

DRAMA 301: Theories of Theatre I

Fall 2007

Course Instructor: Natalie Harrower
Office: Theo 011
Office Hours: Monday 2:30-4:00pm; Wednesday 1:00-2:30pm
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Class Meetings Monday 1:00-2:30pm
Wednesday 11:30-1:00pm

Location: Theo 115
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COURSE GOALS: STUDENTS CAN EXPECT TO...

- ◆ Improve skills in reading, critical thinking, and the synthesis of ideas
- ◆ Comprehend and analyse tracts by some of the major theorists of drama
- ◆ Develop a critical vocabulary of key dramatic and philosophical concepts
- ◆ Trace different approaches to key ideas through their various incarnations
- ◆ Deepen understanding of the relationship between text and performance
- ◆ Enrich understanding of the art-society dialectic
- ◆ Improve the ability to present, discuss, and debate concepts orally
- ◆ Conquer any lingering reservations about the big bad word 'theory'

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as both a survey of select theoretical writings on theatre up to the 1970s, and an in-depth exploration of key issues arising from those theories. Readings and class discussions will raise many questions (many, many more than we can answer!) about the definition, purpose, and effect of drama and theatre in the world. While students will be encouraged to address topics of individual interest, the readings have been chosen to highlight philosophical debates on the ideas of 'mimesis' and 'morality.'

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All readings are available at the Campus Bookstore, and are also on reserve at Stauffer Library.

Gerould, Daniel. *Theatre/Theory/Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel*. New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000.

Course Reader contains:

- Plato, *The Republic* (excerpts)
- Tertullian, *On the Spectacles* (excerpts).
- Artaud, Antonin, "No More Masterpieces"
- Artaud, Antonin, *Spurt of Blood*.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

Participation – 20%

In a seminar course, all participants are responsible for the creation of the learning environment. The success of a seminar is directly linked to the participants' careful preparation, and thoughtful participation. Students will be evaluated on their professionalism (preparedness for the course, regular attendance) and the quality of their contributions to weekly discussions.

Critical Responses – 10 x 4% = 40%

To be posted by 11:59pm the evening *before the reading is first addressed in class*. (e.g. posting on Plato must be online by 11:59pm on Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2007)

Choose ten readings from the course, and write a carefully crafted critical response to the author's arguments (250 words each). Good responses tend to focus on one or two ideas emerging from the readings, and favour depth over breadth. For this assignment, students will create their own blogs through Wordpress.com, and post responses directly to these blogs. See handout for important details.

Seminar Presentation – 15%

Dates TBA

The class will be divided into groups of two or three; each group is responsible for presenting the week's material and engaging the group in a critical discussion of the reading. All members of the group will be assigned the same grade for the presentation.

Essay – 25%

Due Wednesday Dec 5, before 4:00pm

The essay will ask you to address one or more key issues addressed throughout the semester. Details to follow. (2000-2500 words).

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND EXPECTATIONS...

Stress can arise around assignments and deadlines and the use of academic formats, so I think it is important to make the 'rules' clear, so we can understand them, but not dwell on them. When submitting work for a course, ALL references, whether explicit or implicit, directly quoted or paraphrased, must be accurately documented, both in the body of the assignment (e.g. footnotes) and in a bibliography at the end of the paper. In addition, all work submitted for this course must be original to this course. If you consult secondary sources for your seminar presentation, you must also note arguments borrowed from these sources. For further information, carefully read "Plagiarism And How to Avoid It," which I have included in the course reader. Students and Instructors are equally bound by the University's policy on Academic Integrity, which can be found at: <http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/artsci/pg532.html>

As for deadlines, I do think it is in everyone's best interest to just *get work in on time*. For the written assignments, a penalty of 2% per weekday will be applied, up to a maximum of 20% (two weeks late). Assignments more than two weeks late may not be accepted. Exceptional circumstances may warrant a modification to this policy at the instructor's discretion, and students are responsible for adequately communicating their circumstances to the instructor. As for extensions, I am amenable to granting them if students email me early enough – that is, if you demonstrate planning, as opposed to last-minute panic. Due to the nature of the course, extensions cannot be granted for seminar presentations.

READING SCHEDULE

Please complete each reading *before* the first class in which it is discussed.
All readings are in the Gerould book, unless noted by CR (course reader)

Mon Sept 10	Intro/syllabus
Wed Sept 12	Intro - Approaches to 'theory'
Mon Sept 17	Aristotle, <i>The Poetics</i> (selections), 43-67
Wed Sept 19	Aristotle, <i>The Poetics</i> (selections), 43-67
Mon Sept 24	NO CLASS
Wed Sept 26	Schiller, <i>The Stage as a Moral Institution</i> , 248-254
Mon Oct 1	Zola, <i>Naturalism in the Theatre</i> (selections), 358-367
Wed Oct 3	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> (selections) CR
Mon Oct 8	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> (selections) CR
Wed Oct 10	Tertullian, <i>On the Spectacles</i> CR
Mon Oct 15	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Wed Oct 17	Rousseau, <i>An Epistle to Mr. d'Alembert</i> , 202-218
Mon Oct 22	Diderot, <i>Conversations on The Natural Son</i> (selections) and <i>The Paradox of Acting</i> (selections), 189-201
Wed Oct 24	Diderot, <i>Conversations on The Natural Son</i> (selections) and <i>The Paradox of Acting</i> (selections), 189-201
Mon Oct 29	Nietzsche, <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> (selections), 336-350
Wed Oct 31	Nietzsche, <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i> (selections), 336-350
Mon Nov 5	Brecht, <i>The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre</i> and <i>Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting</i> , 444-461
Wed Nov 7	Brecht, <i>The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre</i> and <i>Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting</i> , 444-461
Mon Nov 12	Boal, <i>Theatre of the Oppressed</i> , 462-473
Wed Nov 14	Boal, <i>Theatre of the Oppressed</i> , 462-473
Mon Nov 19	Artaud, <i>The Theatre and Its Double</i> (selections), 433-443 and "No More Masterpieces" CR and <i>Spurt of Blood</i> CR
Wed Nov 21	Artaud, <i>The Theatre and Its Double</i> (selections), 433-443 and "No More Masterpieces" CR and <i>Spurt of Blood</i> CR
Nov 21-23	see <i>Shape of the Universe</i> at The Wellington St. Theatre
Mon Nov 26	<i>Shape of the Universe</i> discussion
Wed Nov 28	Wrap up