



2022

## Open Education Exploration Grant: Michelle Cowin Gibbs

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### Recommended Citation

Gibbs, Michelle Cowin, "Open Education Exploration Grant: Michelle Cowin Gibbs" (2022). *Ames Library Awards*. 34.

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School of Theatre Arts

Ames Library OER Grant  
Final Report

**Final Thoughts:**

I had the pleasure of using majority open-source materials for THEA 141: Introduction to Theatre Arts in Fall 2021. I wanted to offer students some affordable options due to the increase cost of textbooks and plays. I often use OER in all of my classes. This can range from supplementary materials like finding videos and reviewing lesson plans on sites like YouTube and Course Hero. I also almost always include Google Slides as a teaching resource for students. As an assignment, I ask them to work in groups to build slides based on course content. This provides an excellent way for them to build knowledge together and helps with retaining the information.

I already had a collection of open educational resources available from Fall 2020. However, students had to purchase many of the plays that we read in class. Rather than assigning five plays to read, I decided to frame the class around conversations about theatre as a practice and dramatic study. As a result, in Fall 2021, I leaned into finding public domain resources that provided context for the conversations I introduced in class. I had no trouble finding and obtaining these resources. See the spreadsheet attached. However, it was difficult to find a no-cost-to-students textbook that provided a broad overview of theatre but was also visually dynamic in style and format. I wanted to a book that had a balance of substantive content and visual appeal. I discovered along the way that it was difficult to have both. I didn't discover until late that Zarrilli's *Theatre Histories: An Introduction* was available through Ames Library eBook Academic Central. It is no longer available. I did discover after the course that the pdf to *Theatrical Worlds BETA* is an OER. I will use this in future iterations of this course.

Overall, this experience was very rewarding. It has inspired me to continue to do what I can to offer free and/or low-cost options to students. I am scheduled to teach a summer I course in 2022. The course is titled "Staging Faith: Religion and Spiritualism in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Theatre". I am designing the course so that **all** textbook and reading materials will be free for students.

**Challenges:**

There were some challenges. I realized late, that several textbooks that I wanted to use were not part of the creative commons. This presented a challenge, so I decided to use those books as teaching preparation materials. I looked for a theatre history book that was a simpler design but offered a historical and cultural overview of several time periods. This was difficult to find.

**Rewards:**

There were some highlights to using OER resources outside of reduced cost for students. I was able to assign, and watch in-class, more YouTube video reference to supplement textbook readings. These videos offered some variety in ways that students absorbed the information. I discovered that many plays were available on Project Gutenberg or offered as an open education resource. I could add videos to those readings to give students a more well-rounded understanding of the major themes of the plays.

Author(s)	Title	Edition/Vol. No.	Publisher	Location	Year	URL	Resource Type	Evaluation of specific OER or free-to-students resources that you discovered an
Chemers, Michael M.	Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy	Southern Illinois University	Southern Illinois University Press	eBook Central Academic Complete	2010	<a href="https://i-share-iwu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_IWU/1ufnn9r/alma997863493905847">https://i-share-iwu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_IWU/1ufnn9r/alma997863493905847</a>	eBook	This resource was very good for students and was a good foundations textbook for theatre script analysis and dramaturgy. This book was not written to be an open-source book. Students could have purchased hardcopies of the book if they would like. In some ways I liked it better that the resource was not open-sourced. I found that a lot of the open-source books seemed to explain theatre from a general and not specialized perspective. I loved the approach over other open-resource options.
Ibsen, Henrik	A Doll's House		The Project Gutenberg eBook	Public Domain	11/19/20	<a href="https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2542/2542-h/2542-h.htm">https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2542/2542-h/2542-h.htm</a>	eBook	This was a good source because it provided the students with a full copy of the play. There are links at the top of the resource that will help you easily navigate the play. The only issue that I have with this copy is that it is not accessible-friendly resource. The text is formatted in serif font, which can be difficult to read for students with dyslexia.
Sáenz, Benjamin Alire	In the Borderlands of Chicano Identity, There Are Only Fragments.	Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics	University of Minnesota Press	eBook Central Academic Complete	6/19/05	<a href="https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/IWU/detail.action?pq-origsite=primo&amp;docID=310406">https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/IWU/detail.action?pq-origsite=primo&amp;docID=310406</a>	eBook	This resource was very good for students and was a good supplemental text for unpacking cultural diversity. This book was not written to be an open-source book. Students could have purchased hardcopies of the book if they would like, although I recommended that they did not simple because of the cost of the book. In someways I liked it better that the resource was not open-sourced. I found that alot of the open-source books seemed to explain theatre from a general and not specialized perspective. I loved the approach over other open-resource options.
Schechner, Richard	Performance Studies: An Introduction	3rd Edition	Routledge	Google Search		<a href="http://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/1472038/6f8b3427ce6f2a0a076feb7be0001ce7.pdf?1512080466">http://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/1472038/6f8b3427ce6f2a0a076feb7be0001ce7.pdf?1512080466</a>	eBook	I got very lucky to find this textbook online. This textbook is usually available for purchase only. This is a foundational textbook in the field of performance studies. I loved this book as a hardcopy, so it was terrific to find this for students. It also made it affordable for students since I only used 1-2 chapters in the book. That ways they wouldn't have to purchase the entire text.
Bridgforth, Sharon	River See: A Theatrical Jazz Performance Installation			Google Search		<a href="http://www.riversee.com/">http://www.riversee.com/</a>	Video and Script	This was a good source because it provided the students with dynamic website with videos of the performance to see the actual performance. There is also a lot of context for the performance with quotes about the playwright.
Fuchs, Elinor	EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask A Play			Ames Library		<a href="https://courses.iwu.edu/pluginfile.php/722263/mod_resource/content/1/Visit%20to%20a%20Small%20Planet.pdf">https://courses.iwu.edu/pluginfile.php/722263/mod_resource/content/1/Visit%20to%20a%20Small%20Planet.pdf</a>	Article	This is a foundational article that I found that looks at the process of play analysis and audience reception. I have used this text in the past and was glad that it was easy to find in our stacks. This was a good resource because as a foundational text is was easy for students to access as a digital pdf document with the ability to search for keywords in the text.
BBC Radio 4	Erving Goffman and the Performed Self	n/a	YouTube	YouTube	4/15/15	<a href="https://youtu.be/6Z0XS-QLDWM">https://youtu.be/6Z0XS-QLDWM</a>	Video	I have used this video multiple times for different classes. It is a very accessible video that gives students a intriguing and visually dynamic way to see and understand theories related to the theatre.
Burroughs, Marcus	RENT (2019 FULL COMPLETE) with Valentina LIVE	n/a	YouTube	YouTube	1/29/19	<a href="https://youtu.be/2jWa9A3w2FQ">https://youtu.be/2jWa9A3w2FQ</a>	Video	I have used this video multiple times for different classes. It is a very accessible video, visually dynamic and provides an excellent way for students to see how performance interacts with reception theory. The video was very easy to find on YouTube.
CUNY BMCC	Life's A Dream	New York, NY	YouTube	YouTube	2012	<a href="https://youtu.be/2m7i0gqvOFM">https://youtu.be/2m7i0gqvOFM</a>	Video	This video was an excellent resource because students got to see an adaptation of a performance by students just like them. It provided an excellent way to understand the process of adaptation as well as the do ability of classical works.
Dir. Carrie Cracknell	A Doll's House	Young Vic	Digital Theatre Plus	Digital Theatre Plus	2012	<a href="https://edu-digitaltheatreplus.com.proxy.iwu.edu/content/production/s/a-dolls-house-digital-theatre">https://edu-digitaltheatreplus.com.proxy.iwu.edu/content/production/s/a-dolls-house-digital-theatre</a>	Video	I love Digital Theatre Plus and would like to find more opportunities to use this in my classes. I tried to use Kanopy but I often find that it is glitchy. Digital Theatre Plus is easy to access through Ames Library and works as a good resource for students to see new theatre productions classical, contemporary, and experimental produced in the last 10 years at popular and historical theatre companies in Britain and Russia. I also appreciate DTP because it has a healthy amount of teaching resources that are organized by play. By far, this was my favorite OER resource because it was extreme helpful to the ways I teach theatre history in the classroom.

Dir. Hamish Hamilton	ABC's The Little Mermaid Live		Disney+	Disney+			Video	This resource was pedagogically very good. In terms of access, it was not as easy for students to watch on their own because it was only available through a paid streaming service, Disney Plus. You can only access this video through the paid site. If you do not have Disney Plus it was not available to them to watch on their own, unlike Digital Theatre Plus. Instead, I used this resource in class only and made sure to give a healthy amount of time showing students the value of watching live performance in the moment. Students really appreciated this resource because it was refreshing and visually dynamic.
Latino Theatre Company	A Mexican Trilogy: Hope	Los Angeles	Latino Theatre Company	Latino Theatre Company	2010	On pay for play video platform	Video	This was a unique opportunity that was not at all accessible to students to watch on their own. Pedagogically, I used this resource to show students how everything we read and learned about this play could be seen in a full length production. The pay per play cost was VERY expensive. It was \$150 per viewing. I opened up the opportunity for all student at the university to watch the play. We didn't have a lot of students who took advantage of seeing the production but ALL of the students who attended expressed gratitude to see Latinx folk that looked like them in a play production. They felt like it was a rare opportunity and was very grateful to have the opportunity to see the play. The play premiere at IWU was complete free to them but was not accessible for them to see on their own. The next time I use this resource, I'd like to partner with another class to give more students to see the production.
Latino Theatre Company	A Conversation About A Mexican Trilogy	Los Angeles	Latino Theatre Company	Facebook		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=353551955899125">https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=353551955899125</a>	Video	I used this resource to help support context for the play they read in class and would see in video production. The video was an interview with the cast, director, and playwright. This was very easy to find and access. I have taught this play before and was never able to find video interviews with the playwright! I felt super lucky to find this resource right at the time when I taught the class.
Morphmaker	Erving Goffman and You: Idealized Performance	n/a	YouTube	YouTube	9/19/15	<a href="https://youtu.be/zQPO43uA5Ls">https://youtu.be/zQPO43uA5Ls</a>	Video	I have used this video multiple times for different classes. It is a very accessible video that gives students a intriguing and visually dynamic way to see and understand theories related to the theatre.
Bridgforth, Sharon	RIVER SEE	Vol. 43 No. 1	Obsidian	JSTOR, Ames Library	2017	<a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26390351">https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26390351</a>	Article	This was a script that accompanied the video installation and website for a total theatre experience for students. It was very easy to find for free at Ames.
Calderon De La Barca, Pedro	Life Is A Dream Play		The Project Gutenberg eBook	Public Domain		<a href="https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2587/2587-h/2587-h.htm">https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2587/2587-h/2587-h.htm</a>	eBook	This was a good source because it provided the students with a full copy of the play. There are links at the top of the resource that will help you easily navigate the play. The only issue that I have with this copy is that it is not accessible-friendly resource. The text is formatted in serif font, which can be difficult to read for students with dyslexia.
Dolan, Jill	Critical Generosity	Vol 1, Issue 1+2	Linked Fates and Futures	Google Search		<a href="https://public.imagingamerica.org/bl/article/critical-generosity-2/">https://public.imagingamerica.org/bl/article/critical-generosity-2/</a>	Article	This is a foundational article that I found that looks at ways that students can reflect of the reviewing process. I like this resource because it helped me teach empathy and the theatrical experience. This was an easy article to find on Google search.
Muehlhoff, Timothy	Critical Generosity: Gently Confronting the Sacred	The Table	Biola University's Center for Christian Thought	Google Search	1/24/18	<a href="https://cct.biola.edu/critical-generosity-gently-confronting-sacred/">https://cct.biola.edu/critical-generosity-gently-confronting-sacred/</a>	Article	This is a foundational article that I found that looks at ways that students can reflect of the reviewing process. I like this resource because it helped me teach empathy and the theatrical experience. This was an easy article to find on Google search.
Parker, Alexander A.	Life Is A Dream Play By Calderon Reference		Britannica Online	Public Domain		<a href="https://www.britannica.com/topic/Life-is-a-Dream-play-by-Calderon">https://www.britannica.com/topic/Life-is-a-Dream-play-by-Calderon</a>	Reference	Britannica is a great resource that is mostly free for students. It is a subscription based website but is available our IWU campus community for free. Pedagogically, it was a quick reference guide to help student easily find reference sources for research projects.

Omeka	Open Access	<p>This was a very fun and useful way for students to indulge in the process of dramaturgy. I used this site with the help of Dr. Abby Mann at Ames. She provided the training for how students engaged with the platform. The student did run into problems with the site. They stated that it wasn't as user friendly as a website builder like WordPress or Wix. While it was extremely dynamic, it was impossible for anyone to find it on Google search. This was extremely disappointing because it was such a involved semester long project that I wanted their parents to see their hard work. I do not think I will use this resource in the future for that reason.</p>
Google Slides	Google	<p>Ancillary Materials</p> <p>I love Google Slides. I have used this resource for many years. It is a great way for students to create dynamic presentations. I will often ask students to curate their own slides to demonstrate what they are learning about a specific subject. It is pretty user friendly and students can share their work with ease. I also use it to build lecture slides. It is not as user friendly of iPads and smart phones because you do not have easy access to the speaker notes section. I use the speaker notes for my lecture notes. Instead I have to print out my notes which is such a waste of paper.</p>
THEATRICAL WORLDS, BETA VERSION	<p><a href="https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/AA/00/02/18/70/00001/Mitchell_Theatrical_Worlds_accessible.pdf">https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/AA/00/02/18/70/00001/Mitchell_Theatrical_Worlds_accessible.pdf</a></p>	<p>This was a good resource although it took time to open because of the sheer size of the digital pdf. I did not use this resource in the classroom because I discovered it after the course. I will use it in future iterations of the course as a foundational textbook to the introduction to the theatrical process. It looks like a terrific substitute to Zarrilli's Theatre Histories which students would have to purchase.</p>