

**Theatre 476: Seminar in Theatre History: Theories of Acting and Directing
CVA 132; Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 – 10:15 am
Fall Semester, 2009**

“. . . Writing makes the dead so that the living can exist elsewhere. More exactly, it receives the dead that a social change has produced, so that the space opened by this past can be marked, and so that it will still be possible to connect what appears with what disappears. Naming the absent of the household and inserting them into the language of the scriptural gallery is equivalent to liberating the apartment for the living, through an act of communication which combines the absence of the living in language with the absence of the dead in the household. A society furnishes itself with a present time by virtue of historical writing.” (101)

--Michel de Certeau: *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Alan Sikes
Office: CVA 143
Personal Phone: 612-327-9967
Email Address: awsikes@ilstu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 pm

COURSE GOALS

In this course, we will investigate the intersections of past and present imaginings of theatre, attending particularly to the impact of these intersections on current understandings of the roles of actors and directors. We will examine not only how we produce our image of the theatrical past from the perspective of the present, but also how this image renders our own perspective meaningful and communicable. We will, in the words of de Certeau, explore how ‘naming the absent of the household . . . is equivalent to liberating the apartment for the living.’ By exploring the ways in which past and present mutually define one another, we will seek new insights into the functions of actors and directors, and new paths for the pursuit of theatrical scholarship.

COURSE READINGS

I have culled readings for this course from a wide variety of sources. I will place PDF copies of each reading on the Blackboard website in the most timely manner possible. If, however, you or your colleagues have access to the following book titles, you can read from the original texts. See the schedule below for dates on which these texts may prove useful.

Appleton: *Madame Vestris and the London Stage*
Bogart: *A Director Prepares*
Brecht: *Brecht on Theatre*
Brook: *The Empty Space*
Burnim: *David Garrick, Director*
Cole and Chinoy: *Actors on Acting*

Cole and Chinoy: *Directors on Directing*
Diamond: *Performance and Cultural Politics*
Diderot: *The Paradox of Acting*
Drain: *Twentieth Century Theatre*
Dukore: *Dramatic Theory and Criticism*
Foucault: *The Order of Things*
Gerould: *Theatre / Theory / Theatre*
Grotowski: *Towards a Poor Theatre*
Hirsch: *Method to Their Madness*
Huxley and Witts: *Twentieth Century Performance Reader*
Kantor: *Journey Through Other Spaces*
Kelly: *Utopias: Russian Modernist Texts*
Kott: *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*
Leone di Somi: *Dialogues*
Meyerhold: *Meyerhold on Theatre*
Molière: *Eight Plays by Molière*
Nagler: *Source Book in Theatrical History*
Phelan: *Unmarked: Politics of Performance*
Shawn: *Every Little Movement*
Stanislavski: *Building a Character*
Stanislavski: *Creating a Role*
Stanislavski: *My Life in Art*
Wolford: *Grotowski's Objective Drama Research*

COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Individual Outlines and Discussions: 20% of Final Grade

Each student will select an individual highlighted for discussion between the third and fourteenth weeks of class, then produce and present a research dossier for this individual on the appropriate date vis-à-vis the schedule below. The dossier should provide other students with a discussion outline that addresses two or three of the following topics: relevant biographical information for the artist; historical contexts for the artist's work; major themes of the artist's work and their specific historical significance; ways in which current conceptions of theatre shape discussion of this artist from the past. Please limit discussions to 30 minutes and seek to address all the topics you wish to cover in the allotted time.

Brook and Bogart Group Presentations: 20% of Final Grade

During weeks twelve and fourteen we will devote class time to discussions of Peter Brook and Ann Bogart. In preparation for the discussions, students will divide into small groups, each assigned different readings from texts by Brook and Bogart. During class, the members of each group will offer a short presentation on key themes and ideas from their particular reading. Each group should also provide other students with brief written outlines of important concepts from the reading. Please bear in mind that group members should coordinate their efforts and that

each member should take part in the presentation. Note also that because of these presentations, Brook and Bogart are not suitable choices for individual discussion projects.

Final Director / Acting Instructor Presentation: 30% of Final Grade

During our last class meetings individual students will give presentations on a contemporary director or acting teacher of their choice; a list of candidates appears at the end of the syllabus, but pending my approval you may choose to present on an individual not currently listed. As with the other projects, you should also provide your classmates with a brief outline of the key concepts from your presentation. Feel free to include visual imagery, video, scene readings, acting exercises, etc. in these projects, but limit them to 20 – 30 minutes in order to allow time for all of the presentations.

Attendance and Participation: 30% of Final Grade

The remaining portion of your grade is derived from regular attendance and active participation in class discussion. Note the following two stipulations regarding attendance and participation. 1) More than two absences from class will result in a lowering of your final grade by an entire letter; I will make few exceptions to this rule, and only due to a documented emergency. 2) I will gauge whether or not you are keeping up with class readings based on your participation in class discussion; see me if you anticipate problems in following the schedule outlined below.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: Introduction

T 8 / 18

Syllabus and Course Introduction

Th 8 / 20

Read: Foucault: *The Order of Things*: pp. 3 – 17

Week Two: The Early Modern Period

T 8 / 25

Read: Leone di Somi: *Discourses*

Th 8 / 27

Read: Molière: *Critique* and *Versailles Impromptu*: pp. 96 – 150

Week Three: Eighteenth Century England

T 9 / 1

Read: Nagler: *Source Book*: pp. 356 – 373; 413 – 419

Th 9 / 3

Read: Burnim: *David Garrick: Director*: pp. 1 – 20

Week Four: Eighteenth Century Italy and France

T 9 / 8

Read: Cole and Chinoy: (Barbieri et al) *Actors*: 52 – 63

Th 9 / 10

Read: Diderot: *Paradox of Acting*: pp. 11 – 71

Week Five: Eighteenth Century Germany

T 9 / 15

Read: Cole and Chinoy (Lessing): *Actors*: pp. 261 – 267

Th 9 / 17

Read: Cole and Chinoy: (Goethe): *Actors*: pp. 267 – 276

Week Six: The Actors-Managers and their Training

T 9 / 22

Read: Appleton: *Madame Vestris*: pp. 1 – 29; 51 – 80

Th 9 / 24

Read: Shawn: *Every Little Movement*: pp. 15 – 60

Week Seven: Early Realism

T 9 / 29

Read: Cole and Chinoy (Meiningen): *Directors*: pp. 81 – 88

Th 10 / 1

Read: Cole and Chinoy (Antoine Brahm): *Directors*: pp. 89 – 108

Week Eight: Responses to Realism

T 10 / 6

Read: Huxley and Witts (Appia): *20th Century Performance*: pp. 29 -33

Read: Gerould (Maeterlinck): *Theatre / Theory / Theatre*: pp. 381 – 389

Th 10 / 8

Read: Huxley and Witts (Craig): *20th Century Performance*: pp. 159 - 166

Week Nine: The Stanislavski System and the American Method

T 10 / 13

Read: Stanislavski: *My Life in Art*: pp. 352 – 363; 370 – 375; 420 – 424
Half class reads: Stanislavski: *Building a Character*: pp. 5 – 81
Half class reads: Stanislavski: *Creating a Role*: pp. 5 – 106

Th 10 / 15

Read: Hirsch: *Method to their Madness*: pp. 51 – 109

Week Ten: The Russian Revolution

T 10 / 20

Read: Meyerhold: *Meyerhold on Theatre*: pp. 183 – 206

Th 10 / 22

Read: Dukore (Eisenstein): *Dramatic Theory and Criticism*: pp. 942 – 948

Read: Kelly (Vertov): *Utopias: Russian Modernist Texts*: pp. 83 - 85

Week Eleven: Epic Theatre

T 10 / 27

Read: Drain (Piscator): *20th Century Theatre*: 102 - 107

Read: Huxley and Witts (Piscator): *20th Century Performance*: pp. 320 – 326

Th 10 / 29

Read: Brecht: *Brecht on Theatre*: pp. 33 – 42; 69 – 77; 121 - 129

Week Twelve: Grotowski and Brook

T 11 / 3

Read: Grotowski: *Towards a Poor Theatre*: pp. 15 – 25; 255 – 262

Read: Wolford: *Grotowski's Objective Drama Research*: pp. 3 - 34

Th 11 / 5

Read: Brook: *Empty Space*: Groups read and report on each chapter

Week Thirteen: Jan Kott and Tadeusz Kantor

T 11 / 10

Read: Kott: *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*: pp. 52- 65; 87 – 124

Th 11 / 12

Read: Kantor: *Journey Through Other Spaces*: pp. 42 – 50; 106 – 116

Week Fourteen: Postmodern: Live or Otherwise

T 11 / 17

Read: Phelan: *Unmarked: Politics of Performance*: pp. 1 – 27; 146 - 163

Read: Diamond (Auslander) *Performance and Cultural Politics*: pp. 196 – 213

Th 11 / 19

Read: Bogart: *Director Prepares*: Groups read and report on each chapter

Week Fifteen: Thanksgiving Holiday

T 11 / 24

Thanksgiving Holiday / Fall Break

Th 11 / 26

Thanksgiving Holiday / Fall Break

Week Sixteen: Current Voices

T 12 / 1

Final Presentations Day One

Th 12 / 3

Final Presentations Day Two

Exam Day: Current Voices

Final Presentations Day Three

I will present on the work of Robert Wilson

FINAL PRESENTATION CANDIDATES:

Stella Adler

Joanne Akalaitis

Julien Beck

Joseph Chaiken

Richard Foreman

Maria Irene Fornes

Peter Hall

Moises Kaufman

Liz Lecompte

Kristin Linklater

Judith Malina

Marshall Mason

Des McAnuff

Sanford Meisner

Adrienne Mnouchkine

Mike Nichols

Lloyd Richards

Alan Schneider

Andrei Serban
Viola Spolin
Lee Strasberg
Giorgio Strehler
Tadashi Suzuki
George C. Wolfe