

(THE 3313) Theatre History / Dramatic Literature 3

2018
Spring

Instructor: Aaron C. Thomas

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Course Description from the 2017-2018 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, 3rd edition, volume 2*, edited by Puchner and Gainor
- *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett
- *Blasted* by Sarah Kane
- *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 *Hamletmaschine (Die Hamletmaschine)*
- Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners (Información para Extranjeros)*
- Carmelita Tropicana's *Milk of Amnesia - Leche de Amnesia*
- Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila*

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Grade Breakdown		Grading Scale		
Quizzes on Reading	25.5%	93-100: A	80-82.9: B-	68-69.9: D+
Analytical Essay	22.5%	90-92.9: A-	78-79.9: C+	63-67.9: D
Final Exam	20%	88-89.9: B+	70-77.9: C	60-62.9: D-
Writing Is Thinking	12%	83-87.9: B		0-59.9: F
Attendance/Participation	10%			
Midterm Exam	10%			

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.

*Writing Is Thinking.** 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 and then explain briefly how the article might better help us to read theatre texts and understand theatrical practices. 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 12)
- Final Essay (March 26)

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?*

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. **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 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 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 edition

Week One: *Symbolisme*

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 8		Meet one another and discuss syllabus and my expectations Define theatre, performance, performativity Discuss historiography, dramaturgy, entertainment
Wed, Jan 10		Introduce <i>Symbolisme</i>
Fri, Jan 12	Read (W): Maurice Maeterlinck's <i>Home</i> Read (W): Rachilde's <i>The Crystal Spider</i> Documentation of Participation due	Quiz #1: <i>The Crystal Spider</i> and <i>Home</i> Discuss <i>Symbolisme</i>

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Week Two: The Savage God

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 15	MLK Day	No Class Meeting
Wed, Jan 17		Introduce Alfred Jarry Discuss cabaret and the Chat Noir
Fri, Jan 19	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 22	Read (W): F.T. Marinetti's "We Abjure Our Symbolist Masters, the Last Lovers of the Moon" & "The Pleasure of Being Booed"	Introduce Futurism
Wed, Jan 24	Read (W): Selected Futurist <i>sintesi</i>	Finish discussing Futurism German theatre through the Great War
Fri, Jan 26		Introduce Expressionism

Week Four: German and Swiss Avant-gardes

Assignments Due		Class Activities
Mon, Jan 29	Read (W): Ernst Toller's <i>Transformation</i>	Quiz #3: <i>Transformation</i> Discuss Expressionism as style
Wed, Jan 31	Read (W): Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia's "Arthur Cravan and American Dada"	Discuss the Cabaret Voltaire
Fri, Feb 2	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 5	Read (W): Tristan Tzara's <i>The Gas Heart</i> Writing Is Thinking #1 due by the end of today	Quiz #4: <i>The Gas Heart</i> Discuss the death of Dada Introduce Surrealism
Wed, Feb 7	Read (W): Antonin Artaud's <i>Jet of Blood</i> Read (W): Jean Cocteau's <i>Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower</i>	Quiz #5: <i>Spurt of Blood</i> and <i>The Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower</i> Discuss Surrealism
Fri, Feb 9	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 12	Final Essay Topic Due	Midterm Prep
Wed, Feb 14		Midterm Exam
Fri, Feb 16	Read (N): Susan Glaspell's <i>Trifles</i> Read (W): Djuna Barnes' <i>The Dove</i>	Discuss the Little Theatre Movement

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Week Seven: Black American Avant-garde

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Feb 19	Read (N): Sophie Treadwell's <i>Machinal</i>	Quiz #6: <i>Trifles</i> and <i>Machinal</i> Discuss USAmerican companies on Broadway
Wed, Feb 21	Writing Is Thinking #2 due by the end of today	Discuss the Black American avant-garde
Fri, Feb 23	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 #7: <i>A Sunday Morning in the South</i> , <i>Stragglers in the Dust</i> , and <i>The Purple Flower</i>

Week Eight: Brecht and His Influences

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Feb 26	Read (W): Bertolt Brecht's "Emphasis on Sport"	Introduce Brecht
Wed, Feb 28	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 2	Read (W): Bertolt Brecht & Margarete Steffin's <i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i>	Quiz #8: <i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i>

Week Nine: Depression-era and Mid-century USAmerican Theatre

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Mar 5	Read (W): Hallie Flanagan's "Introduction to <i>Federal Theatre Plays</i> "	Return to the United States and the Depression
Wed, Mar 7	Read (W): the Federal Theatre Project's <i>Triple-A Plowed Under</i>	Quiz #9: <i>Triple-A Plowed Under</i> Discuss Realism in the U.S.
Fri, Mar 9	Writing Is Thinking #3 due by the end of today	Discuss USAmerican "golden age" drama

Spring Break: March 12 – March 16

Week Ten: Post-WWII Theatre

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Mar 19	Read (W): Arthur Miller's <i>A View from the Bridge</i>	Quiz #10: <i>View from the Bridge</i>
Wed, Mar 21		Introduce the Theatre of the Absurd
Fri, Mar 23	Read: Samuel Beckett's <i>Endgame</i>	Quiz #11: <i>Endgame</i> Discuss Beckett's influence

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Week Eleven: Postmodernism & Experiments in the 1960s

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Mar 26	Final Essay Due by midnight	Discuss postmodernism
Wed, Mar 28	Read (W): Heiner Müller's <i>Hamletmachine</i> Read (W): Adrienne Kennedy's <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i>	Quiz #12: <i>Hamletmachine</i> & <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i> Discuss postmodern performance
Fri, Mar 30		Discuss 1960s performance troupes

Week Twelve: Experiments in South America

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Apr 2		Discuss South American Theatre
Wed, Apr 4	Read (W): Griselda Gambaro's <i>Information for Foreigners</i>	Quiz #13: <i>Information for Foreigners</i>
Fri, Apr 6		TBA (Leaving space for UCF Celebrates the Arts or other drama)

Week Thirteen: Performance Art and Solo Performance

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Apr 9		Discuss performance art
Wed, Apr 11		Introduce the theatre of the 1990s Discuss Solo Performance
Fri, Apr 13	Read (W): Carmelita Tropicana's <i>Milk of Amnesia – Leche de Amnesia</i>	Quiz #14: <i>Milk of Amnesia – Leche de Amnesia</i>

Week Fourteen: Newer Playwriting I

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Apr 16	Read: Sarah Kane's <i>Blasted</i>	Quiz #15: <i>Blasted</i>
Wed, Apr 18		Final Review
Fri, Apr 20	Read: Chantal Bilodeau's <i>Sila</i>	Quiz #16: <i>Sila</i>

Week Fifteen: Newer Playwriting II

	Assignments Due	Class Activities
Mon, Apr 22	Read: Sharon Bridgforth's <i>the bull-jean stories</i>	Quiz #17: <i>the bull-jean stories</i>

Final Assessment: Monday, April 30, 1.00-3.50p