

**Dr. Kyle A. Thomas**

**Judith Enyeart Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Research**

**Symposium**

**Time and Date of Talk: February 22, 12:15-1:15 PM, TBD**

**Title of Talk:** Ludic Communities: Toward a New History of Theatre in the Early Middle Ages

**Speaker Biography:**

Dr. Kyle A. Thomas is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Missouri State University and Coordinator of the BA/BS Theatre Program. Kyle is a theatre historian, scholar, dramaturg, and director with a research agenda centering on drama, theatre, and performance in the early Middle Ages. He also develops methodological approaches to staging medieval theater for audiences today, as exemplified best in his staging of *The Play of Adam (Le Jeu d'Adam)* at the Met Cloisters in 2016. Kyle is editor-in-chief of the journal *ROMARD: Research on Medieval and Renaissance Drama* and he recently published his book, *The Play about the Antichrist (Ludus de Antichristo): A Dramaturgical Analysis, Historical Commentary, and Diplomatic Latin Edition with a New English Verse Translation*. In addition to directing several shows for the Department of Theatre & Dance, Kyle has also graced the stage of Tent Theatre, most recently in the 2022 production of *Moon Over Buffalo*. You can also catch him on YouTube as The Theatre History Professor or in his reoccurring role on the Discovery Channel series, *Mysteries of the Abandoned: Hidden America*.

**Abstract of Talk (150-250 words):**

The historical narrative of theatre in the Western World often neglects the roughly one-thousand-year period known as the Middle Ages. Such a narrative presupposes the historiographical conditions of the so-called Dark Ages; that theatre was virtually non-existent and drama reduced to allegory, liturgical musings, or mere Bible stories. Rather, theatre and drama were undergoing some of the most significant cultural and dramaturgical shifts since their inception at the height of the Classical Era. This paper will present new research that identifies monastic communities as centers of dramatic experimentation in the early centuries of the medieval period (roughly 600-1200 CE). From theatrical conceptions of worship that would come to affect the development of the liturgy, to pedagogical dramaturgies employed in cloister schools, to representational practices which attempted to embody the Divine; this paper will capture the new chapter that was opened on the history of theatre in Europe during the early Middle Ages.

**Interdisciplinarity:**

This talk will be of interest to those scholars whose research interests cover dramatic literature, performance and representative practices, Latin literature and prosody, community-driven art, and/or theology and doctrine as cultural practice.