

CONTEMPORARY THEATRE PRACTICE

Dr. Julia Listengarten
Office: PAC Theatre 220
Phone: 823-3858
Office hours:
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-5:00, and
by appointment
Julia.listengarten@ucf.edu

Spring 2017
M260; T/R 12:30-1:50

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This graduate course will examine various avant-garde movements and trends in theatre from the late nineteenth-century to the present day. Among these movements are Symbolism, Futurism, Dada, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Theatre of the Absurd, as well as various avant-garde developments in the second half of the twentieth century. The course will also examine the history of American avant-garde theatre with particular emphasis on happenings and rituals of the sixties as well as postmodern and multicultural trends in contemporary theatre practice. In addition, we will investigate theories and practice of significant twentieth-century directors and discuss a number of plays as sources and reflections of avant-garde theatrical history and philosophy.

The class will consist of a mixture of lectures, discussions, and presentations. Students are expected to come to class with things to talk about drawn from their reading, their thinking, and their practical experience in the theatre. *Being prepared means doing more than just quickly skimming the plays.* I approach teaching as a mutual exchange of ideas, hypotheses, and propositions. I am not here merely to feed you information just as you are not here to accept what I say unthinkingly. And feel free to argue with anything you read, or anything I or your peers say; your grade will not be affected just because you disagree with me.

The last few weeks of the semester will focus on the process of theatrical research and writing. Coursework will culminate in a final paper, which might be submitted to a journal to be considered for publication.

Required Texts:

Ed. Robert Knopf, Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950 (2015)
Arnold Aronson, American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History (2000)
Ed. Richard Drain, Twentieth Century Theatre: A Sourcebook (1995)
Gibaldi/Achtert, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Latest edition

Suggested text: Eds. Robert Knopf and Julia Listengarten, Theater of the Avant-Garde, 1950-2000 (2011)

Required Plays:

Maeterlinck, Interior
Bruisov, The Wayfarer
Strindberg, The Ghost Sonata

Jarry, Ubu Roi
 Marinetti, Feet
 Boccioni, Genius and Culture
 Kaiser, From Morn to Midnight
 Stein, Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights
 Artaud, The Spurt of Blood
 Lorca, Blood Wedding
 Ionesco, The Bald Soprano
 Genet, The Maids
 Albee, The Zoo Story
 Pinter, Homecoming
 Whitman, Night Time Sky
 Tadeusz Kantor, The Dead Class (excerpt)
 Vogel, The Baltimore Waltz
 Caryl Churchill, Far Away
 Reza Abdoh, Hip-Hop Waltz of Eurydice
 Susan-Lori Parks, Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World
 Hélène Cixous, Portrait of Dora
 Griselda Gambaro, Stripped

Additional reading material will be assigned every week.

There will also be a few videotapes. ***It is important to keep up with readings. Please make an appointment to see me if you are having trouble.***

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory. ***There will be NO make-up presentations or reports.*** You are responsible for all classes missed. You will be allowed 2 absences per semester in case of illness or emergency. If you need to miss class, you must contact me by phone or note before class. Each unexcused absence will lower your grade one-third of a letter (from B+ to B, for instance). Please be punctual. Three tardies=one unexcused absence for the purpose of grading. ***If you miss more than 4 classes, you will fail this course.***

Note: Plus and minus grades will be implemented in the grading policy. The following is the system that will be used to determine your grade:

Grade	Grade Point Value		Grade	Grade Point Value	
A	4.00	93-100	C	2.00	73-76
A-	3.75	90-92	C-	1.75	70-72
B+	3.25	87-89	D+	1.25	67-69
B	3.00	83-86	D	1.00	63-66
B-	2.75	80-82	D-	0.75	60-62
C+	2.25	77-79	F	0.00	59

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PAPERS

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance: in 2-3 sentences, provide your own definition of “avant-garde” by January 13 (in Webcourses).

1. Class participation (150 pts.)

There will be a series of scene readings and discussions in which each student will participate. Participation in this class is essential, both to maintain a high level of discussion and to encourage you to practice your spoken communication skills. You will be graded on quality as well as quantity of your participation.

2. Research report (50 pts.), ten to fifteen minutes. A handout with bibliography is required.

The body of your presentation should contain:

Clear context and theoretical/ historical framework (15 pts.)

Concise research portion (15 pts.)

Guiding questions to generate further discussion (15 pts.)

Bibliography (5 pts.)

3. Creative project (100 pts.)**4. Research Paper (100 pts.)**

Guidelines for the Research Paper:

Identify major theoretical tenets, assumptions, traditions, and tendencies that have interested you over the course of the semester

Choose your research topic and write a one page abstract for your paper, including a preliminary thesis and anticipated outcomes

Prepare a working bibliography for your intended topic

Write an outline—a preliminary structure for the final paper

Write a prospective introduction to your paper (1-2 pages)

Describe three major issues that you are going to develop in the main body of your paper

Work on the paper

5. Final Paper (100 pts.), ten to fifteen pages, on a topic approved by me, or **Creative Project**

Total: 500 points

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PAPERS

CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week of January 9:

Topics: Introduction: what is Avant-Garde?

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Introduction (Thursday)

Week of January 16:

Topics: Franco-Russian Symbolism: Maeterlinck, Interior (Tuesday)
The Wayfarer (Tuesday)
 Pataphysical Theater: Jarry, Ubu Roi (Thursday)

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Chapters 1 & 2
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: # 1
Interior, The Wayfarer, Ubu Roi

Week of January 23:

Topics: Intimate Theater/Chamber Drama: Strindberg, The Ghost Sonata (Tuesday)
 Italian Futurism: Marinetti, Feet; Boccioni, Genius and Culture (Thursday)

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Chapters 3 & 5
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: ## 5, 41, 57
 Strindberg, The Ghost Sonata
 Marinetti, Feet; Boccioni, Genius and Culture

Week of January 30:

Topics: German Expressionism: Kaiser, From Morn to Midnight (Tuesday)
 Dada; French Surrealism: Vitrac, The Mysteries of Love (Thursday)

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Chapters 6, 7, & 9
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: ## 6, 8
 Kaiser, From Morn to Midnight
 Vitrac, The Mysteries of Love

Week of February 6:

Topics: Theatre of Cruelty: Artaud, The Spurt of Blood (Tuesday)
 Lorca, Blood Wedding (Thursday)

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Chapters 10
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: ## 68, 73
 Artaud, The Spurt of Blood
 Lorca, Blood Wedding

Week of February 13:

Topics: American Dada and Surrealism: Stein, Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights (Tuesday)

Discussion of the Creative Project (Tuesday)

Theatre of the Absurd: Albee, The Zoo Story (Thursday)

Ionesco, The Bald Soprano (Thursday)

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Chapters 12 & 13
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: # 17

Stein, Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights
 Albee, The Zoo Story
 Ionesco, The Bald Soprano

Week of February 20:

Topics: Theatre of the Absurd (continued): Pinter, Homecoming; Genet, The Maids (Tuesday)

Thursday: Creative Project. Part I

Reading: Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1890-1950, Chapter 13
 Pinter, Homecoming
 Genet, The Maids

Week of February 27:

Topics: Origins of the American Avant-Garde; Theories and Foundations (Tuesday)

Thursday: Creative Project. Part II

Reading: American Avant-Garde Theater: A History, Chapters 1 & 2

Week of March 6:

Topics: Origins of the American Avant-Garde; Theories and Foundations (continued) (Tuesday)
 Off-Broadway, Happenings, and the Living Theatre: (Thursday)

Discussion of Essay Topics

Reading: American Avant-Garde Theater: A History, Chapter 3
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: # 69
 Whitman, Night Time Sky
Theater of the Avant-Garde; 1950-2000, Chapters 2 & 5

Week of March 13:

Spring Break

Week of March 20:

Topics: The 1960s Collectives and Rituals: Grotowski, The Open Theatre, The Performance Group, Andre Serban (Tuesday)

Research/Catch up Day (Thursday)

Week of March 27:

Topics: Postmodern Multicultural, and Multidisciplinary Trends in Performance: Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Eugenio Barba, Pina Bausch, Martha Clarke, Tadeusz Kantor (Tuesday)

Performance Art: Spalding Gray, Elizabeth LeCompte, The Wooster Group (Thursday)

Reading: American Avant-Garde Theater: A History, Chapters 4 & 5
Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook: # 19, 20, 21, 70, 78, 84
Introduction to Theater of the Avant-Garde: 1950-2000
 Tadeusz Kantor, The Dead Class (excerpt)
Theater of the Avant-Garde; 1950-2000, Chapter 5

Week of April 3

Topics: Reza Abdoh, Hip-Hop Waltz of Eurydice (Tuesday)
 Camp: Ludlam; Sontag (Thursday)

Reading: American Avant-Garde Theater: A History, Chapters 6 & 7
Theater of the Avant-Garde; 1950-2000, Chapters 4 & 6
 Reza Abdoh, Hip-Hop Waltz of Eurydice
 Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp’”
 Ludlam, “Camp”

Paper DUE—Thursday, April 6

Week of April 10:

Topics: Avant-Garde Trends in Contemporary American Playwriting

Vogel, The Baltimore Waltz (Tuesday)
 Suzan-Lori Parks, Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World (Thursday)

Reading: Vogel, The Baltimore Waltz
 Suzan-Lori Parks, Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World
Theater of the Avant-Garde; 1950-2000, Chapter 2

Week of April 17:

Topics: Theatre from a Feminist Perspective: Ariane Mnouchkine, Judy Chicago, Hélène Cixous, Carolee Schneemann, Karen Finley (Tuesday)
Hélène Cixous, Portrait of Dora (Tuesday)

Contemporary European and Latin American Perspectives in Playwriting:
McDonagh, Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, Caryl Churchill, Griselda Gambaro, Heiner Müller

Caryl Churchill, Far Away (Thursday)
Gambaro, Stripped (Thursday)

Reading: Hélène Cixous, Portrait of Dora
Caryl Churchill, Far Away
Gambaro, Stripped

Twentieth-Century Theatre: # # 30, 31, 32, 33, 83
Theater of the Avant-Garde; 1950-2000, Chapters 5 & 6

Final: Thursday, April 27,
10:00 AM – 12:50 PM

Notes:

1. *All written assignments must be typed. Handwritten assignments and papers will not be accepted. Papers must be stapled before you arrive in class.*
2. *All written work must meet the standards of basic expository writing and must follow the style outlined in the MLA Handbook. Grammar, clarity, organization, style, and documentation count and will affect your grade.*
3. *The penalty for plagiarism is the semester grade of F.*

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

There are plays and materials that may express adult or controversial themes as well as strong language. If this presents a problem for you, please see the instructor immediately to access your chances for success in the course.

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so we can discuss

accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity.

It is the policy of the University to reasonably accommodate absences due to observed religious holidays. However, the student will be held responsible for any material covered during the absence and must inform the instructor two weeks prior the holiday.

Since theatre requires the use of mind, voice, and body, there might be situations that will require a certain amount of physical contact between you and the instructor and other students. If this presents a problem for you, please see the instructor immediately to access your chances for success in the course.