Course Overview

The second term of the Theatre History sequence moves through multi-national developments in the 18th and 19th centuries, the birth and growing pains of Realism, cultural conditions preceding and artistic responses to the World Wars, national identity crises and contemporary ideas of theatre and theatricality. We end with that most delectable and frustrating of aesthetic principles/movements/periods, postmodernism.

Throughout the term, you are encouraged to consider information not merely as “fact.” Ultimately, the value of historical study is a new understanding of our world and one’s own functioning within it. It is hoped that this course will allow you to develop a conceptual framework which will lead to a personal concept of the theatre as it applies to your own work as an artist.

The class will utilize both lecture and classroom discussion, and student participation is actively sought and encouraged. Input of class members will be treated as part of the content of the class and may appear on examinations. Formal evaluation will be through quizzes and discussions of assigned plays, a research paper and two examinations.

Students joining the course this term are urged to see me early in the term to make sure basic vocabulary and approach to the material are clearly understood.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me immediately.

Instructor Info

Jonathan Cole
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office hours by appointment
Course Objectives

The course is a survey of theatre history. Mastery of the material will include both objective knowledge of important ideas, people, places, methods, and technology and the ability to relate theatrical practice to the general culture. Course objectives include:

★ knowledge of important facts
★ ability to identify connections between concepts both within a specific period and between different periods
★ ability to relate a dramatic text to the period in which it was performed
★ ability to identify concepts and practices that are evident in the contemporary theatre.

Course Requirements and Expectations

Readings

In addition to readings from the Brockett text, you are expected to have read carefully, by the date listed on the syllabus, a selection of plays from the period covered this term. It is expected that you will bring a copy of the plays with you on the days when they are being discussed. Please find and bring your own copy or edition of the plays in question. Individual, reasonably-priced copies of the plays are also available at various bookstores.

Participation

Participation in class discussions (both in large and small groups) is an expected part of this course and will factor into your final grade. Prompt attendance is required, and attendance will be taken through a variety of means. Attendance, plus your active, thoughtful participation in a variety of discussion and written exercises, will determine the participation portion of your grade.

Blurb

In addition to unannounced quizzes (as deemed necessary to insure reading of the assigned work), you may be assigned no more than four “blurbs” – one-page, handwritten responses to specific projects or ideas.

Major Writing Assignment

This consists of a 12-15 page paper which focuses on a particular theatre professional (i.e. Heiner Müller, Josef Svoboda) or group (i.e. Theatre du Soleil, The Group Theatre). The paper will be an examination of at least three significant works that haven’t been read in class or productions, and will contextualize these works in a framework which includes other significant works of the artist/group, and relevant social, economic, political, artistic and theoretical factors. Finally, it will draw conclusions about the work of the individual or group in question that demonstrate significant insight into the particular conditions in which the artist(s) create(s). More specific information about individual parts of the assignment will be provided in class.
Reading Questions
As you go through the assigned readings, jot down any thoughts or questions that occur to you, and get them ready to bring them to class. Then, take the single idea or question which seems most suitable for class discussion, type it up and email it to the class list (thtr-219-01@willamette.edu) no later than the beginning of class on the day that reading assignment is due. You will then choose and respond to one of your peer’s questions via email, and send your reply to the class list no later than the beginning of class on the last day of that unit. Further clarification will be given in class.
NO READING QUESTIONS ARE DUE FOR PLAYS.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON FORMATTING AND GRADING:
The subject line of each email and response must be exactly as follows, or it will not be counted:
All reading questions must have a subject line of “Last name: RQ #” e.g. “Cole: RQ 5”
All responses must have a subject line of “Last name: response #” e.g. “Cole: response 2”

Exams
Because of the fragmented nature of the wide variety of material covered in this term, two examinations (one lesser, one final) will be given to help you to focus your thinking. They will consist of short identifications of important people, places, and concepts as well as an essay question. The final exam may or may not be comprehensive. Quizzes, as needed, will be short 2-5 question short-answer exams.

Please note:
All work is due in class at the beginning of the period on the listed due date.

No late work will be accepted except through prior arrangement.

Quizzes missed due to tardiness or absence may not be made up unless permission is given before the quiz date.
Grading

Grading of the examinations will be based on the clarity and organization of thought, use of documented facts, and pertinence of conclusions. These factors, along with quality of research and general literacy of expression, will also constitute the basis for grading your formal written work.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes,Blurbs and Reading Questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser Examinations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Grading Standards

A = Superior work, ability to integrate material and arrive at original conclusions
B = Good work, mastery of assigned materials
C = Satisfactory work, understanding of basic materials and concepts
D = Poor work, incorrect information or lack of understanding
F = Unsatisfactory, incomplete or inadequate work

There is no curve. Borderline grades will be raised at the discretion of the instructor.

Written Work

All out-of-class assignments are to be typed and formatted in accordance with MLA guidelines, and are to be impeccably proofread and spell checked. You are STRONGLY encouraged to buy a copy of the current MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

On Flexibility

This course is a survey of information essential to an understanding of theatre history. As with any survey course, the content must remain flexible if it is to address the specific needs and abilities of the students; therefore, the syllabus and course schedule are subject to change at any time. These changes are at the sole discretion of the instructor, and whenever possible will be made in writing.
Required Texts


The following plays will be read as part of this course:

- *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Rostand)
- *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Aikin)
- *Woyzeck* (Georg Büchner)
- *The Master Builder* (Ibsen)
- *The Cherry Orchard* (Chekhov)
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Wilde)
- *The Breasts of Tiresias* (Appollinaire)
- *Machinal* (Treadwell)
- *Mother Courage* (Brecht)
- *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett)
- *Death of A Salesman* (Miller)
- *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Kushner)

Recommended Texts

Course Schedule

Week 1
Jan 17 Introduction
Jan 19 Sturm & Drang/Romanticism Brockett Ch.12
Jan 21 Romanticism

Week 2
Jan 24 Romanticism
Jan 26 Cyrano de Bergerac (Rostand) Assigned Play
Jan 28 19th Century Brockett Ch. 13

Week 3
Jan 31 19th Century drama Brockett Ch. 14
Feb 2 American Melodrama Assigned Play + scenes
Uncle Tom’s Cabin (Aikin) selections;
Woyzeck (Büchner)
Feb 4 the search for new theatre: 1880-1920 Brockett ch. 15

Week 4
Feb 7 Realism/Modernism Final Paper Topic Due
Feb 9 Realism/Modernism
Feb 11 Ibsen The Master Builder (Ibsen) Assigned Play

Week 5
Feb 14 Stanislavski and the MAT Brockett Ch. 16
Feb 16 The Cherry Orchard (Chekhov) Assigned Play
Feb 18 Wrap up Realism, etc.

Week 6
Feb 21 a touch of the Brits: Shaw, Wilde, et al
Feb 23 Research Methods: Doreen Simonsen meet in Library instruction room
Feb 25 The Importance of Being Earnest (Wilde) Assigned Play

Week 7
Feb 28 Theatre in Transition Brockett Ch. 17
Mar 2 Theatre in Transition Brockett pp. 414-428 (in Ch. 18)
Mar 4 reactions: the early 20th century “isms”
The Breasts of Tiresias (Appollinaire) Assigned play

Week 8
Mar 7 American Expressionism Brockett Ch. 19
Mar 9 Machinal (Treadwell) Assigned Play
Mar 11 Brecht, Wedekind, Piscator: Epic Theatre annotated bibs/abstracts due
Week 9
- Mar 14: *Mother Courage* (Brecht)  
  Assigned Play
- Mar 16: Study/Review Day
- Mar 18: Examination

*FYI: Spring Break: 3.21-3.25*

Week 10
- Mar 28: Reaction and recovery: 1945-1968  
  Brockett Ch. 20
- Mar 30: Reaction and recovery: 1945-1968
- Apr 1: Absurdism

Week 11
- Apr 4: *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett)  
  Assigned Play
- Apr 6: American realists: Miller  
  Peer Rough Draft Due
- Apr 8: American realists: Williams  
  Return Peer Edited Rough Draft

Week 12
- Apr 11: *Death of A Salesman* (Miller)  
  Assigned Play
- Apr 13: Post-1968: where do we go from here?  
  Brockett Ch. 22 & 23
- Apr 15: Study day/no formal class

Week 13
- Apr 18: Asian American Theatre  
  Reading Packet
- Apr 20: SSRD: No class
- Apr 22: African American Theatre  
  Reading Packet

Week 14
- Apr 25: Toward a Contemporary Theatre  
  B Ch. 24
- Apr 27: Collaborative Collectives/Devising
- Apr 29: *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Kushner)  
  Assigned Play

Week 15
- May 2: Final Review  
  Final Draft Paper Due

FINAL
- Friday 5/7: 8-11 am  
  Final Exam

Be sure to bring a copy of the plays to class for discussion days!!