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THTR 330H.01: Theatre History I

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**The School of Theatre and Dance
College of Visual and Performing Arts
The University of Montana
THTR 330 H
Theatre History I
Fall 2013**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-1, Fridays 10-11, and by appointment**

PURPOSE:

Students will learn about various aspects of Theatre History via the reading and studying of plays that provide a context to the era, culture and style.

OUTCOMES:

In this setting the student will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of paradigmatic shifts in the theatre in the context of different political and social climates;
- Articulate how specific milieus marked evolutions in the theatre;
- Better understand the parallel between life and art;
- Display a cultivated sense of theatre genres, techniques, and theories; and,
- Cultivate the ability to write an upper division paper in the field of theatre.

REQUIREMENTS:

It is mandatory that students come to class. Attendance will be taken every time the class meets; there is no excuse for tardiness. There will be 3-4 pop quizzes in order to facilitate class discussions. There will be two group projects in which students will utilize information garnered in class and their own research to create artistic pieces. There will be two scholarly papers due, one of which will be re-written. The purpose of these papers is to help the student critically understand specific theatrical periods in connection with historical events. Although there will be some lecturing by the instructor, there will also be time allotted for discussion and small group work. Finally, there will be a final exam that will cover the breadth of the knowledge the student has acquired over the course of the spring semester.

TEXTS:

The Norton Anthology of Drama Volume 1: antiquity through the eighteenth century
Other texts will be made available either in class or on Moodle.

CONTENT/SCHEDULE:

(always subject to change)

Tues	Aug/27	Class Introduction and Orientation to Theatre History	
Thurs	Aug/29	Theater research and writing	
Tues	Sept/03	Ritual of Abydos and the beginnings of the Passion Play	
Thurs	Sept/05	Ritual and theories of origin	
Tues	Sept/10	Greek Theatre	
Thurs	Sept /12	<i>Agamemnon</i>	
Tues	Sept/17	Chinese theatre	
Thurs	Sept/19	<i>Snow in Midsummer</i>	
Tues	Sept/24	Noh theatre	
Thurs	Sept/26	<i>Atsumori</i>	FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION/BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Tues	Oct 1	Indian theatre	
Thurs	Oct 3	<i>The Little Clay Cart</i>	WORLD DANCE CLASS JOINS US
Tues	Oct 8	World folk and popular theatre	FIRST PAPER DUE
Thurs	Oct 10	FIRST GROUP PRESENTATION	
Tues	Oct 15	Meetings (<i>No class</i>)	
Thurs	Oct 17	Meetings (<i>No class</i>)	
Tues	Oct 22	Medieval Theatre	
Thurs	Oct 24	<i>Doctor Faustus</i> /20 minutes for Toy Theatre	
Tues	Oct 29	<i>Hamlet</i> /15 minutes for Toy Theatre	
Thurs	Oct 31	Elizabethan Drama	
Tues	Nov 5	<i>Tartuffe</i> /15 minutes for Toy Theatre	
Thurs	Nov 7	Comedy Francise/15 minutes for Toy Theatre	
Tues	Nov12	British Restoration	
Thurs	Nov 14	<i>The Rover</i> /30 minutes for Toy Theatre	
Tues	Nov 19	SECOND GROUP PRESENTATION: TOY THEATRE	
Thurs	Nov /22	<i>Thanksgiving</i> (<i>No class</i>)	
Tues	Nov /27	Commedia	SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION/BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Thurs	Nov /29	<i>Mistress at the Inn</i>	
TUES	Dec/04	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	SECOND PAPER DUE
THURS	Dec/06	Melodrama	
FINAL EXAM:			

ASSESSMENT:

The final grade will reflect the student's effort and progress.

- Attendance, Participation, Contribution 20%
- Quizzes 10%
- Projects 20%
- Papers 40%
- Final 10%

GROUP PROJECTS

You will be working with 2 different groups in this class:

- The first is a group presentation dealing with one area touched upon in the reading or in a lecture.
 - Each group will be assigned a specific theatre tradition early in the semester to present on as a group. Each group member will be asked to come to class on September 10 having conducted preliminary research into the tradition.
 - Traditions assigned include: Early Shamanism, Roman Theatrical Performances, Greek Comedy, Kyogen, Shadow Puppetry, Early German Drama and Hroswitha, Miracle/Mystery/Morality plays of Medieval Europe, Sturm and Drang.
 - Your job is to clearly articulate how this Theatre Practice came into being, what defines the practice and what residue from the practice can be seen in later performances and even today.
 - Each presentation should be approximately 10 minutes.
 - Each presentation should involve:
 - The specific and concise presentation of new information;
 - All group members active participation;
 - A performance example (live or video);
 - An interactive element designed to involve the audience (your peers) actively such as a game, exercise or discussion.

- The second group project is a group Toy Theatre piece.
 - Each group will choose a play to present a piece from that has not been read in class but that have been influential and runs parallel to a period we have been studying: Once the text is chosen by the group, members can opt to present:
 - A fully extracted scene, unabridged and unedited;
 - A cutting or splicing of several scenes from the play; or,
 - An extremely abridged version.

THEATRE HISTORY 1 PAPER GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Choose a subject (designer, director, playwright, actor, theorist or theatrical device, invention or practice) from a specific era and place to research. After presenting their contribution to the field of theatre, evaluate their contribution in terms of strength, weakness, staying power and validity. Use information presented in class as a starting point only. The paper should be 3-4 pages in length, not counting the title page and reference list.

This is an upper division theatre course and for many of you, this class will present one of the few opportunities to work on your writing skills before you enter the professional work arena. Upper division scholarship requires that you master the concepts found in the research and literature and begin to use this knowledge to create new knowledge. In other words, you are not being asked to regurgitate facts. You are being asked to use facts you uncover in research to conceive new ideas and to critically discern the value and importance of the ideas and artistic choices others have made. You are being asked to theorize. Scholarly writing requires a standardized format that has been outlined in several style manuals. The one I recommend for writing in the theatre is the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. There are several copies available in the library, the guide is also available for purchase, and examples can be found online.

Formatting Guidelines:

- Late papers will not be accepted;
- All papers must be typed and turned in legible, dark, hard copy;
- Do not justify both margins (it is difficult to read this random spacing of words);
- Double space and indent every paragraph;
- STAPLE your paper together BEFORE coming to class – a staple will suffice, folders and binders make it more difficult to read;
- Use one side of the paper only;
- Cite ALL references - give credit to your sources – all information that is not commonly known, or your own original conclusion MUST be cited;
- Number your pages, beginning on the second page;
- Provide an original title on the title page;
- Provide a reference list in the form of a bibliography.

ASSESSMENT:

How I am grading:

Content (50 points)

- *Original title befitting paper.*
- *Strong and original thesis:* The thesis was clear, concise, and original.
- *Factual and researched support for thesis:* The thesis was supported with both practical and academic research: The thesis was proved in the body of the paper.
- *Fluidity and strength of content:* The style, presentation, and subject of the content flowed together smoothly providing the reader with both a foundation of, and a curiosity for, the subject matter. Connections were made between ideas. It is clear that the student learned from researching and writing the paper.

Structure (50 points)

- *Mechanics:* The paper was technically sound. Word choice and usage was appropriate and grammar was clear and consistent. Spelling and punctuation were in order.
- *Sources:* The author cited sources with care – introductions were present for quotes and books and articles were utilized in support of the thesis of the paper. A bibliography was present and sufficient.
- *Placement of thesis:* The thesis statement was introduced at the top of the paper and was consistent throughout.
- *Clear, ordered, and organized support for thesis:* The body of the paper served to support the thesis and was organized with this effect in mind. There was enough support and it was ordered appropriately.

Descriptive Grading Rubric:

A: This grade indicates excellence. Excellent work is complete, original, and technically sound. Excellent work goes above and beyond the expectations of the assignment. Excellent research takes ideas and concepts and develops them by giving them new meaning or insight. The student learns a great deal by writing an A paper – the audience learns by reading the paper.

B: This grade indicates good work. It is complete, technically sound, and addresses the subject and assignment by meeting the expectations. The main ingredient that is missing is the development of original ideas. The student's knowledge is added to, but there is little evidence of new insight.

C: This grade indicates average work. The assignment is covered and the expectations met. There are no few new ideas and little knowledge is gained from writing or reading the paper.

D: Formatting guidelines were not met. The paper does not meet the basic requirements in terms of length, scope and content.

Unacceptable papers do not meet the requirements of the assignment. They are often papers that are not on the subject assigned or are plagiarized either by direct copying or by lack of adequate citation.

GETTING STARTED AND CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH:

Discovering your area to research: *moving from broad to specific*

- 1) Choose an era, culture and local.
- 2) Choose a theatrical practice or device.
- 3) Choose an artist or theorist connected to the chosen practice.
- 4) Research your practice and person thoroughly and create your bibliography.
- 5) Create a research question to frame your writing.

Example:

- 1) Late 1800's, naturalist art movement in Europe, France, Paris, Pigalle area.
- 2) Grand Guignol Theatre (graphic, amoral horror entertainment) as a style of theatre and as a specific location (venue 293 seat theatre in Paris)
- 3) Max Maurey (served as the Director of the Theatre from 1898-1914. Emphasized horror plays and judged the success of a performance by how many patrons passed out from shock)
- 4) Beginning bibliography:

Freshwater, Helen. "Sex, Violence and Censorship: London's Grand Guignol and the Negotiation of the Limit." In *Theatre Research International*. Oct2007, Vol. 32 Issue 3, p247-262.

Hand, Richard and Wilson, Michael. *Grand-Guignol: The French Theatre of Horror* University of Exeter Press - Exeter Performance Studies, 2013.

Hand, Richard and Wilson, Michael. "The Grand-Guignol: Aspects of Theory and Practice." By: Hand, Richard J.; Wilson, Michael. *Theatre Research International*. Autumn2000, Vol. 25 Issue 3, p266.

Hunter, Jack. *Chapel Of Gore & Psychosis: The Grand Guignol Theatre* . Creation Publications, 2012.

Neih, Camillia and Yuki, Kaori. *Grand Guignol Orchestra, Vol. 5*. VITZ Media LLC, 2011.

Level, Maurice, Joshi, S. T. and Eckhardt, Jason. *Tales of the Grand Guignol*. Centipede Press, 2013.

Quigley, Karen. "Theatre On Call: Participatory fainting and Grand-Guignol theatre." In *Performance Research*. Sep2011, Vol. 16 Issue 3, p105-107.

What is Grand Gilgnol? Thrillpeddlars, 2006. Web: <http://www.grandguignol.com>, access date: July, 2013.

Madness, Torture and Murder on the Paris Stage. Life Magazine, 2007. Web: <http://life.time.com/curiosities/grand-guignol-mayhem-photos-from-a-notorious-paris-theater-1947/#1>, access date: July, 2013.

- 5) What specific techniques did theatre director Max Maurey employ to shock his audiences during the early 1900's at Le Teatre du Grand-Guignol and how successful were his attempts?

WRITING THE PAPER:

I. Introduction: *introduce your thesis*

- A. Your thesis statement is a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view. In this way your thesis is the answer to the central question you are raising in the paper. Writing a thesis statement allows you to see where you are headed and to remain on a path as you write.
 - 1. Two important factors:
 - a. What purpose are you trying to achieve in the paper? Do you want to describe something? Persuade your reader of something? Make an original observation?
 - b. What audience are you writing for? Are they interested? How much do they know? Will they agree or disagree with you?
- B. Once you have a thesis statement you can begin to develop a full thesis, which is typically:
 - 1. The thesis statement *plus* points, facts, or arguments in support of your thesis.
 - 2. This can be introduced in your first paragraph.
 - a. The introductory paragraph opens with a broad, general statement related to the thesis and then narrows to a single point – the thesis statement.
 - b. The paragraph moves from general to specific; strongest arguments are reserved for the end.

II. Body of the paper: *defend your thesis*

- A. For a 3-4 pages paper you will more than likely have at least six paragraphs in the body of your paper.
 - 1. A paragraph is generally more than four sentences!
- B. The body of your paper will flesh out the ideas and arguments in support of your thesis statement that you introduced in the introductory paragraph.
 - 1. If you back up your thesis statement with six concrete arguments, then you will typically have six paragraphs in the body of the paper. Each “body” paragraph will specifically address one of the facts you are using to support your main point.

III. Conclusion: *wrap it up*

- A. Connect the thesis statement to the body of the paper
 - 1. The opposite of the introductory paragraph, your conclusion begins with your thesis and widens gradually towards a final, broad statement.
 - 2. Remind the reader of the arguments in favor of your thesis statement – borrow, suggest, transform, pull out words from the body of the paper.
 - a. summarize and exit gracefully!