

DR 606 THEATRE | theory

Department of Drama | Fall, 2012

A person with only one theory is lost.
He must have several, four, many! He must stuff his pockets with them as if they were newspapers,
always the latest, one can live nicely among theories, one can be snugly housed among theories.
~ Bertolt Brecht¹

INSTRUCTOR | Aaron Tobiason

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COURSE LOCATION | Hartke 101

OFFICE | Hartke 210

OFFICE HOURS | Monday 5pm-6pm, and by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this modified DR 606 course is two-fold: to ensure a working familiarity with some of the most important theoretical movements in the history of the Western theatre and cultivate an appreciation for the ways in which the theatre of today is a product of a discussion that has been ongoing for more than two millennia; and to introduce students to the ever-emerging field of Performance Studies, which has been the home of the most sustained engagement with performance theory in the second half of the twentieth-century.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To explore (and review) some of the most important theoretical movements in Western theatre history
2. To investigate the relationships between theory and practice that existed in the various periods covered
3. To distinguish between theories of drama and theories of performance, and see various ways the relationships between the two have been mediated
4. To survey the expansive field of Performance Studies, and study important influences on its development
5. To assess the state of contemporary performance theory, particularly its relationship to prior theoretical models

COURSE FORMAT

This seminar meets Mondays from 6:10pm-8:40pm in Hartke 101. Class time will be spent discussing, in depth, various primary and secondary source documents related to various theories spanning the history of Western theatre. The number, length, and complexity of these readings will vary from week to week, but will frequently be significant. Many discussions will be student-led, and there will be multiple opportunities for students to formally present findings to their peers.

In addition to the required texts (listed below) DR 606 will rely on a variety of electronic materials available through the course Blackboard site. You will also need to check your e-mail regularly, as I will use it to communicate information on any changes to our schedule, cancellations, etc.

¹ Quoted in Daniel Gerould, ed., *Theatre/Theory/Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel* (NY: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 11.

REQUIRED TEXTS & TICKETS

- You will need to purchase/procure the following texts:
 - *Theatre/Theory/Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel*, edited by Daniel Gerould (ISBN: 1557835276)
 - Marvin Carlson's *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present* (ISBN: 0801481546)
 - Victor Turner's *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (ISBN: 0933826176)
 - Richard Schechner's *Performance Theory* (ISBN: 0415314550)
 - Richard Schechner's *Between Theater and Anthropology* (ISBN: 0812212258)
 - *The Goffman Reader*, edited by Charles Lemert and Ann Branaman (ISBN: 1557868948)
 - David Kertzer's *Ritual, Politics & Power* (ISBN: 0300043627)
 - Philip Auslander's *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (ISBN: 0415773539)
- The following texts from DR 604, 607, and 610 are also required:
 - *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski*, edited by Frank Dukore (ISBN: 0030911524)
 - Plato's *Great Dialogues of Plato* (any edition, including online versions, will suffice, as will ISBN: 0451530853)
 - Jonas Barish's *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* (available on Google Books)
 - Bertolt Brecht's *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (ISBN: 0809005425)
 - Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double* (any English edition, such as ISBN: 0802150306)
- You will also need the following play texts (no specific editions or translations are required):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sophocles' <i>Oedipus the King</i> ○ Any one of the following: Aeschylus' <i>Agamemnon</i>, Euripides' <i>Medea</i>, or Euripides' <i>Iphigenia at Aulis</i> ○ Pierre Corneille's <i>Le Cid</i> ○ Jean Racine's <i>Phaedra</i> ○ Seneca's <i>Medea</i> or Terence's <i>Phormio</i> ○ <i>Second Shepherd's Play</i> or <i>Everyman</i> ○ Niccolò Machiavelli's <i>The Mandrake</i> ○ Carlo Goldoni's <i>The Fan</i> ○ Shakespeare's <i>King John</i> ○ Christopher Marlowe's <i>The Jew of Malta</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lope de Vega's <i>Fuente Ovejuna</i> ○ Calderón's <i>Life Is a Dream</i> ○ George Lillo's <i>The London Merchant</i> ○ Gotthold Lessing's <i>Miss Sara Sampson</i> ○ Victor Hugo's <i>Hernani</i> ○ Johann Goethe's <i>Faust</i> (Part 1) ○ Henrik Ibsen's <i>A Doll's House</i> ○ Anton Chekhov's <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> ○ August Strindberg's <i>Miss Julie</i> and <i>A Dream Play</i> ○ Maurice Maeterlinck's <i>The Intruder</i> ○ Sophie Treadwell's <i>Machinal</i>
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- The remainder of the course readings will be made available through electronic reserve on the course Blackboard site (<http://bb8.cua.edu/webapps/login/>).
- You will also need to purchase a ticket to the Department's production of *Hedda Gabler*, which runs October 11th through 14th.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION POLICY

You are expected to attend all classes, and to be on time. If you are significantly late or absent more than twice, your final grade will drop one full letter grade for each late arrival or absence thereafter.

I do not accept late work. The only exceptions to this rule are emergency situations with appropriate documentation, or if you have discussed a situation with me in advance and received an extension. All written assignments are due at the beginning of the class period (papers submitted more than 15 minutes after the beginning of class will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero). If you miss deadlines for papers or are unprepared for your course presentations, it will be impossible to receive an A in this course.

In any graduate seminar, but particularly in one so intimate, active participation is absolutely essential. I will not lecture, and – aside from the scheduled presentations that occur throughout the semester – the significant majority of each class will be devoted to discussions of the material we’ve read, discussions that require active engagement by each of us. It will be (painfully) apparent when someone has skipped or skimmed on the readings; while things will happen, and there will likely be days where you are unable to adequately prepare yourself for class, please keep these to a minimum, as they will hurt the productivity of our work and will negatively impact your grade.

READING RESPONSES & TESTS

- Once we begin the Performance Studies section of the syllabus, you’ll be required to write brief responses (2-3 pages, double-spaced) to the readings we cover each week. These responses need to address **all of the readings** assigned for the day, and should put them in conversation with each other, or with previous texts. While the emphasis is on analysis and synthesis, important questions/confusions/contradictions that remain should also be included. These must be **e-mailed to me by midnight each Sunday**, and should be accompanied by a hard copy the following day when we meet.
- There will be a midterm exam due on **October 12th** (distributed on October 1). This will be a take-home essay exam that will cover all of the theories we’ve addressed to that point, as well as several that will only be dealt with on the exam (Brecht, Artaud, and the Absurdist). I am happy to discuss these exams with you before they are due if you run into any problems.
- There will be a final take-home essay exam due in my inbox by midnight on **December 16th** (we should not need to meet during the period scheduled for the final exam). It will cover all of the readings in the Performance Studies section of the course. It will be distributed on November 26th, and I am happy to discuss it with you prior to the due date.

ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

[your name here]’s Manifesto

Your first assignment will be to write an initial draft of a theatrical manifesto. I imagine you’ve encountered them before, particularly in your readings of the various –isms of early twentieth-century avant-garde theatre (Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism, etc.). In a nutshell, your task is to lay out your “recipe” for great/entertaining/affective/transformational theatre. There’s a GMU assignment that pretty much captures what I’m looking for, so I’ll quote from it here:

Compose your own 1000-word [minimum] manifesto, expressing the aims, goals, desires, and angers of your artistic and creative moment. As a manifesto, it must be particular to the time in

which it is written (now, or next week). It must make outrageous and extravagant [*sic*] claims which you will later disown. It must express contempt [*sic*] or disgust, as well as passion and excitement. It must use active, powerful verbs, shameless nouns, incandescent adjectives and adverbs.

Generally, manifestos have three parts, though the length of each is variable:

- Introductory section of poetic prose, which declares the context of the manifesto. Such a powerful declaration must arise from a specific place and time. The description of the place and time should itself serve as a model of the kind of art you are calling for. This section should also identify, in strong terms, that which you are against, and exactly why. Exaggerate the faults of your enemies, and proclaim the necessity of change.
- List of criteria for your art
 - demands
 - rules and guiding principles
 - condemnations
- Concluding statement explaining, for example, how the world will be better after your ideas have been implemented. Or perhaps simply urging others to join with you. You don't care what the world thinks because you are trying to change the world.

Of these three, the list is perhaps the most important, although the introductory section is often the most artfully written. It is also important that your manifesto [*sic*] demonstrate the principles it calls for. A manifesto doesn't simply define a movement, it calls it into being.²

While I want you to adopt the tone and conventions of the genre and have fun with these (they may involve verse, non-traditional formatting or media, etc.), the goal is to present an honest – though necessarily inflated and sensationalized – assessment of what you feel to be the most important criteria for creating good theatre in today's society. These will be read/performed for your classmates on **September 10th**, and will be revised and re-presented on **December 3rd**.

Period Review of *Hedda Gabler*

You'll first need to see the Drama Department's production of *Hedda Gabler*, which runs October 11th - 14th. You're then going to write a review of the production/play from the vantage point of an individual theorist from one of the theoretical schools we've reviewed in the first month of class. It will be due on **October 22nd**. You'll receive more detailed instructions during Week Three.

Presentations and Lecture/Discussion

- As noted, the first portion of this class is devoted to reviewing and supplementing the material you've already covered in previous classes. You'll have the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the material by taking responsibility for **presenting a succinct yet comprehensive overview** of a particular category of theory each week. These presentations should last **15-20 minutes**, and should be presented as scholarly papers (though you will not need to turn them in). You will be presenting on a particular topic each week during the period between September 10th and September 24th. **Everyone** will need to be prepared to discuss **all** of the theories/readings we cover each week, though you will each take responsibility for being an expert on only one of them. These will be assigned during our first class meeting.
- During the Performance Studies portion of the class, you will each be responsible for **leading discussion** on particular day. I'm sure this is familiar from previous classes, but the idea is

² http://classweb.gmu.edu/textualmedia/manifesto_assignment.html

that you become the expert on that week's readings, and prepare a series of questions or prompts to help guide your peers through the material. Your outline and tentative questions must be **e-mailed to me by noon** on the Sunday before you lead discussion so I can provide feedback/advice as necessary.

In addition to this, however, you will need to prepare a **20-30 minute lecture** appropriate for an undergraduate audience that covers what you see as the key ideas in the readings. You will deliver this lecture (with accompanying PowerPoint/media as appropriate) at the beginning of the class period. We'll select weeks during our second meeting of the semester.

Contemporary Theory Presentation

For our final day of class, you will each need to find a journal article, published in the last decade, that suggests the ways material we've covered in class can be seen influencing contemporary practice. You'll read the article thoroughly, and present a **15-20 minute overview** of it to your classmates on **December 3rd**. You'll receive more details on this in week 8.

WRITING GUIDELINES

These guidelines will apply to all the written work you submit in this class. All need to be typed, and should adhere to the following formatting:

- **1" margins** (top, bottom, left and right)
- **Double-spaced**
- **12 point type**, and please – outside of your titles – use only Times New Roman or Courier
- **Page numbers** (x of y, preferably)
- The **class name/number**, the **date**, and **your name** need to appear at the start of your paper, preferably in the upper-right corner (these should be single-spaced).

I will assume you are all familiar with how to cite material in a scholarly paper; when quoting or paraphrasing from a text, you may simply include the page number from the reading and omit the rest of the citation and works cited.

DUE DATES

The readings assigned throughout the semester must be read by the date they appear on the syllabus.

Assignment/Response/Exam	Date(s) Due
Manifesto	September 10 th , December 3 rd
Reading Responses	Weekly starting October 15 th
Review Presentations	September 10 th , 17 th , & 24 th
Midterm	October 12 th
See <i>Hedda Gabler</i>	Runs October 11 th - 14 th
Period Review	October 22 nd
Lecture/Discussion	TBD
Contemporary Theory Presentation	December 3 rd
Final Exam	December 17 th

GRADING**Breakdown of Assignment Weights**

Reading Responses	10%
Period Review	10%
Manifesto	10%
Presentations/Lectures	20%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%
Attendance/Participation	20%

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A	93-100 %	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
B-	80-82	F	0-59

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Before presenting the University's policy, let me stress that I have a zero tolerance policy regarding plagiarism or academic dishonesty. If I have evidence of potential misconduct, I will forward it to the department chair for advice without hesitation or delay. If you are at all uncertain of whether your use of another's work is potentially questionable, please err on the side of caution (and feel free to run those concerns by me). I'd much rather see original mediocrity than stolen brilliance!

Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are required to initiate the imposition of sanctions when they find violations of academic honesty, such as plagiarism, improper use of a student's own work, cheating, and fabrication.

The following sanctions are presented in the University procedures related to Student Academic Dishonesty (from <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityprocedures.cfm>): "The presumed sanction for undergraduate students for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. There may be circumstances, however, where, perhaps because of an undergraduate student's past record, a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, would be appropriate. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion. ...In the more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction."

Please review the complete texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm> and <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm>.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact Disability Support Services (at 202 319-5211, room 207 Pryzbyla Center) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To read about the services and policies, please visit the website: <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu>.

This syllabus may (and likely will) be subject to revision.

You will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(B) indicates material available on the course Blackboard site.

Week One

August 27: **In Which a Tricked-Out Frankenstein of a Theatre Theory Course is Introduced, and a Tentative Contract is Agreed To**

Week Two

September 3: Labor Day – NO CLASS

Week Three - September 10

September 10: **Greeks, French Renaissance, Roman and Medieval**

3.1: Classical Greece

Excerpts from Plato's *The Republic* (Books 2, 3, 4, & 10) and *Ion*

Excerpts from Aristotle's *Poetics* (Dukore 31 – 56)

Carlson's "Aristotle and the Greeks"

Barish (5 – 37)

Plays: Sophocles' *Oedipus* and either of the following: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Medea* or Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*

Optional: *Mimesis* (1 – 59)

3.2: French Renaissance

de Scudéry, Corneille, French Academy, d'Aubignac, Molière, Racine (Dukore 207 – 255)

Carlson's "The French Renaissance" and "Seventeenth Century France"

Corneille's *Of the Three Unities of Action, Time, and Place* (Gerould)

Plays: Corneille's *Le Cid* and Racine's *Phaedra*

Optional: *Mimesis* (89 – 103)

3.3: Rome, Late Antiquity, Medieval

Cicero, Horace, Longinus, Tertullian, Saint Augustine, Donatus, Mannyng (Dukore 67 – 102)

Carlson's "Roman and Late Classic Theory" and "The Medieval Period"

Barish (66 – 79)

Plays: Seneca's *Medea* OR Terence's *Phormio* **AND** *Second Shepherd's Play* OR *Everyman*

Optional: *Mimesis* (61 – 75s)

Due: Manifesto, Draft One

Week Four**September 17: Rest of the Renaissances****4.1: Italian Renaissance**

Cinthio, Robortellus, Trissino, Scaliger, Castelvetro, Guarini (Dukore 121 – 156)
 Carlson's "The Italian Renaissance"

Plays: Machiavelli's *The Mandrake* and Goldoni's *The Fan*

Optional: *Mimesis* (76 – 88)

4.2: English Renaissance

Northbrooke, Gosson, Lodge, Sidney, Puttenham, Anonymous, Jonson (Dukore 157 – 194)

Carlson's "The Renaissance in England and the Netherlands"

Sidney's *Defense of Poesy* (Gerould 117 – 127)

Plays: Shakespeare's *King John* and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*

Optional: *Mimesis* (104 – 119)

4.3: Spanish Renaissance

Jonson, de Vega (Dukore 185-194, 198-204)

Carlson's "The Spanish Renaissance"

Barish (132 – 154)

de Vega's *The New Art of Writing Plays* (Gerould 135 – 145)

Plays: de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna* and Calderón's *Life Is a Dream*

Optional: *Mimesis* (120 – 133)

Week Five**September 24: Sentimentalism, Romanticism****5.1: Sentimentalism**

Dennis, Farqhar, Addison, Steele, Lillo, Johnson, Hume, Goldsmith, Lessing
 (Dukore 363 – 424, 427 – 436)

Carlson's "The Restoration and Eighteenth Century in England"

Barish (191 – 220)

Lessing's *Hamburg Dramaturgy* (Gerould 236 – 247)

Diderot's *Conversations on The Natural Son* and *The Paradox of Acting* (Gerould 198 – 201)

Plays: Lillo's *The London Merchant* and Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson*

Optional: *Mimesis* (221-255)

5.2: Romanticism

Goethe, Schlegel, Stendhal, Hugo (Dukore 476 – 515, 677 – 691)

Carlson's "Germany to Hegel," "Italy and France in the Early Nineteenth Century," and "Nineteenth-Century England"

Barish (295 – 349)

Blake's "All Religions Are One" (**B**)

de Staël's *Of the Dramatic Art* (Gerould 262 – 267)

Hugo's *Preface to Cromwell* (Gerould 298 – 313)

Plays: Hugo's *Hernani* and Goethe's *Faust* (Part 1)

Optional: *Mimesis* (256-294)

5.3: Realism/Naturalism

Kierkegaard, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Tolstoy (Dukore 549 – 574, 911 – 926)

Barish (350 – 399)

Carlson's "France in the Late Nineteenth Century"

Zola's *Preface to Therese Raquin* and *Naturalism in the Theatre* (Gerould)

Strindberg's *Preface to Miss Julie* (Gerould)

Antoine's "The New Acting of the *Théâtre Libre*" (B)

Plays: Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*

Optional: *Mimesis* (217 – 232)

Week Six

October 1: Symbolism and Expressionism

Symbolism

Maeterlinck, Wagner (Dukore 726 – 736, 777 – 794)

Carlson's "The Early Twentieth Century, 1900-1914"

Sologub's "The Theater of a Single Will" (B)

Bryusov's "Realism and Convention on the Stage" (B)

Craig's *The Actor and the Übermarionette* (Gerould)

Plays: Maeterlinck's *The Intruder* and Strindberg's *A Dream Play*

Expressionism – NEW –ISM!

Ly Gasset (Dukore 756 – 760)

Carlson's "The Twentieth Century, 1914-1930"

Rubiner's "Man in the Center" (B)

Kornfeld's "Epilogue to the Actor" (B)

Goll's "Two Superdramas" (B)

Kaiser's "Man in the Tunnel" (B)

Plays: Kokoschka's *Murderer the Women's Hope* (B) and Treadwell's *Machinal*

Film: Murnau's *Nosferatu* (available on YouTube)

Distribute Midterm Examination and Period Review Description

Week Seven

October 8: Columbus Day – NO CLASS

Midterm

October 12: **Due: Midterm examination in my inbox by midnight**

Week Eight

See *Hedda Gabler*
(October 11-14)

October 15: What is Performance Studies?

Conquergood's "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research" (B)
 Geertz's "Art as a Cultural System" (B)
 Turner's *From Ritual to Theatre* (omit pages 20-60)
 Schechner's *Performance Theory* (chapters 1-3)

Distribute Contemporary Theory Presentation Description**Week Nine****October 22: Ritual**

Turner's *From Ritual to Theatre* (20-60)
 Schechner's *Performance Theory* (chapters 4 and 6)
 Schechner's *Between Theater and Anthropology* (chapter 3)
 Kirby's "The Shamanistic Origins of Popular Entertainments" (B)

Due: Period Review**Week Ten****October 29: Performance in Everyday Life**

Goffman's *The Goffman Reader* (chapters 1-4, 9-11)

Week Eleven**November 5: Linguistic Performances**

Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (lectures I-V) (B)
 Bauman's "Verbal Art as Performance" (B)

Week Twelve**November 12: Ritual in Politics, Politics as Ritual**

Kertzer's *Ritual, Politics & Power*

Week Thirteen**November 19: Performing Identity**

Phelan's *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (chapters 1, 7) (B)
 Butler's "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" (B)

Week Fourteen**November 26: Liveness/Digital/Virtual**

Auslander's *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*
 Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (B)

Distribute Final Exam**Week Fifteen****December 3: Contemporary Theory Presentations**

Due: Final Manifesto

Final Exam

December 16: Due: Final Exam in my inbox by midnight