

(THE 3313) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 3

2017
Spring

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Course Description from the 2016-2017 Undergraduate Catalog

Theatre history and literature from modern realism to present.

Course Objectives

The study of theatre history allows those who make and enjoy theatre to discover how theatrical practices of the past continue to influence trends in theatre, film, and storytelling in the present day. Learning about the history and the historical context of specific plays, artists, and performance practices allows makers and lovers of theatre to make connections between the ways in which theatre and society are always working to shape each other. How do performances try to support - or change - the cultures that produce them? What are some of the very different functions that performances can serve in a society? How do the reasons that audiences go to theatre change over time? These are some of the questions we will be asking as we journey through a century of changes, challenges, risks, and struggles in the story of theatre and performance.

This course is designed to introduce the student to significant periods of theatre history by:

- Reading and discussing plays from important periods in theatre history,
- Discussing the staging practices of certain periods of time: acting styles, theatre architecture, major theatre artists, acting companies, and theories of performance,
- Contextualizing plays and staging practices within the cultures that produced them in order to examine how performance and society interact and intersect, and
- Exploring connections between how texts work and the contexts in which they were first produced.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Identify major theatre artists, architectural elements, staging practices, performance events, and theatrical forms of the major periods of theatre history from the historical avant-garde through the present day and explain their significance to theatre practice;
- ✓ Place plays, theatrical events, and theatrical practices within a larger cultural and historical context for each major period and demonstrate ways in which performance and culture influenced each other within that time period;
- ✓ Examine play-texts critically from historical, cultural, practical, and theoretical points of view and be able to draw connections between a text's form and its context;
- ✓ Effectively communicate analysis of texts and their contexts;
- ✓ Conduct basic but thorough research;
- ✓ Present clearly written analysis of that information that makes connections and creates new knowledge.

Course Content

Note well that some of the material in this course will include language and topics that some people might find objectionable. *If some of this material is so offensive to you that it negatively affects your ability to learn, you are encouraged to take another course to satisfy this requirement.* If you have any concerns, please see me as soon as possible.

Assigned Texts

We are reading what amounts to a play every other class period. All students are required to read all plays and other texts assigned for the course. In order to analyze scripts individually and as a group it is imperative that everyone read each day's material.

Required Texts

- *Norton Anthology of Drama, 2nd edition, volume 2*, edited by Puchner and Gainor
- *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett
- *Blasted* by Sarah Kane
- *The Hungry Woman: a Mexican Medea* by Cherríe Moraga
- *The Bull-Jean Stories* by Sharon Bridgforth

Course Texts linked via Webcourses

- Maurice Maeterlinck's *Home (Intérieur)*
- Rachilde's *The Crystal Spider (L'Aragnée Cristal)*
- F.T. Marinetti's "The Pleasure of Being Booed" and "We Abjure Our Symbolist Masters, the Last Lovers of the Moon"
- selected Futurist *sintesi*
- Ernst Toller's *The Transfiguration (Die Wandlung)*
- Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia's "Arthur Cravan and American Dada"
- Tristan Tzara's *Dada Manifesto 1918 (Dada Manifeste 1918)*
- Tristan Tzara's *The Gas Heart (Le Cœur à Gaz)*
- Jean Cocteau's *Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower (Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel)*
- Antonin Artaud's *Jet of Blood (Jet de Sang)*, "No More Masterpieces", and "Theatre of Cruelty"
- Djuna Barnes' *The Dove*
- Georgia Douglas Johnson's *A Sunday Morning in the South*
- Marita Bonner's *The Purple Flower*
- May Miller's *Stragglers in the Dust*
- Bertolt Brecht's "Emphasis on Sport" & "The Modern Theatre Is the Epic Theatre"
- Bertolt Brecht and Margarete Steffin's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich (Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches)*
- Hallie Flanagan's "Introduction to Federal Theatre Plays"
- *Triple-A Plowed Under*
- Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*
- Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro*
- Heiner Müller's *Hamletmachine (Die Hamletmaschine)*
- Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners (Información para Extranjeros)*
- Carmelita Tropicana's *Milk of Amnesia - Leche de Amnesia*
- Caryl Churchill's *Far Away*

Grade Breakdown		Grading Scale		
Quizzes on Reading	24%	93-100: A	80-82.9: B-	68-69.9: D+
Final Exam	20%	90-92.9: A-	78-79.9: C+	63-67.9: D
Analytical Essay	20%	88-89.9: B+	70-77.9: C	60-62.9: D-
Syntheses & Exegeses	15%	83-87.9: B		0-59.9: F
Attendance/Participation	10%			
Midterm Exam	10%			
Imagined Theatre	1%			

Required Assignments

Quizzes on Reading. There will be a quiz nearly every day that I have assigned a play-text. This is the best way I know how to assess that students are completing the assigned reading. Because I consider the reading to be paramount to each student's achievement of the course objectives, *these quizzes will be a significant component of your final grade.* All quizzes are pass/fail. A three out of five or better is a pass and students with a two or lower fail the day's quiz.

*Syntheses & Exegeses.** On three different occasions during the course we will read a theoretical essay discussing some aspect of theatre practice. We will then discuss this essay in class. Following this class discussion, and in order to assist students with understanding these essays, students will write brief summaries of the arguments contained in each article (*synthesis*) and then explain briefly how the article might better help us to read theatre texts and understand theatrical practices (*exegesis*). Each of these assignments will be completed with a minimum of 400 words. The purpose of this assignment is to get students to practice *reading arguments, quoting other scholars, and correctly citing quotations.*

*Analytical Essay.** The course will include one written research paper consisting of a minimum of 1,500 words. This essay will be a contextualized reading of one of the plays on the list of "Notable Plays" or another play or performance of the student's choosing (pending instructor approval). Students may not write on a play we are reading for class. The essay will combine historical research about the context of the piece with a reading of the piece itself so that the essay makes an argument about how the piece significantly impacted its society or (and this version is much easier) how society or culture made an impact on the piece and how it works. This essay will be submitted online through Webcourses, graded electronically, and returned to students through Webcourses.

This assignment is broken down into the following due dates:

- Essay Topic (February 22)
- Final Essay (March 27)

All written assignments will be submitted in Chicago format (preferably) or MLA (if you must), and all quotations will be accurately and exhaustively cited. **There are a lot of you, but I am committed to making each of you better, clearer writers, and I want to help you as much as I can with this.**

Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss possibilities for the paper and to bounce ideas around.

Exams. Both the midterm and the final assessment will address how certain theatrical practices *worked* in their performance contexts. I will not ask students about dates. Rather, I will want students to be able to describe the main performance styles we discussed over the period of the course and feel comfortable with theories of theatrical practice. The questions are always: *How does this performance mode work?* and *What were these artists attempting to accomplish?*

Imagined Theatre: Students will carefully imagine and craft a theatrical scenario. The assignment will work like this: begin with the thought “Imagine this...” and then carefully describe what happens in this imagined theatre scenario. Avoid describing how an audience member might feel watching such a scenario and simply let the scenario exist in the imagination. Students will submit this imagined theatre through Webcourses, but these will also become public (if anonymous) performance that others can read.¹

Here’s a scenario of my own. (Imagine this): *The curtain rises on a pair of horses eating grass. Slowly a cow enters, chewing. They eat together. A dog runs on with a bone in its mouth, chewing noisily and occasionally growling as it wrests meat off of the bone. As the animals eat, the food that they are eating does not seem actually to get consumed. There is always more food to eat. Perhaps, over a period of several hours, imperceptibly but unmistakably the animals get fatter and fatter. The stage floor eventually begins to creak and make noise until finally it collapses under the weight of the animals.*

Attendance and Tardiness Policies

Class periods will involve discussion and clarification of the day’s reading, and will also consist of instruction found nowhere in the readings. It is my aim to fill each class period with useful information and discussion and never to waste your time in class. There are forty-two class periods in this term. **You may miss four days without it affecting your grade. Each unexcused absence in excess of four will be deducted from your final grade at the rate of 2.5% per absence.**

Please be on time to class. Coming late to class disrupts discussion. Quizzes on the day’s reading will be given at the beginning of class. **If you miss a quiz, you may not make it up unless you have a really good story.** I am serious about this.

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Laptops and Phones

Please keep your laptops closed and your cell phones quiet and dark during class. *You can check your email and respond to texts from your grandmother after class is over.* You will probably want to take notes in class; please do not use a laptop for this activity.

Scholarship and Integrity

UCF faculty members support the UCF Creed. Integrity – practicing and defending academic and personal honesty – is the first tenet of the UCF Creed. This is in part a reflection of the

¹ The idea for this assignment comes from Daniel Sack, “Some Imagined Theaters: Selections for a Theoretical Stage,” *Theater* 45.3 (2015): 6-25.

second tenet, Scholarship – honoring learning as a fundamental purpose of membership in the UCF community. Course assignments and tests are designed to have educational value; the process of preparing for and completing these exercises will help improve your skills and knowledge. Material presented to satisfy course requirements is therefore expected to be the result of your own original scholarly efforts.

UCF faculty members have a responsibility for your education and to the value of a UCF degree; I seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to infringements of academic integrity. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a “Z Designation” on a student’s official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see z.ucf.edu. If you are having trouble completing or handling the assignments in this course, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. I want to be accessible to you when you need me.

Gordon Rule

This course is a Gordon Rule course. The required four assignments which fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk. Each has the following characteristics:

1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
3. It will be organized clearly and logically
4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

Community

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If, as currently designed, this course poses barriers to effectively participating or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss options or adjustments. You may also contact SAS directly to talk about the resources they provide such as note-takers and other assistance. (Ferrell Commons 185 / 407.823.2371 / sas@ucf.edu). You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

From L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

From Achipatong Weerasethakul's *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*

*Facing the jungle, the hills and vales,
my past lives as an animal and other beings rise up before me.*

From Raymond Williams' *Marxism and Literature*

Tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits. ... What we have to see is not just 'a tradition' but a selective tradition: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification.

From Heather Love's *Feeling Backward*

The effort to recapture the past is doomed from the start. To reconstruct the past, we build on ruins; to bring it to life, we chase after the fugitive dead. Bad enough if you want to tell the story of a conquering race, but to remember history's losers is worse, for the loss that swallows the dead absorbs these others into an even more obscurity.

From N. Scott Momaday's *A Man Made of Words*

I belong in the place of my departure, says Odysseus, and I belong in the place that is my destination.

From Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*

One must find the minor language, the dialect or rather idiolect, on the basis of which one can make one's own major language minor. That is the strength of authors termed "minor," who are in fact the greatest, the only greats: having to conquer one's own language, in other words, to attain that sobriety in the use of a major language, in order to place it in a state of continuous variation (the opposite of regionalism). It is in one's own language that one is bilingual or multilingual. Conquer the major language in order to delineate in it as yet unknown minor languages. Use the minor language to send the major language racing. Minor authors are foreigners in their own tongue. If they are bastards, if they experience themselves as bastards, it is due not to a mixing or intermingling of languages but rather to a subtraction and variation of their own language achieved by stretching tensors through it.

Course Calendar:

W = Reading is available through Webcourses

N = *Norton Anthology of Drama*, 2nd editionWeek One: *Symbolisme*

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 9		Meet one another and discuss syllabus and my expectations Define theatre, performance, performativity Discuss historiography, dramaturgy, entertainment
Wed, Jan 11 Fri, Jan 13	Read (W): Maurice Maeterlinck's <i>Home</i> Read (W): Rachilde's <i>The Crystal Spider</i> Imagined Theatre due	Introduce <i>Symbolisme</i> Quiz #1: <i>The Crystal Spider</i> and <i>Home</i> Discuss <i>Symbolisme</i>

Week Two: The Savage God

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 16 Wed, Jan 18	Martin Luther King Day	No Class Introduce Alfred Jarry Reminder about cabaret and the Chat Noir
Fri, Jan 20	Read (N): Alfred Jarry's <i>Ubu Roi</i>	Quiz #2: <i>Ubu Roi</i>

Week Three: The Variety Theatre

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 23	Read (W): F.T. Marinetti's "We Abjure Our Symbolist Masters, the Last Lovers of the Moon" & "The Pleasure of Being Booped"	Introduce Futurism
Wed, Jan 25 Fri, Jan 27	Read (W): Selected Futurist <i>sintesi</i>	Discuss Futurism Introduce the German avant-garde

Week Four: German and Swiss Avant-gardes

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 30	Read (W): Ernst Toller's <i>The Transfiguration</i>	Quiz #3: <i>Transfiguration</i> Discuss Expressionism as style
Wed, Feb 1	Read (W): Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia's "Arthur Cravan and American Dada"	Discuss the Cabaret Voltaire
Fri, Feb 3	Read (W): Tristan Tzara's <i>Dada Manifesto 1918</i>	Discuss Dada, its project, and its performance techniques

Week Five: Dada and Surrealism

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Feb 6	Read (W): Tristan Tzara's <i>The Gas Heart</i> Synthesis & Exegesis #1 due by the end of today	Discuss the death of Dada Introduce Surrealism
Wed, Feb 8	Read (W): Antonin Artaud's <i>Jet of Blood</i> Read (W): Jean Cocteau's <i>Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower</i>	Quiz #4: <i>Spurt of Blood</i> and <i>The Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower</i> Discuss Surrealism
Fri, Feb 10	Read (W): Antonin Artaud's "No More Masterpieces" and "Theatre of Cruelty"	Discuss Artaudian Theory

Week Six: The Early US American Avant-garde

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Feb 13	Read (N): Susan Glaspell's <i>Trifles</i> Read (W): Djuna Barnes' <i>The Dove</i>	Discuss the Little Theatre Movement
Wed, Feb 15	Read (N): Sophie Treadwell's <i>Machinal</i>	Quiz #5: <i>Trifles</i> and <i>Machinal</i> Discuss US American companies on Broadway
Fri, Feb 17	Synthesis & Exegesis #2 due by the end of today	Discuss the Black American avant-garde

Week Seven: Black American Avant-garde

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Feb 20	Read (W): Georgia Douglas Johnson's <i>A Sunday Morning in the South</i> Read (W): May Miller's <i>Stragglers in the Dust</i> Read (W): Marita Bonner's <i>The Purple Flower</i>	Quiz #6: <i>A Sunday Morning in the South</i> , <i>Stragglers in the Dust</i> , and <i>The Purple Flower</i>
Wed, Feb 22	Paper Topic Due	Midterm Prep
Fri, Feb 24		Midterm Exam

Week Eight: Brecht and His Influences

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Feb 27	Read (W): Bertolt Brecht's "Emphasis on Sport"	Introduce Brecht
Wed, Mar 1	Read (W): Bertolt Brecht's "The Modern Theatre Is the Epic Theatre"	Continue discussion of Brecht, the <i>Episch</i> , and the <i>Verfremdungseffekt</i>
Fri, Mar 3	Read (W): Bertolt Brecht & Margarete Steffin's <i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i>	Quiz #7: <i>Fear and Misery</i>

Week Nine: Depression-era and Mid-century US American Theatre

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Mar 6	Read (W): Hallie Flanagan's "Introduction to <i>Federal Theatre Plays</i> "	Return to the United States and the Depression
Wed, Mar 8	Read (W): the Federal Theatre Project's <i>Triple-A Plowed Under</i>	Quiz #8: <i>Triple-A Plowed Under</i> Discuss Realism in the U.S.
Fri, Mar 10	Synthesis & Exegesis #3 due by the end of today	Discuss US American "golden age" drama

Spring Break: March 13 - March 17

Week Ten: Post-WWII Theatre

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Mar 20	Read (W): Arthur Miller's <i>A View from the Bridge</i>	Quiz #9: <i>View from the Bridge</i> Discuss World War II in Europe, Existentialism, and the Absurd
Wed, Mar 22		Introduce the Theatre of the Absurd
Fri, Mar 24	Read: Samuel Beckett's <i>Endgame</i>	Quiz #10: <i>Endgame</i> Discuss Beckett's influence

Week Eleven: Postmodernism & Postcolonialism

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Mar 27	Final Essay Due by midnight	Discuss postmodernism
Wed, Mar 29	Read (W): Heiner Müller's <i>Hamletmachine</i> Read (W): Adrienne Kennedy's <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i>	Quiz #11: <i>Hamletmachine</i> & <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i> Discuss postmodern performance
Fri, Mar 31		Discuss South American Theatre

Week Twelve: Experiments in the 1960s

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Apr 3	Read (W): Griselda Gambaro's <i>Information for Foreigners</i>	Quiz #12: <i>Information for Foreigners</i>
Wed, Apr 5		Discuss performance art
Fri, Apr 7		Introduce the theatre of the 1990s Discuss Solo Performance

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Week Thirteen: American Developments in the U.S.

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Apr 10	Read (W): Carmelita Tropicana's <i>Milk of Amnesia - Leche de Amnesia</i>	Discuss US American dramaturgy
Wed, Apr 12		Discuss Latina/o theatre
Fri, Apr 14	Read: Cherríe Moraga's <i>The Hungry Woman: a Mexican Medea</i>	Quiz #13: <i>The Hungry Woman</i>

Week Fourteen: Newer Playwriting I

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Apr 17	Read (W): Caryl Churchill's <i>Far Away</i>	Quiz #14: <i>Far Away</i>
Wed, Apr 19	Read: Sarah Kane's <i>Blasted</i>	Quiz #15: <i>Blasted</i>
Fri, Apr 21		Final Review

Week Fifteen: Newer Playwriting II

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Apr 24	Read: Sharon Bridgforth's <i>The Bull-Jean Stories</i>	Quiz #16: <i>The Bull-Jean Stories</i>

Week Sixteen: Final Assessment

Mon, May 1	Final Assessment: 1.00-3.50p
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