CONTEMPORARY THEATRE PRACTICE

Dr. Julia Listengarten  
Office: PAC Theatre 220  
Phone: 823-3858  
Office hours:  
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-4:00, and  
by appointment  
Julia.listengarten@ucf.edu

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:  

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

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:

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NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PAPERS

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Attendance: in 2-3 sentences, provide your own definition of “avant-garde” by January 11 (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. Each of you in a group of two will lead one class discussion.

2. Research report (50 pts.), ten to fifteen minutes. Individual or in a group of two. 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.)
   Details will be discussed in class. This is a collaborative project with undergraduate students in the Early Modern Spanish Drama class (in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures)

4. Research Paper (100 pts.), ten to fifteen pages, on a topic approved by me.

   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. Reflection paper (100 pts).

Total: 500 points
NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PAPERS

CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS
**Week of January 7:**

**Topics:** Introduction: what is Avant-Garde?

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

**Week of January 14:**

**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 21:**

**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 28:**

**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 4:**

**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 11:**

**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 18:
Topics: Theatre of the Absurd (continued): Pinter, Homecoming; Genet, The Maids
(Tuesday)

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

Week of February 25:
Topics: Origins of the American Avant-Garde; Theories and Foundations (Tuesday)

Thursday: Creative Project. Phase I. Research Questions and Methodology

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

Week of March 4:
Topics: Origins of the American Avant-Garde; Theories and Foundations (continued)
(Tuesday)

Discussion of Essay Topics

Reading: American Avant-Garde Theater: A History, Chapter 3

Research/Catch up Day (Thursday)

Week of March 11:

Spring Break
Week of March 18:
Topics: Off-Broadway, Happenings, and the Living Theatre (Tuesday)

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

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

Paper DUE—Thursday, March 21

Week of March 25:
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 1
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”

Week of April 8:
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 15:**
**Topics:** Theatre from a Feminist Perspective: Ariane Mnouchkine, Judy Chicago, Hélène Cixous, Carolee Schneemann, Karen Finley (Tuesday)
Hélène Cixous, Portrait of Dora (Tuesday)

**Tuesday—Creative Project Phase II**

**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:**
*Presentation of Creative Project and Completion of Written Reflection.*

Thursday, April 25,
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 me as soon as possible.

**Policy Statements**

**Academic Integrity**

The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) defines academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action.

[http://www.academicintegrity.org/icaи/assets/FVProject.pdf](http://www.academicintegrity.org/icaи/assets/FVProject.pdf)

**UCF Creed**: Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

1. Integrity: I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.
2. Scholarship: I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.
3. Community: I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.
4. Creativity: I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.
5. Excellence: I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

The following definitions of plagiarism and misuse of sources comes from the Council of Writing Program Administrators <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9> and has been adopted by UCF’s Department of Writing & Rhetoric.

**Plagiarism**

In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

**Misuse of Sources**

A student who attempts (even if clumsily) to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student should be considered to have failed to cite and document sources appropriately.

**Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating**

UCF faculty members have a responsibility for your education and the value of a UCF degree, and so 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
For more information about UCF’s Rules of Conduct, see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/.

Unauthorized Use of Class Materials
There are many fraudulent websites claiming to offer study aids to students but are actually cheat
sites. They encourage students to upload course materials, such as test questions, individual
assignments, and examples of graded material. Such materials are the intellectual property of
instructors, the university, or publishers and may not be distributed without prior authorization.
Students who engage in such activity are in violation of academic conduct standards and may
face penalties.

Unauthorized Use of Class Notes
Faculty have reported errors in class notes being sold by third parties, and the errors may be
contributing to higher failure rates in some classes. The following is a statement appropriate for
distribution to your classes or for inclusion on your syllabus:
Third parties may be selling class notes from this class without my authorization. Please be
aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or
grade. Use these materials at your own risk.

In-Class Recording Policy
Outside of the notetaking and recording services offered by Student Accessibility Services, the
creation of an audio or video recording of all or part of a class for personal use is allowed only
with the advance and explicit written consent of the instructor. Such recordings are only
acceptable in the context of personal, private studying and note
taking and are not authorized to
be shared with anyone without the separate written approval of the instructor.

Course Accessibility Statement
The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons
with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with
disabilities who need specific access in this course, such as accommodations, should contact the
professor as soon as possible to discuss various access options. Students should also connect
with Student Accessibility Services (Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone
(407) 823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be
created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations
that might be reasonable.

Campus Safety Statement
Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, we will all need to work
together. Everyone should be aware of the surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and
security concepts.
• In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
• Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the
door. Please make a note of the guide’s physical location and consider reviewing the
online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.
• Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes from each of your classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency. (Insert class-specific details if appropriate)

• If there is a medical emergency during class, we may need to access a first aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those items are located in this building, see http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/AEDlocations-UCF (click on link from menu on left). (insert class specific information if appropriate)

• To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to my.ucf.edu and logging in. Click on “Student Self Service” located on the left side of the screen in the tool bar, scroll down to the blue “Personal Information” heading on your Student Center screen, click on “UCF Alert”, fill out the information, including your e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click “Apply” to save the changes, and then click “OK.”

• If you have a special need related to emergency situations, please speak with me during office hours.

• Consider viewing this video (https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk) about how to manage an active shooter situation on campus or elsewhere.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students
If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact your instructor to discuss your circumstances.