

**THAR381: THEATRE HISTORY**  
**PRE-REQUISITE: THAR381; THAR MAJOR OR MINOR STATUS**  
**TR9:35-10:50; BLOC133**

**FALL 20XX**  
**KPULLEN@TAMU.EDU**  
**104A ACADEMIC BUILDING**

**DR. KIRSTEN PULLEN**  
**TR1-2 AND BY**  
**APPOINTMENT**

Why should we read and write about theatre? How should we read and write about theatre?

What comprises theatre history? For whom is it written? How does theatre history help us read dramatic literature and understand theatrical performance?

Can dramatic literature be separated from its performance? How can dramatic literature be understood outside of its context? How can we understand context?

What does it mean to say that performance is research?

How do we propose performance projects? How and why should we evaluate our own performances?

How can we evaluate professional and academic productions? How should we read and write performance reviews?

In this class, we'll investigate the intersections between theatre history, dramatic literature, and cultural performance. We'll focus on texts, events, and people as case studies in the history of performance. We'll develop an understanding of how social, political, economic, and cultural context informs performance. We'll explore how the text as performed changes throughout time, place, and histories.

This is a writing-intensive course; our goal is to develop the writing skills we'll need as performance professionals. We'll use performance as research, and we'll analyze our own performance practice. We'll explore different kinds of professional writing, developing proposals and cover letters. We'll bring our historically informed eyes to a TAMU production, reviewing theatrical performance.

At the end of the course, you will be familiar with milestones of world theatre history and canonical dramatic literature texts from the world stage; understand how and why to use performance as research; be experienced writing performance proposals, and be able to write an informed performance review.

**Guest Artist Residency: Tim Miller**

We are extremely fortunate to have guest artist Tim Miller for a week-long residency (4-9 Oct) to develop our studio production. He'll be visiting our class, giving a free performance, and workshopping an original performance with any and all interested students. I can't imagine any of you will miss any of it.

**Required Texts**

All the plays are available on WebCT. It is important that you use these translations and editions of the texts. Please print them out, annotate them carefully, and bring them to class.

Zarrilli, Phillip B., Bruce McConachie, Gary Jay Williams, and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei. *Theatre Histories: An Introduction*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) New York and London: Routledge, 2010. (TH)

## **Course Requirements**

**WebCT:** I use this to post marks, information on exams, performance dates and groups, and assignments. I include relevant links to performances and other information from class lecture. All powerpoint presentations, the syllabus, checklists, and assignment prompts are available online. All of the play texts are available online as pdf files.

**Participation (50 points):** Class works when we're all engaged. I expect you to attend every class, to have completed all the readings, to produce a thoughtful writing and thinking essay, and to participate in all discussions, small group work, performance workshops, and other activities. Your failure to do so will be reflected in your participation grade. Though I do not take attendance, it is very difficult to succeed in this class without being physically and mentally present. Make your choices carefully, and assume responsibility for those choices.

**Writing and Thinking (150 points):** Approximately once a week, you'll be assigned a short writing and thinking essay. These are intended to prepare you for class, to encourage you to think carefully about a specific question, and to suggest other avenues for reading, writing, thinking, and discussing theatre history and dramatic literature. WT assignments are worth 15 points (you can earn 15, 12, 10 or 7 points). There are opportunities to complete twelve writing and thinking assignments; you may earn up to 30 bonus points or skip two assignments without penalty. I do not accept late WT assignments.

**Cover Letter (100 points):** You will write a cover letter/proposal for an internship, a TAMU design or production crew position, or graduate school admission.

**Review (200 points):** You will review the TAMU production of *Dangerous Liaisons* (11-14 Nov) in a short (1250-1500 word) essay. In addition to the review, your mark will include a draft and participation in an in-class writing workshop.

**Performance Project (250 points):** Working in groups of no more than five, you will perform a short (no more than 15-minute) selection from one of the plays we're studying. All texts we read this term are separated from the TAMU context by thousands of years, thousands of miles, thousands of worldviews, and your assignment is to illuminate the original historical performance conditions and context for us. At the same time, you must make the performances meaningful to us, despite their geographic, chronological, and stylistic differences. In short, you will be using performance as research (both for yourselves, exploring language, performance style, setting, gesture, genre AND for your classmates, teaching them something new through your performance). Find resonances between our experiences and the experiences they represent. You'll make strong, historically informed, critical choices about your text and then perform those choices. Each group member will write a short, unique (1000 word) paper on their production, describing the choices they made, analyzing those choices, and judging their success or failure. Each group member will peer-edit another's paper. Your mark for the project will be based on your performance (125 points), paper (100 points) and peer edit (25 points).

**Final Exam (250 points):** We'll take an exam 10 December (12:30-2:30). Readings, in-class screenings, discussions, artist residencies, performances, and activities from the entire course will be covered by the exam. Though the exam for this version of the course is unique, it's not a bad idea to ask former students what their exams were like.

*You are responsible for all in-class viewings, workshops, lectures, and guest-artist residencies. You are expected to bring all of the readings to class every single day. All readings are due on the date indicated. Papers and performances are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. All work submitted must be typed. No work accepted via email without prior arrangement. Failure to complete or earn a passing grade on the cover letter, performance project, review, or final exam results in failure of the course as a whole. No late assignments, no extra credit, no exceptions.*

<b><u>Grade Distribution:</u></b>		<b><u>Grade Equivalency:</u></b>	
Participation	50	1000-900	A
Writing and Thinking	150	899.5-800	B
Proposal	100	799.5-700	C
Review	200	699.5-600	D
Performance	250	599.5↓	F
Final	250		

### **Grading:**

**A=900-1000** Exceptional ability to conceptualize and present ideas; effort beyond meeting basic criteria; you have sought out new ideas and information; your work is thorough and original; your work shows initiative and imagination; there are few to no errors in your written work; overall your work shows a trajectory of development and growth. You have exceeded expectations for research, writing, or speaking at the upper division level in a Research I university.

**B=800-899** Solid work; meets basic requirements; evident language competency; few errors; you are able to engage but generally do not go beyond information and ideas readily accessible through class, readings, and discussions. Your research, writing, and speaking are commensurate with upper division standing in a Research I university.

**C=700-799** Marginal work; writing assignments and discussions demonstrate limited ability or effort to engage ideas and information; written assignments have many errors (sentence structure, spelling, grammar, etc.) and/or are underprepared. Your research, writing, and speaking are slightly below expectations for students with upper division standing in a Research I university and should be improved with additional effort.

**D=600-699** Quantity and quality of work falls far below the expectations of upper division students in a Research I university. You are either not expending enough effort or you need help to accomplish the work required.

**F=below 599** Needs no explanation.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

### **Plagiarism**

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty."

KNOW THE CODE. See <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/> for the Aggie Honor Code.

*"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."*

**THAR381: THEATRE HISTORY**

**FALL 2010**

**DR. KIRSTEN PULLEN**

*All readings and written assignments must be completed before class. All performances must take place on the date indicated. All performance papers must be submitted one week after the performance. All work submitted must be typed. No email submissions without prior arrangement. No late assignments, no extra credit, no exceptions.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
31 Aug	<b>THEATRE HISTORY/ PERFORMANCE HISTORY</b>		
2 Sep		<b>TH</b> xx-xv	As assigned in class, analyze the video according to an Aristotelian or Bharatan framework. How successful is it, according to your framework? What elements does it emphasize, and which does it suppress or ignore? How useful is your framework for assigning meaning to this particular text? (This is a diagnostic assignment; it is ungraded, but it's not optional.)
7 Sep	<b>WRITING WORKSHOP</b>		Bring in 2 copies of your cover letter
9 Sep	<b>RITUAL PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>TH</b> 15-40; 45-51; 58-65; 88-96	
14 Sep		<b>TH</b> 104-110 <i>The Bacchae</i>	
16 Sep		<i>The Bacchae</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	How does the theatre space reinforce meaning in <i>The Bacchae</i> ? How does space indicate power relations? How might Dionysus be represented as an outsider through the use of space in contemporary productions of the play?
21 Sep		<b>TH</b> 65-70; 96-102	What does it mean to say that what is socially peripheral is symbolically central? Analyze a contemporary example (from theatre, from the mass media, from political culture) of this phenomenon. (How) Does it differ from the early modern context?
23 Sep	<b>SACRED PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>TH</b> 110-118; 133-42	<b>Cover Letter Due Bacchae Paper Due</b>
28 Sep		<i>The Little Clay Cart</i>	What are the correspondences between reader-response theory and the principles of Sanskrit drama as set out in the Natya Shastra? Provide a short analysis of <i>TLLC</i> that incorporates the two theoretical perspectives.
30 Sep		<i>The Little Clay Cart</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	
5 Oct		<b>TH</b> 70-71 <i>The Conversion of Thais the Whore</i>	How can a nun write about a whore? How can a nun perform a whore? How might audiences understand this play? What arguments about spirituality and sensuality does it make?

7 Oct	<b>TIM MILLER</b>		<b>TLLC Paper Due</b>
12 Oct		<i>The Conversion of Thais the Whore</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	Tim Miller assignment TBA
14 Oct	<b>AUTHORIZING PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>TH 118-23; 157-67</b>	
19 Oct		<i>The Shrine in the Fields</i>	Based on the reading and class discussion, perform a feminist analysis of <i>Shrine</i> . <b>CTW Paper Due</b>
21 Oct		<i>The Shrine in the Fields</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	
26 Oct		<b>TH 173-82; 185-97</b>	
28 Oct		<b>TH 206-209; 227-34</b>	Revisit the goals and challenges of performance as research. How does embodied knowledge change our view of history? What are some limits to representing and reperforming the past? What kinesthetic structures did you discover as you danced our court dance? <b>Shrine Paper Due</b>
2 Nov		<i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i>	Discuss the representations of sex and violence in <i>'Tis Pity</i> . What's represented on stage, and what isn't? Which is more challenging to accept and understand, the incestuous relationship, or the gore? Who is the villain in the play? Who deserves vengeance? Does s/he get it?
4 Nov		<i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	
9 Nov	<b>REVIEWING FOR THE THEATRE</b>		Bring in a review of a Tim Miller performance. Note audience and intent.
11 Nov		<b>TH 200-203; 211-219</b>	<b>'Tis Pity Paper Due</b>
16 Nov	<b>WORKSHOP</b>		Bring in 2 copies of your review draft
18 Nov		<i>Tartuffe</i>	Are Aggie traditions carnivalesque? How are they like and unlike court dance and court masque? Are rules relaxed and hierarchies set aside? Who benefits (and how) from this carnival moment?
23 Nov		<i>Tartuffe</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	<b>Dangerous Liaisons Review Due</b>
30 Nov		<b>TH 203-206; 219-227</b>	
2 Dec		<b>TH 206-209</b> <i>The Rover</i>	Kabuki Worksheet <b>Tartuffe Paper Due</b>
7 Dec		<i>The Rover</i> <b>*Performance*</b>	Perform a queer reading of <i>The Rover</i> (see TH227-34). How does the play challenge a heteronormative ideal? How does it represent a homosocial community?
10 Dec	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>		<b>Rover Paper Due</b>

**Cover Letter (100 points):** You will write a cover letter/proposal for an internship, a TAMU design or production crew position, a job, or graduate school admission. You must write for a specific goal: find a graduate program you'd like to apply to, an internship for which you're qualified, or a design/production crew position for the THAR2010-2011 season.

Cover letters generally have an introductory paragraph, a body with several supporting examples, and a conclusion that thanks the people reading for their time and indicates how you might be reached for further discussion. Of course they are examples of your very best writing and thinking. Of course they communicate your personality as well as your qualifications. Of course they indicate how well you'd fit into existing structures (often by suggesting familiarity with those structures). They should be as long as they need to be in order to fully demonstrate your fit for the position, but no longer. They should be written like business letters, and formatted accordingly. (See the example on WebCT)

We will workshop these letters in class 7 September, and I will grade your drafts (25 points). Final versions as well as my marked draft are due 23 September (75 points). If you do not turn in a draft cover letter, I will not accept your final version. If you don't turn in a final version, you will fail the class.

**Review (200 points):** You will review the TAMU production of *Dangerous Liaisons* (11-14 November) in a short (1250-1500 word) essay. Your review will balance reportage, analysis, and judgment in order to reach critical mass. That is, you will describe specific production choices clearly and accurately; explain why those choices were made; and determine whether the execution of those choices was successful. Your review should indicate what happened, why it happened, and how well it happened. You will need to present enough specific evidence so that the reader is persuaded by your opinion.

You will write for a specific audience to be determined in our class discussion of reviewing. Your ability to communicate to this audience will partially determine your mark. You will write with specific intent, and your essay must fulfill that intent as well as provide a review of *Dangerous Liaisons*. Your review will of course be evidence of your very best thinking and writing, and of course it will be titled, stapled, typed, and double-spaced. There will be no grammatical or typographical errors in your review.

We will workshop reviews in class 16 Nov; your drafts must include your introductory paragraph as well as one body paragraph that balances RAJ. I will grade these drafts (50 points). Final reviews as well as my marked draft are due 23 October (150 points). If you do not turn in a draft review, I will not accept your final version. If you don't turn in a final version, you will fail the class.

**Performance Project (250 points):** Working in groups of no more than 5, you will perform a short (15-minute) intervention into the play of your choice. Your performance must directly and clearly include material from the play text as written. It need not be time-based (beginning/middle/end); it need not present a specific scene; it need not summarize the play. It MUST be an example of performance as research. That is, you must use the performance project to investigate and understand the original play text, context, performance style, language, genre, setting, staging, and aesthetics. You must help us discover something we cannot learn solely from our own reading and discussion.

Your performance will be graded on the clarity, complexity, innovation, and intellectualism of your performance choices. What portions of the text will you stage? Where will you stage them? How will you frame the performance? How will you establish the performer/audience relationship?

You will each complete a short (1000-1200 word) performance abstract/project plan, due in class one week after your performance. The performance abstract should include your artistic aims, your research goals, your intended and actual outcomes, your technical and geographic constraints, your artistic and theoretical contexts. The project plan will include a timetable, rehearsal schedule, identification and allocation of tasks, and other relevant information. Each member will write a unique paper, and each will peer-edit another's. Your mark for the project will include your performance (125 points), paper (100 points) and peer edit (25 points).