

THE 6507
Dramatic Theory and Criticism

Dr. Julia Listengarten
Office: T220
Tuesday/Thursday: 1:30-4:00
and by appointment

Fall 2016
Tuesday/Thursday: 10:30-11:45
M116

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will investigate theoretical developments in theatre and their connections with theatre history and dramatic literature. What is the impact of theory on theatre practice and dramatic literature? How does the evolution of theatre theory reflect the development of theatre? What is the place of theatre theory in the context of the world's cultural and intellectual history? What are the ways in which theory may interact with theatre practice in contemporary theatre settings? How can we--theatre practitioners of the twenty first century--interact with theory to challenge our own practice?

We will start with Aristotle and the Greeks and trace the development of theoretical thought in its association with practical theatre up to the present day.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, From the Greeks to the Present, by Marvin Carlson
Theatre/Theory/Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel, ed. Daniel Gerould
Theatre in Theory, 1900-2000; An Anthology, ed. David Krasner

REQUIRED PLAYS:

The knowledge of these texts is assumed during class discussions

Bacchae by Euripides
Dr. Faustus by Marlowe
Phaedra by Racine
Life is a Dream by Calderon
Faust, Part 1, by Goethe
Three Sisters by Chekhov
Good Woman of Setzuan by Brecht
Far Away by Churchill
Phaedra's Love by Kane
Vienna: Lusthaus by Mee
Explosion of Memory: Description of a Picture by Müller

Handouts:

Dramatic Theory and Criticism: From Greeks to Grotowski, ed. Bernard Dukore (handouts)
Other readings

RECOMMENDED SOURCES:

(The following books will be extremely useful as you prepare your reports.)

Modern Theories of Drama: A Selection of Writings on Drama and Theatre, 1840-1990, ed.

George W. Brandt History of the Theatre, by Oscar Brockett (latest edition)

Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama Since the

Late Nineteenth Century, by Oscar Brockett and Robert Findlay

European Theories of the Drama, by Barrett Harper Clark

Theatre Semiotics, by Marvin Carlson

Places of Performance, by Marvin Carlson

Mythology, by Edith Hamilton

The Death of Tragedy, by George Steiner

The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre, ed. John Russell Brown

The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia, by Mel Gordon

The Player's Passion, by Joseph Roach

Theatre of the Oppressed, by Augusto Boal

Performance Art from Futurism to the Present, by RoseLee Goldberg

The Social History of Art, by Arnold Hauser

Directors on Directing, eds. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy

What is Dramaturgy?, by Bert Cardullo

Playing with Theory in Theatre Practice, ed. Megan Alrutz, Julia Listengarten, and Vandy Wood

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory. *There will be NO make-up tests and presentations.* You are responsible for all classes missed. You will be allowed 3 absences for illness and emergencies. For every additional absence, 10 points will be subtracted from your final points. Please be punctual. *If you miss more than five classes, you will fail this course.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

As of Fall 2014, all faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes, or as soon as possible after adding the course, but no later than August 26. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

***** Write a short (2-4 paragraphs) essay on What is Theory?*****

You must use "Webcourses" to submit this assignment.

(5 points--will be added as extra credit)

1. Class participation (20 pts.)

Each student is required to participate in class discussions. 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. Context Presentation (40 pts.)

Each student will be responsible for one context presentation briefly outlining historical developments (**10 pts.**), social and political highlights (**10 pts.**), as well as art trends of an assigned period (**15 pts.**). A short handout for the class is a requirement (**5 pts.**).

3. Two reports (15 pts. each)

You will be allowed 15-20 minutes. A short handout for the class is a requirement.

Report I: Interplay between theory and practice (examples: Stanislavsky, Appia, Craig, Artaud, Brecht, Grotowski, Kantor, etc.)

Report II: Critical theory and its impact on theatre

The body of your presentation should contain:

Clear context and theoretical/ historical framework (**5 pts.**)

Concise research portion (**5 pts.**)

Guiding questions to generate further discussion (**5 pts.**)

4. One group presentation on the interaction between theory and practice (40 pts.) You can work together with your classmate or form a collaborative team with another class/student body.

Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes each and should include the following:

Present theoretical framework (**10 pts.**)

Discuss the use of respective theory as a lens in your practice (**10 pts.**)

Present your practice-based project (this can include elements of design, acting, directing, performance art, etc.) (**10 pts.**)

Reflect on the use of theory in your practice: did it inform your decisions? Did it become a challenge/obstacle? Did it illuminate your practical approach? (**10 pts.**)

Include one page handout

5. One critical essay (20 pts.)--7-10 pages of critical examination of a selected topic or a case study resulting from your group project.

6. Final Project (40 points). For your final project, you can build on your group project or research paper. The results of your research will be presented in class at a time appropriate to the class schedule.

*****If you have any other idea for your paper such as a practice-based presentation or workshop, please discuss it with me as early as possible*****

Guidelines for Research Paper: An example of your research paper--you may choose a play (to be approved by me) and argue at substantial length how it does or does not conform to the dramatic theory of its day (or subsequent dramatic theory that was retrospectively applied to it). Is the play good enough to transcend all theoretical considerations? Is the play crippled by its attempt to conform to theory, or is its power in fact enhanced by the theoretical restrictions it has placed upon itself? The paper calls for intense critical and theoretical analysis on your part, though you may, of course, do research to stimulate your own thinking or to buttress your views.

7. **Bibliography (10 points)**, a comprehensive, annotated bibliography on a subject of your final project or research paper.

TOTAL: 200 points

PAPERS:

The papers will be turned in before class on the date due. The papers should be typed (or processed) on standard sized white paper, with title page, clipped or stapled in the upper left hand corner, with no cardboard or plastic binder of any kind. The papers should be prepared in accordance with Gibaldi/Achert, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Each paper should include a complete bibliography. As a guide to writing, you may use Strunk and White, Elements of Style.

The quality of writing is an extremely important element in a course such as this. It is assumed that any student enrolled in a graduate level course has acquired fundamental academic writing skills. Any paper in which *writing faults* (form, grammar, spelling, style, sentence or paragraph structure, etc.) impede the flow or validity of the ideas will be returned marked "unable to grade." The student must then revise the paper to meet at least minimal academic writing standards and resubmit it. A grade penalty will then be assessed, based on the quality of revision and length of time before resubmission.

In addition to the papers, there will be other occasional written assignments.

Notes:

1. *All written assignments must be typed. Handwritten assignments and papers will not be accepted. Papers must be clipped or stapled before you arrive in class.*
2. *All written work 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.*

Note: Plus and minus grades will be implemented in the grading policy.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS:

Week 1**Tuesday 8/23**

Syllabus

Initial Introductions

Thursday 8/25

Why Theory?

Gerould's Introduction

Week 2**Tuesday 8/30*****Plato, Aristotle, and Greek Tragedy******Greek Comedy***

Carlson, Chapter 1.

Gerould, Aristotle (Introduction, p.18); Aristotle, PoeticsBacchae**Thursday 9/1*****Roman Theatre. Medieval Theatre.***

Carlson, Chapters 2 &3

Gerould, Horace: The Art of Poetry**Week 3****Tuesday 9/6*****Eastern Theatrical Thought***Gerould, Bharata: Natyasastra; Zeami: On the Art of the No Drama**Thursday 9/8*****Renaissance Italy***

Carlson, Chapter 4

Gerould, Castelvetro: "The Poetics of Aristotle"; Guarini: "The Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry"

Week 4**Tuesday 9/13*****Renaissance Spain***

Carlson, Chapter 5

Life is a Dream

Gerould, Lope de Vega: "The New Art of Writing Plays"

Thursday 9/15***English Renaissance***

Carlson, Chapter 7

Gerould, Philip Sydney: "The Defense of Poesy"

Dr. Faustus

Week 5**Tuesday 9/20*****French Renaissance and Neoclassicism***

Carlson, Chapters 6 & 8

Gerould, Pierre Corneille: "Of the Three Unities of Action, Time and Place"

Thursday 9/22***French Renaissance and Neoclassicism***

Carlson, Chapter 8 (continued)

Racine, Phaedra**Week 6****Tuesday 9/27*****English Restoration and Eighteenth Century***

Carlson, Chapter 9

Gerould, John Dryden: "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy"

Thursday 9/29**Catch-up and/or Research Day****Week 7****Tuesday 10/5*****Enlightenment in Germany and France***

Carlson, Chapters 10, 11, & 12 (specific pages will be assigned)

Gerould, Denis Diderot: "Conversations on The Natural Son"; "The Paradox of Acting";

Lessing: "Hamburg Dramaturgy"

Thursday 10/6***Spread of Romanticism in Germany and France***Goethe, Faust, Part 1

Gerould, Schiller: "The Stage as a Moral Institution"; Goethe: "Shakespeare Once Again";

Schopenhauer: "The World as Will and Idea"

Week 8**Tuesday 10/11*****Nineteenth-Century England. Late Nineteenth-Century Germany*****Wagner and "The Art-Work of the Future."*****Initial Discussion of Group Project***

Carlson, Chapters 13 & 15

Gerould, Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy**Thursday 10/13**

Work in progress: Discuss the “theory into practice” project and/or paper ideas.

Week 9

Tuesday 10/18

France in the Late Nineteenth Century. Naturalism. Beginning of Modernism. Early Twentieth-Century

Carlson, Chapters 16 and 17

Gerould, Zola: Preface to Therese Raquin; Naturalism in Theatre

Thursday 10/20

**Group projects presentations and discussions
(Mid-term)**

Week 10

Tuesday 10/25

Naturalism. Beginning of Modernism. Early Twentieth-Century (continued)

Gerould, Strindberg: Preface to Miss Julie

Chekhov, Three Sisters

Thursday 10/27

The Rise of the Avant-Garde. Pre-World War II Theatrical Thought and Practice

Carlson, Chapters 17 & 18

Gerould, Gordon Craig: “The Actor and the Übermarionette”; Maeterlinck: “The Tragical in Daily Life”

Week 11

Tuesday 11/1

Pre-World War II Theatrical Thought and Practice (continued)

Carlson, Chapter 19

Gerould, Yeats: “The Tragic Theatre”; Meyerhold: “The Fairground Booth”; Marinetti: “The Variety Theatre”

Gerould, Artaud: The Theatre and Its Double

Thursday 11/3

Epic Theatre and Bertolt Brecht

Gerould, Brecht: “The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre”

Krasner, Walter Benjamin, “What is Epic Theatre?”

Brecht, Good Woman of Setzuan

Week 12

Post-World War II Thought and Practice. Existentialism. The Theatre of the Absurd**Tuesday 11/8**

Carlson, Chapter 20

Krasner Ionesco: "The Avant-Garde Theatre"

Krasner, Duerrenmatt: "Problems of the Theatre"

Krasner, Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd

Thursday 11/10

Papers or Case Studies are Due

Theatre in the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties. New Trends in Theatre

Carlson, Chapter 21

Krasner, Steiner: The Death of Tragedy

Krasner: Grotowski: Towards the Poor Theatre; Peter Brook: "The Immediate Theatre"

Week 13

Theatre in the Sixties, Seventies, Eighties, and Beyond

Tuesday 11/15

Carlson, Chapter 21 (specific pages will be assigned). **Readings will be divided.**

Gerould, Boal: "Theatre of the Oppressed"; Wole Soyinka: "Drama and the African World View"; Havel: "Writing for the Stage"

Thursday 11/17

Krasner, Judith Butler: "From Parody to Politics"

Krasner, Schneider: "The Explicit Body in Performance"

Kane, Phaedra's Love

Week 14**Tuesday 11/22**

Twentieth Century Since 1980 (continued).

Carlson, Chapter 22

Krasner, Patrice Pavis: "Languages of the Stage"

Krasner, Kirby: "Manifesto on Structuralism"

Krasner, Richard Schechner: "What is Performance Studies Anyways?"

Thursday 11/24

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

Tuesday 12/29

Twentieth Century Since 1980 (continued)

Carlson, Chapter 22

Churchill, Far AwayMee, Vienna: Lusthaus**Thursday 12/1**Muller, Explosion of Memory/Description of a Picture

Krasner, Muller: "Reflections on Post-Modernism"

Discussion of final work in progress**Final:****December 6, 10:00 am-12:50 pm****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.