No Exit

On trust and assessment in Theater Arts
L'enfer, c'est les autres
INEZ: Once and for all. SO here we are, forever. [Laughs.]


GARCIN: [Looks in the two women, and joins in the laughter] For ever, and ever, and ever.

[They slump onto their respective sofas. A long silence. The laughter dies away and they gaze at each other.]

GARCIN: Well well, let’s get on with it …
- design discipline-specific, multidimensional learning outcomes
- implement our assessments in an intelligent and practical manner
- use the findings to improve our program for our students’ benefit
Theater Arts Department

Dance

Design

Drama
Theater Arts Department
Program Learning Outcomes

2. Theatrical histories and theories.
3. Performance experience.
4. Research proficiency.
5. Creative practice.
6. Appreciation of diversity.
7. Communication and critical thinking.
8. Collaborative skills.
Students should be able to identify and apply basic theatrical concepts in dance, design, and drama.

PLO 2. Theatrical histories and theories.
Students should be able to recognize and analyze performance works within the general culture and historical period that produced them.

PLO 3. Performance experience.
Students should be able to translate theater arts tools and techniques into performance, participating in any theatrical endeavor with the rigor, discipline, and imagination necessary to make a meaningful contribution.

PLO 6. Appreciation of diversity.
Students should be able to recognize and appreciate a wide variety of approaches, cultures, and styles in both past and contemporary performance practice.
On a desert island with a group of 17-21-year-olds looking to get a BA degree in Theater Arts, what would you, left to your best imagination, like for them to have been exposed to before they graduate? This isn't anything you yourself would necessarily teach (you could bring in experts), but only what you would want them to have encountered in the course of the major.

Please submit specific wishes: play titles, names of authors, artists, groups, specific performance genres, or performances.

If you believe there should be a priority in the order of introduction, please indicate that (i.e., this should be taught before that, or, this list is in order).

The list will not be collated and will not be anonymous: It's a chance to simply see what individual faculty members would dream up.

Results to be discussed, jettisoned, argued over, admired, whatever we decide, but in no way will be a binding contract and will never prescribe or proscribe anything. The exercise should be generative, imaginative, and quite probably will wind up a bit eccentric.
Task: create multiple choice, true or false, and/or fill in blank questions with an unequivocal correct answer.

Constraint: questions are expected to stem from those classes that are requirements for all of our majors.

*For faculty who do not teach a required course on a regular basis, make an educated attempt based on extensive discussions on this topic during our faculty retreat.*

Reminder: frame questions that require a measure of critical and creative thinking about the topic at issue and not simply rote memorization.

Goal: together to develop a fact-based exam of 30 questions, 15 each for PLO 1. Foundations of performance and PLO 2 Theatrical histories and theories.
Exam

For each of the following questions, circle the letter of the answer that best answers the question.

1. Samuel Beckett wrote
   A. Waiting for Godot
   B. Happy Days
   C. Endgame
   D. Acts Without Words I
   E. All of the above <- RIGHT

2. Orange, green and purple are classified as which kind of colors for pigment?
   A. Primary <- RIGHT
   B. Secondary
   C. Tertiary
   D. Neutral

3. What is the name of the first rehearsals in the performance venue where lighting cues, sound cues, fly cues, set changes, set piece movement, prop placement and movement and additional production needs are worked out?
   A. Technical rehearsal <- RIGHT
   B. Fight rehearsal
   C. Pick-up rehearsal
   D. Dress rehearsal

4. Merce Cunningham was known for his use of
   A. Chance procedures
   B. Removing the hierarchy of spatial orientation
   C. Collaborating with John Cage
   D. All of the above <- RIGHT

5. Which of these questions help you to identify a protagonist?
   A. Who is at the center of the play’s action?
   B. Who has undergone the most change in the play?
   C. Whose choices in the play are the most important?
   D. All of the above <- RIGHT
   E. None of the above
### Final Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Points</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 - 16</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>&gt;16 - 18</td>
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<td>&gt;18 - 20</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>&gt;20 - 22</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>&gt;22 - 24</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;24 - 26</td>
<td>2</td>
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**Submissions**: 35  
**Total Score Possible**: 28  
**Mean**: 21.02  
**Median**: 21  
**Mode**: 21  
**Range**: 14 - 26  
**Quartile 1**: 20  
**Quartile 3**: 22.5  
**Standard Deviation**: 2.49
Students participate in a wide variety of ways on-stage and off-stage, in preparation for, and actual performance of, the show. Our strategy is to collect direct evidence from both “insider-process” and “outsider-product” perspectives.
The faculty director of the show offers us an insider’s insight into the working process of participants, providing an evaluation on all categories of concentration amongst Senior theater arts majors, which may include assistant director, choreographer, designer, dramaturg, performer, stage manager, or crew member.

- Collegiality
- Creative Contribution
- Preparation
- Professionalism
Secondly, we want our faculty to approach the performance as an outsider, taking a product perspective and evaluating Senior theater arts majors who work on the show, which may include choreographer(s), designer(s) (costume, lights, projection, scenery, sound), dramaturg(s), performer(s), stage manager and crew members.

For example,

- Movement invention (choreographer)
- Use of text (performer)
- Sustained engagement (all)
- Visual aesthetic / artistic strength (designers)
## Designer Rubric

### Faculty director “process” perspective

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<th>Below expectations</th>
<th>Meets expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality</td>
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<td>Creative contribution</td>
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<td>Preparation</td>
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<td>Professionalism</td>
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Comments:

### SUPPORT SCRIPT (designers)

Do the actors have everything they need to tell the story onstage. Can actors be seen and heard. Is the period (if specified and/or important) communicated in the set, costumes and sound – and lighting. Do scene changes, lighting, sound, projection cues and costumes changes work fluidly/support the script or do they slow down/confuse the storytelling?

### USE OF SPACE (designers)

Does use of space allow the audience to see/hear/engage with the actors as they occupy the story? [Applies to all disciplines]

Sets: In black-box space: Actor/audience relationship: helpful to the storytelling? In any space: Does the set occupy the theater dynamically/sculpturally or more 2-dimensionally (only hugging the floor, for instance)? Either way, does it support the script’s themes?

Lights: Is the playing area covered as the aesthetic dictates? Does the lighting create emphasis that aids the storytelling and staging? [Also, see Projections/Media below]

Costumes: Do the costumes communicate the characters’ social standing, economic tier, age, geography? Time of year? Do supportive details “read well”?

Sound: Does the quality and level of the sound work well in the space?

Projections/Media: Do the images support the script. Do Lights and Media work well together? Are images clear and vibrant or washed out?

### Designer Rubric

### Faculty audience “product” perspective

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<td>Visual aesthetic</td>
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<td>Support script</td>
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<td>Specificity of choice</td>
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<td>Use of space</td>
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Comments:
Indirect evidence is collected at the conclusion of the faculty-directed show in the form of a student reflection essay.

Self-assessment (or self-appraisal, self-evaluation) plays a central role in artistic practice.

Typical self-appraisal questions – i.e., what did I learn, what risks did I take, and what will I change – reflect the highest level of assessment, self-examination, because they require students to judge personal strengths and weaknesses.
Exit Stage Right

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