

**Theatre 675.02 Syllabus**  
**The Practice of Theatre and Aging**  
**5 credits U / G**  
**Winter 2006**

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**CLASS TIME:** Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** 2038 Drake Performance and Event Center

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**INSTRUCTOR:** Joy Reilly  
**OFFICE:** 1103 Drake  
**OFFICE EMAIL:** reilly.3@osu.edu  
**OFFICE PHONE:** 292-0804  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and by appointment

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**DESCRIPTION:** An introduction to the Practice of Theatre and Aging exploring a variety of methods used within the Senior Theatre Movement to celebrate Life Experience. This course will provide a background and exercises in the Theatre of Reminiscence, the gathering of Oral History, Life Review, Reader's Theatre, Life-writing and Live Art Performance. Senior Theatre—performance by and for those over 55 years old—now encompasses a wide variety of practitioners from small amateur groups in retirement and recreation centers, to fully professional companies engaged in artistic performance and educational and service outreach. As the baby boomer generation retires more people will be looking for creative outlets to enrich their retirement years. Senior Adult Theatre suggests creative new ways of storytelling to honor and preserve Memory.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this course, the student will have practiced a variety of techniques. Some classroom sessions will include older guest actors as participants. There also will be an opportunity for an outreach experience with a Retirement center, a Nursing Home or a Recreation center in the central Ohio community. Together with Theatre 675.01: Crones, Curmudgeons, and Living Treasures—Theatre and Aging, this course constitutes an area of specialization which is the first of its kind. By the end of this course, the student will know how to conduct a Life Review session with one person or a group; to lead an Oral History discussion group with Final Celebration Presentation for friends and families; have tapped into Life Experience to write autobiographical monologues, and be able to create and direct a Reader's Theatre production. Participants will know how to work creatively with various age groups from 55 to 100+. Students who would benefit from this class, include professionals entering health and social work professions, educational outreach programs, schools, retirement and recreation centers, nursing homes, churches and hospice organizations. This class provides a foundation for those who wish to pursue a career in Senior Adult Theatre both in the performance of plays and in the documenting of oral history and life experience through video and the live stage.

**TEACHING METHOD:** Lecture/Discussion/Workshop participation.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Roorbach, Bill. *Writing Life Stories*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Story Press, 1998.

Goldberg, Nancy. *Writing Down the Bones*, Boston, Mass. Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1986

Basting, Anne Davis. *The Stages of Age: Performing Age in Contemporary American Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.

We will make liberal use of videotapes of eight performances by Grandparents Living Theatre, and one videotape of *Howling At The Moon*.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:** Students are graded on a standard 4.0 scale. Each student will be responsible for the following (weighted as indicated):

- (1) One Oral History of a family member or close friend (25 percent of grade)
- (2) One 5-page Life Review (25 percent of grade.)
- (3) Review of a Senior Theatre performance (25 percent of grade)
- (4) Directing one 20-minute Readers Theatre Creative Presentation (25 percent of grade)

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY**, the OSU Escort Service is available after 6 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

**RESEARCH PROTOCOL:** Students will work with established "human subjects" procedures set out by the Office of Research. Currently, those procedures involve taking an online orientation and then submitting research protocols for review. The entire class will work with one set of research procedures for interviews and oral history.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1:**

**January 7**

Introduction to the field. Working with the elderly in theatre. Introduction to research procedures and protocols. This session includes participatory exercises and videotapes of performance.

**Week 2:**

**January 14**

Life Review. Students will learn how to tell the story of their own lives through major life transitions. They will practice on each other.  
Read: Basting, introduction to *The Stages of Age*

**Week 3:**

**January 21**

Oral History and Oral History on video. Students will interview each other --- and present each other's "special story" to the class. Students will be asked to bring video camera and/or tape recorder to this session.  
Read: Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones*

**Week 4:**

**January 28**

Readers Theatre. Each student will work with older guest actors to adapt and present a piece of literature, fairytales, poetry or letters into a performance.  
Read: Roorbach, *Writing Life Stories*  
Due: Oral History

**Week 5:**

**February 4**

Life writing. Students will observe a guest performance by eight older women of autobiography as performance. They will participate in workshop exercises.  
Due: Review of Senior Theatre Production

**Week 6:**

**February 11**

The class will visit a Retirement Center, Nursing Home or Recreation Center as a group to conduct exercises with residents.  
Due: Life Review

**Week 7:**

**February 18**

Readers Theatre Directing Project. Each student will present a 30 minute Final Creative Presentation in class. Students may use class members, older actors, or volunteers.

**Week 8-9:**

**February 25  
March 4**

A continuation of the Final Creative Presentations in class.

**Week 10:**

**March 11**

Concluding discussions and course overview

**Theatre 675.01 Syllabus**  
**Crones, Curmudgeons, and Living Treasures – Theatre and Aging**  
**5 Credits U / G**  
**Autumn 2005**

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**CLASS TIME:** Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** 2038 Drake Performance and Event Center

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**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Alan Woods  
**OFFICE:** 1433 Lincoln Tower  
**OFFICE EMAIL:** woods.1@osu.edu  
**OFFICE PHONE:** 292-6614  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The History, Theory, and Literature of the Senior Theatre Movement. Senior Theatre--performance by and for those over 55 years old--is the most rapidly growing sector of recreational and avocational theatre in North America and Europe, with fully professional performance groups now emerging. This course explores the history of the emerging international Senior Theatre Movement from its beginnings in the post World War II era to the present, the application of studies in gerontology to the developing theory of Senior Theatre, and the growing literature of dramatic texts created for Senior Theatre from oral history, life narratives, and traditionally scripted drama.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the course, the student will have gained a detailed knowledge of the growth, development, and current status of Senior Theatre, awareness of performance as both artistic and recreational activity, and familiarity with the Senior Theatre's dramatic texts, both original and adapted for the particular needs of Senior Theatre practitioners. With Theatre 675b, The Practice of Theatre and Age, this course constitutes a concentration in senior theatre as part of the area of specialization in aging.

**TEACHING METHOD:** Lecture/Discussion.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Andersson, Lars, ed. *Cultural Gerontology*. Westport, CT: Auburn House, 2002.  
Basting, Anne Davis. *The Stages of Age Performing Age in Contemporary American Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.  
Haarbauer, Martha. *Seasoned Theatre: A Guide to Creating and Maintaining a Senior Adult Theatre*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.  
Lonergan, Kenneth. *The Waverly Gallery*. New York: Grove Press, 2000.  
Vorenberg, Bonnie L. *Senior Theatre Connections. The First Directory of Senior Theatre Performing Groups, Professionals, and Resources*. Portland, Or: ArtAge Publications, 1999.

Manuscript playtexts, drawn from the Senior Drama Collection at the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute:

Appel, Dori. *Memory Lane*  
Brody, Alan. *Medeais Nurse*  
Cheatwood, Vicki. *Manicures & Monuments*  
Chisholm, Edgar. *The Long Dance*  
Comarton, Warner D. *Elevator Music*  
diAmico, Miriam. *A Noodle Kugel for Company*  
Dubois, Katherine. *Shady Manor*

Gall-Clayton, Nancy. *Felicitys Family Tree*.  
Gardner, Bonnie Milne. *Day Old Bread*  
Gehris, John. *Odds ni Ends*  
Hoehn, Doug. *This Beingis Lease*  
Horton, GERALYN L. *Autumn Leaves*  
Loebell, Larry. *Memorial Day*.  
Perlman, Sandra. *Something With Fish*  
Thompson, Jerry. *Coffee Break*

The plays listed are the semifinalists and finalists from the recent Eileen Heckart Drama for Seniors competition, which attracted 470 entries from writers around the world.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Each student will complete two short research reports, with the results presented orally in class, and a longer formal research paper of publishable quality. The oral reports will focus on (1) an existing professional, avocational or recreational Senior Theatre company, and (2) an analysis of plays written for Senior Theatre groups. Each report should last about 15 minutes, and must include appropriate handouts.

The research paper will be on a topic selected by the student, and should conform to the guidelines in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Joseph Garibaldi, 6th edition, 2003). Normally, such a research paper should be from 12-25 pages (double-spaced, processed) in length.

**GRADING:** Grades will be determined by the quality of work completed, with individual assignments contributing as listed below:

Research Report	30%
Research Report	30%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

(Readings should be completed prior to class meeting)

- Week 1:  
September 24 Introduction and theoretical background; gerontology and the realities of aging in America in the second half of the twentieth century; representation of older characters in plays
- Week 2:  
October 1 Stumbling/road blocks: strengths and limitations of performance by and for the aging.  
Reading: Andersson, chapter 1; Basting; intro and chapter 1
- Week 3:  
October 8 History: Avocational/recreational beginnings; drama as therapy  
Reading: Haarbauer, ppp. 15-65; Vorenberg, introduction  
Have selected company for oral report 1
- Week 4:  
October 15 History: Senior pride and the gray panthers; theatre as empowerment; consciousness raising  
Reading: Basting, chapters 2 and 3
- Week 5:  
October 22 History: Senior drama recognized; American Theatre Association focus group  
Reading: Haarbauer, chapters. 4 and 5
- Week 6:  
October 29 History and Literature: Development of first strains of professionalism, development of oral history and self generated texts;  
**Oral Reports 1**, have selected texts for oral report 2
- Week 7:  
November 5 History and Literature: Professional senior companies growth and maturity; efforts to expand repertory  
Reading: Lonergan and selections from Vorenberg
- Week 8:  
November 12 History and Literature: Senior centers and entertainment; the dancing grannies; international connections and contexts  
Reading: Basting, chapters 4 and 5
- Week 9:  
November 19 History, Theory and Literature: Specialization and niche groups; cross cultural and diversity issues; the market emerges;  
**Oral Reports 2**
- Week 10:  
November 25 **Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class**
- Week 11:  
December 3 History, Theory and Literature: Organizational and group maturity; conferences, festivals, emergence of a professional association;  
**Research Report Due**