak. Yes, for this course, I'll expect LOL to be fully written out, which hopefully will eliminate the phrase from our forums.
* Be respectful of others' ideas and comments. You are each entitled to your opinions on Kabuki theater and Hamlet, what "funny" means, gender-blind casting and any other subject we may discuss. I encourage honesty in discussions, but please communicate with me if you feel someone is being rude. I hope you will feel free to state your opinions. I will expect you to be respectful of others' opinions. To that end, please limit your views to discussions of the material.
* There's language and there's "language." Think before you write. If it could be offensive to anyone, it will be offensive to someone.

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to introduce students to the theater as an art and as a social tool within all human cultures. In this course we will investigate the origin of theater, the impulse which continues to create theater, dramatic literature, and theater production elements. We will also compare this entertainment form to other similar forms, and explore its place in contemporary society. Through online lectures, discussion forums, filmed performances, exercises, and the assigned reading, the class will investigate the basics of dramatic and theatrical form.

NOTE:  This is an introductory level course on an arts subject.  I will not require you to memorize the substructure of Strindberg's plays or analyze the varied versification in Shakespeare's tragedies.  On the other hand, the course is set up to challenge you as you are ready to be challenged, and I will happily add additional material to anyone who finds a subject, playwright, or historical period they wish to explore further.

Course Objectives:

1. Identify and define the separate components of the collaborative process in the creation of live theater.
2. Develop and recognize their own artistic aesthetic, and demonstrate the ability o citically analyze plays and other forms of theatrical entertainment.
3. Identify historical period, styles, and forms of drama, from 5th century Greece to Contemporary Theater.
4. Ability to analyze and apply dramatic structure, its several parts and how each part works within the whole to accomplish the purpose of the playwright.
5. Ability to describe the six different elements of theater production.
6. Ability to describe the historical movements of acting.
7. Ability to describe the major historical periods of Theater Arts and their different styles in acting and production.
8. Ability to define the purpose and general characteristics of Tragedy.
9. Ability to define the purpose and general characteristics of Comedy.
10. A comprehension about contemporary theater arts and a fundamental understanding of the Global picture in contemporary Theater Arts.
11. After this course a student should be able to describe the types of theater s/he prefers and why, and the types of theater that are most successful in the USA, and why these forms are popular.

Lectures - General Information

This course provides a lecture series designed to introduce students to the theater experience. Students must take responsibility for viewing the lectures. There are between 1 and 4 lectures each week. They vary in length.

The lectures should be accessible to all students. When possible I'll post the unvoiced Power Point notes or a lecture summation for each lecture. You may not need this additional resource but students have found it sometimes helpful for preparing for the quizzes.

Grading Rationale

1. Discussion forums (5 points total)
2. Weekly Quizzes, including 2 Essay Responses. (3 to 12 points each, 95 points total)
3. The following grading scale will be employed in this course:

95 - 100   A

91 - 94     A-

88 - 90     B+

84 - 87     B

81 - 83     B-

78 - 80    C+

74 - 77     C

71 - 73     C-

68 - 70     D+

64 - 67     D

58 - 63     D-

57 - 01     F

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1:  January 11 - 17**

**Topic 1:  The Idea of Theater**

* Please Read:  Brief Course Overview
* Lecture - "The Idea of Theater"
* Lecture - "The Audience"
* Support materials – Please view all.
* Introduction Forum
* Quiz 1

 **Week 2:  January 18 - 24**

**Topic 2:  Stage Spaces**

* Lecture - "Stage Spaces: Form and Function"
* Lecture - "Stage Spaces: The Contemporary Theater"
* Support Materials
* Quiz 2

 **Week 3:  January 25 - 31**

**Topic 3:  Actors - And how they got that way**

* Lecture - "The Fundamentals of Acting"
* Lecture - "The Heritage of the Contemporary Actor"
* Support Materials
* Stage Savvy #2
* Note:  NO quiz.

 **Week 4;  February 01 - 07**

**Topic 4: Contemporary Actors and Acting Style**

* Lecture - "The Contemporary Acting Approach"
* Lecture  - "Contemporary Actor Training"
* Lecture  - "Acting Styles"
* Support Materials
* Stage Savvy #3
* Quiz 3

**Week 5:  February 08 - 14**

**Topic 5:  Drama 1: Tragedy and Serious Forms**

* Lecture – “Drama: Form and Function”
* Lecture - "Tragedy"
* Investigate classical tragedies, Oedipus the King (Sophocles) and Hamlet (Shakespeare)
* Investigate other serious dramatic forms
* Support Materials
* Quiz 4

**Week 6:  February 15 - 21**

**Topic 6:  Drama 2 – Comedy and Related Forms**

* Lecture - "The Precepts of Comedy"
* Lecture - "The Comedic Genre"
* Lecture - "The Audience and Our Relationship to Comedy"
* Investigate Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare
* Investigate contemporary Comedy
* Support Materials
* Quiz 5

**Week 7:  February 22 - 27**

**Topic** **7:  Directing for the Stage**

* Lecture  - "Directing for the Stage"
* Lecture - "Theater Organization: Producing & Theater Management"
* Support Materials
* Quiz 6

**February 28 - March - 07      Spring Break - No assignments.**

**Week 8: March 08 - 14**

**Topic 8:  Theater Production – Set, Lighting, Props and Sound**

* Lecture  - "Technical Theater Production"
* Support Materials
* Online Tech Exploration
* Quiz 7

**Week 9:  March 15 - 21**

**Topic 9:  Contemporary American Theater**

Lecture - "Contemporary American Theater and Diversity"

* Lecture on the American Theater scene
* Investigate Angels in America  and other contemporary works
* Production and popular theater in USA
* Support Materials
* Quiz 8

**Week 10:  March 22 - March 28**

**Topic 10:  Stage Costumes**

* Lecture - "Costumes for the Theater - Lecture 1"
* Lecture – "Costumes for the Theater - Lecture 2"
* Support Materials
* Quiz 9/ Essay 1 - Virtual American Theater Tour
* Quiz 10

**Week 11:  March 29 - April 4**

**Topic 11: Shakespeare Overview**

* Lecture - "You ARE Hamlet”    Why can we not leave that poor melancholy Dane alone?
* Experiencing the plays, the actors, the ideas in Shakespeare’s works
* While we're talking the greatest of all playwrights ...Playwriting
* Support Materials
* Quiz 11

**Week 12:  April 05 - 11**

**Topic 12:  Musical Theater**

* Lecture - "The History and Development of Musical Theater"
* Lecture - "Contemporary Musical Theater"
* Support Materials
* Quiz 12

**Week 13:  April 12 - 18**

**Topic 13:  World Theater**

* Lecture: "World Theater"
* Support Materials
* Quiz 13

**Week 14:  April 19 - 25**

**Topic 14 :  Theater in Our Lives**

* Lecture  - "The Now and Future Theater"
* Lecture - "Theater as Part of Our Lives"
* Your relationship and involvement with the arts
* Support Materials
* Final Quiz/ Essay 2 - Virtual World Theater Tour