THEATRE HISTORY II, Spring 2009  
PERF 366/666.001  Mon./Thurs. 12:45-2:00p.m.  
COURSE SYLLABUS: Read Thoroughly!

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Office: Katzen Room 230  
Office Hours: M 2-3:30  
Th 11a.m.-12:30p.m., 2-3:30 and 5-6:30p.m.

OVERVIEW: Students will read, research, discuss and analyze plays and excerpts from theatre and drama of the 19th and 20th Centuries. The course will primarily cover material from the United States and Europe, but we will touch briefly upon works from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Students are strongly encouraged to pursue non-Western works as supplements to regular coursework. This course has a substantial reading component. Students will bring discussion questions to class and are expected to participate vigorously. Students may be asked to take quizzes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: To give students an understanding and critical base of a broad range of 19th and 20th century theatrical literature, theatre styles and artistic movements, and their social contexts.

By the end of the course you will be able to:
- Examine the similarities and differences between dramatic literature in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as cultures and contexts.
- Examine the similarities and differences between theatre practices in the 19th and 20th centuries, cultures and contexts.
- Understand and use criteria and vocabulary with which to read, analyze and view theatre.
- Study and analyze play structure, style and meaning.
- Examine cultural, religious, societal and artistic phenomena as reflected in theatre of the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Write critical analyses of plays read and seen in performance.
- Write a comprehensive research-based analysis of a playwright’s work.
- Develop and implement presentations on the history of dramatic literature and theatre practice.
- Use critical thinking skills and creative and aesthetic faculties to tap your own expressive abilities and potential.

METHODOLOGY:
- Readings, lectures and guided discussions
- Classroom presentations and performances
- Viewing of SIX theatre productions
- Critical analyses of those productions
- Outside research culminating in an Annotated Bibliography and
- A Final Project consisting of an oral presentation and paper
- GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY will, on an individual basis, lead one entire class period
**REQUIREMENTS. In order to pass this course you will need to do all of the following:**

- **Attend class regularly and arrive on time.** Each student is allowed two (2) unexcused absences. The third unexcused absence will result in an **automatic letter grade reduction.** Every three late arrivals will be counted as an additional absence. For an absence to be excused you must present a note from a doctor or academic advisor. When possible, try to get your absences approved *in advance* of the absence. **Please note:** Students are expected to obtain notes, assignments and handouts distributed in their absence. They are also expected to read all the plays listed in the syllabus.

- **Complete five (5) written response/discussion “blurbs.”** For 5 out of the 14 plays we read, each student is expected to present a response to the week’s reading. See additional handout for detailed instructions.

- **Lead classroom discussion on one day of class. Pairs of students will sign up to present material and lead one day of classroom discussion.** Presentations should be approximately 30 minutes long, and no more than 45 minutes. In presentations, students should include some biographical information on the playwright of the day, as well as historical and social context for the day’s play. Students should also provide some background on theatre practice of the time. In addition to the scholarly aspect of presentations, all pairs should also include a visual demonstration or example of theatre practice of the era. Finally, student presenters will join the teacher in leading a class discussion on the play. Students should come equipped with approximately 5 discussion questions to get the group started. The professor will provide additional discussion fodder and assist students in guiding the discussion.

- **Classroom discussion leaders will be graded on the quality of their presentations as determined by the presentation itself, as well as a ONE PAGE written document PER STUDENT inclusive of all presentation notes and discussion questions.** This page should be unique for each student, as students will be graded on an individual AND group basis.

- **Submit all assignments on time.** I discourage, but will accept late assignments. For each **DAY** your assignment is late it will be marked down one-third of a letter grade or the equivalent. More than one week late is an automatic “F.”

- **Complete ALL readings on time.**

- **Complete ONE in-class presentation/lead ONE discussion.**

- **Attend THREE off-campus productions and THREE on-campus productions.** Students must turn in ticket stubs and/or programs for each production attended.

- **Write ONE critique (~5 pgs.) of one professional production.** Due dates listed on Schedule portion of Syllabus. Graduate students will critique TWO productions. More details to follow.

- **Complete an annotated bibliography.** More details to be provided later.
• Set aside a $65-100 lab fee to buy tickets to performances.
• Complete one final project/paper/presentation.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
• Critiques should be ~5 pages long. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, titled, and STAPLED. Papers may not be re-written for credit, but students are encouraged to visit the writing center and/or the instructor before the due date for writing tutorials and assistance in developing paper topics. See calendar for due dates. More details to follow.

• Your final Project and Oral Presentation will consist of a 10 page paper on three plays by a 19th or 20th century playwright not covered in this course. In February, students will randomly draw a playwright’s name, research that playwright, complete a detailed, annotated bibliography, then write a paper on three of that author’s plays. The student will also prepare a 10-minute oral presentation for the class on the day of the final. The time needed for final presentations may exceed the time allotted for the final exam. We will creatively account for this as the date approaches. More details on the scheduled date and the assignment specifications to follow.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:
I will be grading based on a point system. The weighted point value of each assignment is as follows:

- Critique: 50 pts.
- Annotated Bibliography: 50 pts.
- Discussion “Blurbs”: 5 @ 10 pts. each = 50 pts.
- In-Class Presentation: 50 pts.
- Class Participation: 50 pts.
- Final Research Project: 100 pts.

*Graduate Student Extras to be included as needed

At the end of the semester, I will add your earned points and divide the total by the number of points possible to get a final grade percentage. Please be aware that grades are non-negotiable; if you have concerns about my expectations, bring them to me before the due date.

*Remember that:
3 late arrivals = 1 absence
3 unexcused absences = 1/3 drop in course grade (B to B-)
4 unexcused absences = 2/3 drop in course grade (B to C+)
... and so on...

Grading Standards:
A = excellent, consistently superior work in class, written assignments, performances, examinations, and perfect attendance.
B = very good work in class, written assignments, performances, examinations, and perfect attendance.
C = satisfactory work in class, written assignments, performances, and examinations.
D = requirements poorly met. Work is not satisfactory or not completed and/or attendance is unsatisfactory.
F = failure to meet course requirements in assignments, participation, and attendance.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
The Broadview Anthology of Drama, Volume II
Brecht, Bertolt Roundheads and Peakheads*
Coward, Noel Hay Fever*
Rivera, José Marisol*
*I will put all starred plays on reserve in the Music Library and/or on ereserves via Blackboard for your convenience.

REQUIRED SHOWS:
The Cherry Orchard, Washington Shakespeare Company, January 15-February 15
Hay Fever, American University Greenberg Theatre, February 12-14
Roundheads and Peakheads, Catalyst Theater Company, February 11-March 15
Marisol, Forum Theatre, March 14-April 5
Tartuffe, American University Greenberg Theatre, April 10-12
Senior Capstone Project, American University Studio Theatre, April 23-25

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:
Brustein, Robert.  The Theatre of Revolt.
Carlson, Marvin, Ed.  Theories of the Theatre.
Esslin, Martin.  The Theatre of the Absurd.
Huxley, Michael and Noel Witts, Eds.  The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader.
www.theatredatabase.com, www.theatrehistory.com, *www.lowt.org (*This is where you will find links to all professional theatres in DC, including ticket information!),
**www.ticketplace.org (**This is where you’ll find half price tickets for professional DC productions!)

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. Similarly, if you are part of an athletic team, you are required to notify me and get me a copy of your schedule in the first weeks of the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: All students are expected to adhere to the Academic Integrity Code for American University, which is detailed in the current Schedule of Classes describing “standards of academic conduct, rights and responsibilities of members of the academic community, and procedures for handling allegations of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty, as defined by the Code, includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations (in-class or take-home), dishonesty in papers, work done for one course and submitted for another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with another student’s work, and copyright violations. Violations of the Code are treated seriously.”
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
THEATRE HISTORY III
Subject to Change.

Mon. Jan. 12  Introduction and Overview
Thurs. Jan. 15  Romanticism

**Between Jan. 15 and Feb. 5 see THE CHERRY ORCHARD**

Mon. Jan. 19  MLK Day  No Class
Thurs. Jan. 22  WOYZECK, Georg Büchner
Mon. Jan. 26  The Growth of Popular Theatre, Minstrelsy and Blackface
Thurs. Jan. 29  UNCLE TOM’S CABIN
Mon. Feb. 2  Modernism, Realism
Thurs. Feb. 5  HEDDA GABLER, Henrik Ibsen
(plus possible CHERRY ORCHARD critique due)
Mon. Feb. 9  Discuss CHERRY ORCHARD production
The Beginnings of the Historical Avant-Garde and World War I

**Between Feb. 11 and March 15 see ROUNDHEADS AND PEAKHEADS**

Thurs. Feb. 12  UBU ROI, Alfred Jarry

**Between Feb. 12 and Feb. 14 see HAY FEVER**

Mon. Feb. 16  THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, HAY FEVER,
and comedy of manners
Thurs. Feb. 19  Library Day!
Mon. Feb. 23  The Great Depression, New Stagecraft
Thurs., Feb. 26  MAJOR BARBARA, George Bernard Shaw
Mon. Mar. 2  Symbolism, Expressionism, and more Historical Avant Garde
Thurs., March 5  THE GHOST SONATA, August Strindberg

**Mon./Thurs., March 9 and 12  *Spring Break**

Mon. Mar. 16  THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE, Bertolt Brecht
(plus possible ROUNDHEADS AND PEAKHEADS critique due)

**Between March 14 and April 5 see MARISOL**

**Thurs., March 19**
Race, Class, and “The American Dream”

**Mon. Mar. 23**
NATIVE SON, Paul Green and Richard Wright

**Thurs. Mar. 26**
**Annotated Bibliography Due**

**Mon. Mar. 30**
The Federal Theatre Project and World War II

**Thurs. April 2**
CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, Tennessee Williams

**Between April 2 and 4 see TARTUFFE**

**Mon. April 6**
Discuss TARTUFFE
Existentialism and Absurdism

**Thurs. April 9**
PLAY, Samuel Beckett

**Mon. April 13**
Magical Realism and the Surreal

**Thurs. April 16**
MARISOL, José Rivera
(last day for possible critique of MARISOL due)

**Mon. April 20**
Postcolonialism

**Thurs. April 23**
OUR COUNTRY’S GOOD, Timberlake Wertenbaker

**Between April 23 and 26 see SENIOR CAPSTONE**

**Mon. April 27**
The American Musical and Senior Capstone

**Thursday, April 30, 11:20-1:50 p.m.**
Final Papers Due and Oral Presentations
THEATRE HISTORY III
CLASSROOM AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the course syllabus for Theatre History III, Spring Semester 2008. I agree to uphold my end of the syllabus by working toward the goals outlined above and below to the best of my ability.

Signed: ______________________________________________ Date: ________________

Printed Name: __________________________________________

Email: 
Phone: 
Year: 
Major: 
Favorite Play: 

Three Personal Goals for this class for the semester:

1. 

2. 

3.