

Theater Historiography website
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RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
School of Contemporary Arts

THEA 232, History of Theater
4 Credits
Fall 2010
MR 9:45-11:15 Room BC 224
Office hours: MR 1-2:30 and by appointment

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Course Description

This course is an exploration of the historical development of theater and performance from its origins to the beginnings of modern theater in the late 19th century. Through this course, students will study how theater and performance reflects the intellectual, social, political and religious life of cultures defined by place and time. While we will explore exemplary texts from different places and periods of the western and Asian dramatic tradition, we will also focus on the historical, political, social, and theatrical contexts in which they were created and produced.

Course Objectives

We will discuss and explore historical performances and their cultural-historic contexts and confront the many questions that they continue to provoke. We will read the texts closely to examine their historical relevance, thematic interests and structural choices, but we will also critically evaluate, research, and write about them as guides to performance, and mine them for insights, memories, and provocations.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate understanding of theater history and dramatic literature from diverse places from prehistoric rituals to 1870.
2. Critically evaluate performances and their elements in written form.
3. Analyze visual and performance materials with clarity and rigor

Outcome	Participation	Prod. Analyses	Research Blurb	Quizzes	Midterm	Final Paper/Presentation
1	X	X	X	X	X	X
2		X			X	X
3	X	X	X		X	X

Electronic Forms of Communication

In accordance with College policy, I will use your Ramapo College email address (@ramapo.edu) to communicate with you about all course-related matters.

Texts, Readings, Materials

Available at the bookstore (for purchase or rent) and online:

Theatre Histories: An Introduction, Eds. Zarrilli, McConachie, Williams, Sorgenfrei, Routledge.
The Norton Anthology of Drama, Shorter Edition, Eds. Gainor, Garner, Jr., and Puchner.

There will be several additional readings distributed in class and online. Some are available on the Norton website at wwnorton.com/drama. These are noted in the syllabus. Make sure you have these texts, both the ones you purchase and the ones in class and online, in plenty of time to prepare for the appropriate class period. Not having a book will not be a valid excuse for missing required discussion and work.

Course Requirements

Participation and Attendance

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While there will be some lecture, class participation in regular discussions and other activities is vital to a course like this. You must thoughtfully read the assigned texts and be prepared to analyze and discuss them in class. You should take notes while reading and prepare questions for class discussions. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off for class. If you choose to use a laptop to take notes, you must sit in the front row of the classroom. If at any time I notice you doing anything else with it, your final grade will be penalized by ½ a letter grade.

You are expected to attend every class meeting and arrive on time. Your final grade will be penalized by ½ a letter grade for each absence after the third. (e.g. a final grade of B+ with four absences becomes a B). Two instances of lateness will equal one absence.

Writing Assignments

I recommend that you read the Writing About Drama tutorial on the Norton Online site (www.norton.com/drama) to help you organize and conceptualize your production analysis and your midterm as well as help you with research ideas for your final project.

1. In-class writing assignments– These will range from brief reflections and analyses to summaries of plays.
2. Production Analysis – Over the course of the semester you are required to write a 2-3 page analysis of a live performance. This is NOT a review, but should focus on elements of the play and the production that seem relevant to our studies of theatre history. The analysis should examine a performance according to its relationship to important factors of theatre history. How does this performance compare to a historical theatre that we have studied? How is it different? Be specific about the space, actors, audience, and dramatic text. Please choose a historical theatre that you feel provides a useful comparison. This should not just be a paper that concludes simply that these things are completely different. If they are, explain why this might be. You do not need to use secondary sources for these analyses, but you may if they will be helpful. If you hand this in before Thanksgiving, I will return it with feedback and you may do a revision.
3. Research Blurb – On October 11 you will present and hand in an annotated bibliography on an aspect of theater history before 1870, and bring in at least two sources to share with the class. Topics will be discussed and assigned in class, or you can suggest your own. Your bibliography must include at least one primary source, at least one secondary source, and at least one print source. The library has useful tutorials on finding research materials on their website: <http://library.ramapo.edu/libtutor.html>
4. Midterm essay – (3-5 pages, typewritten, double-spaced) Due Thursday, October 21
Choose a scene from any of the plays we have read up through *Hamlet*. For this essay, describe in detail how you would stage the scene. You must describe everything and explain your choices: the space, the actors, the setting, the lighting, and the text. You may hand in a draft of this before October 10 if you wish to get feedback and revise before the due date.

Examinations, Laboratory/Studio, Library Research

1. Quizzes – These will happen four times over the course of the semester (see schedule). They will focus on the readings and discussions we have had in class and will mix short answers, identifications, passage recognition, and brief essay questions. To help prepare, there are quizzes on the Norton website that you can take – there will be at least one question from these sample quizzes on each of our quizzes.
2. Research Project – Over the course of the semester you will put together an historical casebook on a play of your choosing. Please meet with me by November 2 to discuss your topic. You will be required to use online and library resources to put together this casebook, which you will present to the class and hand in the last week of the semester.

Experiential Component

Each course will include a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom. For this course, each student will be required to attend at least three (3) theatrical productions during the course of the term. Two of them must be the Ramapo productions of *Waiting for Godot* and *The Trojan Women 2.0*. We will discuss and refer to both of these productions extensively in class and you will be expected to be able to refer to them in discussions, reflections, and quizzes. The other can be any performance, but I recommend you take one of the free tickets to see *Jet Lag* at Montclair State University on Sunday, October 3. You may use any of these three performances as the basis of your Production Analysis.

Grading Policy

20%	Class Participation, including in-class writing assignments
10%	Production Analysis
10%	Research Blurb
20%	Quizzes
15%	Midterm Essay
25%	Final Research Project Casebook and Presentation

Policy on Academic Integrity

Students are expected to read and understand Ramapo College's academic integrity policy, which can be found in the *Ramapo College Catalog*. Members of the Ramapo College community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Office of the Provost.

Students with Disabilities

If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a documented disability, please make an appointment during my office hours.

Weekly Class Schedule

All readings should be completed for the date they are noted. This schedule is subject to change.

R	Sep 2	Introduction Reading: TH xvii-xxvi, 1-14, NAD 81-85
M	Sep 6	LABOR DAY; NO CLASS
R	Sep 9	Oral, Ritual, and Shamanic Performance Reading: TH 15-40, NAD 1-4
M	Sep 13	Civic Ritual and the Greeks Reading: TH 52-65, NAD 4-12, Aristotle (e-reader 3-17)
R	Sep 16	<i>Oedipus</i> and the City Dionysia Reading: NAD 89-135 (Sophocles' <i>Oedipus</i>) TH 88-96, Plays in Performance (PIP) for <i>Oedipus</i> (online)
M	Sep 20	Euripides, <i>The Bacchae</i> Reading: NAD 169-214 (Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i>), PIP for <i>The Bacchae</i> (online), Girard (e-reader 45-46)
R	Sep 23	Greeks, cont.
M	Sep 27	Roman Performance: Empire and Comedy Reading: TH 103-110, 126-133; NAD 12-16 QUIZ 1
R	Sep 30	Medieval European Theatre and Drama

SUNDAY OCTOBER 3, 3pm. JET LAG at Montclair State University (recommended)

- M Oct 4 Medieval cont.
R Oct 7 Sanskrit Drama and Theatre
Reading: NAD 16-19, TH 110-118, 133-156, Richmond (e-reader 227-236)
- M Oct 11 Sanskrit, cont.
RESEARCH BLURB DUE
R Oct 14 English Renaissance
Reading: TH 169-179, 206; NAD 31-35, 37-42
- M Oct 18 Shakespeare and *Hamlet*
Reading: NAD 333-445, Greenblatt (e-reader 50-56), PIP for *Hamlet* (online)
R Oct 21 *Hamlet*, cont.
MIDTERM ESSAY DUE
- M Oct 25 The Spanish Golden Age
Reading: TH 179-182, NAD 42-45, 651-667 (*Loa*)
R Oct 28 Spanish Golden Age, cont.
QUIZ 2
- M Nov 1 Noh Theatre of Japan
Reading: TH 118-125, 157-167, NAD 22-25, 249-264 (*Atsumori*)
R Nov 4 Noh cont
Reading: Zeami (e-reader 252-258)
- M Nov 8 Noh, cont.

TROJAN WOMEN 2.0 runs 11/11-14 and 18-20 at 8pm in the Sharp Theater (required)

- R Nov 11 Commedia dell'Arte NAD 35-37
Neoclassicism and the French Theatre
Reading: TH 182-190, 199-201, NAD 45-48
- M Nov 15 Moliere's *Tartuffe*
Reading: NAD 509-566, TH 211-219, PIP for *Tartuffe* (online)
View film of *Tartuffe*
RESEARCH DUE
- R Nov 18 Moliere and 17th Century French theater
- M Nov 22 Moliere cont.
QUIZ 3
- R Nov 25 THANKSGIVING; NO CLASS
- M Nov 29 Romanticism and Melodrama
Reading: NAD 49-60; TH 235-252, 263-269; Mason (e-reader 192-105)
- R Dec 2 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Reading: TH 334-335, 341-346
Uncle Tom's Cabin <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/onstage/scripts/aikenhp.html>
- M Dec 6 Final presentations

R Dec 9 Final presentations
QUIZ 4

M Dec 13 Final Presentations
FINAL CASEBOOK DUE
PLAY ANALYSIS DUE

For all written assignments, follow MLA rules for format and citation -- available online at
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

FINAL CASEBOOK ASSIGNMENT

Final Presentations December 6, 9 and 13, Casebook due December 13. Please meet with me by November 2 to discuss your topic.

This can be about any theatre, theatre company, play, production of a play, or theater history question before 1870. You will be required to use online and library resources to put together this casebook, which you will present to the class and hand in the last week of the semester. You should think about this as an assignment in dramaturgy, and the casebook a compendium of information that is making an attempt to demonstrate how and why this material should resonate NOW, with US.

This is a three-part assignment. The first part is research. The second is an essay and casebook to hand in. The third part is the presentation of this casebook to the class.

Part One: Research. This is NOT the same as your Research blurb, although you may use the same subject. Due in class November 15. Research your subject and prepare to share with the class and hand in an annotated bibliography that includes at least two primary sources, at least two secondary sources, and at least one print source.

Part Two: In a 3-5 page written essay, introduce the historical theatre, company, play, or problem that you are describing to us. You need to explain the theatre, its geographical and chronological place, its actors, texts, audience, and its importance. Make sure to include historical context that we need to know, including political, social, and economic elements that might help us understand the theatre. You should also make sure to address the historical evidence through which you have learned these things. In addition to the essay, the casebook should include images, if possible, and any additional information that might help give a comprehensive picture of the theatre. Make sure that this information is presented clearly.

Part Three: A presentation of LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES that succinctly describes your theatre using at least a few images on powerpoint slides or in handouts. DO NOT JUST READ FROM YOUR POWERPOINT SLIDES.