

NEIU Faculty Research & Creative Activities Symposium Abstract

1. The contact information and academic disciplines of all participants

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2. Project title

Classic Theater for a Modern Audience:
Producing Antigone at NEIU

3. Project abstract

Each year, Stage Center Theatre offers multiple performances produced by the Department of Communication, Media, and Theatre. The season generally includes four mainstage productions, two children's theatre productions, a festival of new 10-minute plays, and sometimes one or more summer theater shows. Plays are chosen by the CMT faculty with a goal of presenting work that challenges our students and engages our audience of students, faculty, staff, and community.

For the 2018-2019 season, we decided it was important to present a classic play as part of our season. "Classic" is a broad term, including the works of ancient Greece and Rome, Shakespeare, Moliere – in some definitions, any play written prior to the 20th century. What these plays share is highly structured language, elements of non-realistic presentation, such as direct address to the audience, and stylized acting. These are all skills our student actors can benefit from learning.

The play we chose was ANTIGONE, written by Sophocles about 441 BCE. With its central conflict between honoring the laws of man and following "natural law," ANTIGONE speaks to our current political climate. The character Antigone embraces civil disobedience, and chooses to bury her brother, which she considers the right thing to do, over the decree that he remain unburied, as a traitor to the State. Antigone is a model of resistance, and from the beginning we spoke of this production as, "Antigone: Nevertheless, She Persisted."

By the date of the Faculty Symposium, ANTIGONE will have closed. This presentation will look back at the reasons for choosing this play, and the adaptation, by Bertolt Brecht; and choices the director made to make this presentation relevant to the NEIU community. We will explore some of the challenges the play presented to the cast and to its student designer; and the methods we took to overcome these challenges. We will look back at our successes, and discuss the reactions and feedback from audiences, and consider some of the lesson learned from the production. The presentation will be accompanied by a PowerPoint illustrating the performance.