

9-2013

## THTR 531.01: Graduate Seminar - Theatre History

Jillian Campana

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**The School of Theatre and Dance  
College of Visual and Performing Arts  
The University of Montana  
THTR 531  
Graduate Theatre History  
Fall 2013**

**Dr. Jillian Campana**  
**jillian.campana@umontana.edu 243-5846 McGill 216**  
**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.

You will be responsible for finding and reading one published, peer reviewed journal article on each individual theatre practice/era covered in this class.

**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>	<b>FIRST RESEARCH</b>
<b>QUESTION/BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE</b>		
Tues Oct 1	Indian theatre	
Thurs Oct 3	<i>The Little Clay Cart</i>	<b>WORLD DANCE JOINS</b>
Tues Oct 8	World folk/popular theatre	<b>FIRST PAPER DUE</b>
Thurs Oct 10	<b>FIRST GROUP PRESENTATION</b>	
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	<b>SECOND GROUP PRESENTATION: TOY THEATRE</b>	
Thurs Nov /22	<i>Thanksgiving</i> ( <i>No class</i> )	
Tues Nov /27	Commedia	<b>SECOND RESEARCH</b>
<b>QUESTION/BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE</b>		
Thurs Nov /29	<i>Mistress at the Inn</i>	
TUES Dec/04	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	<b>SECOND</b>
<b>PAPER DUE</b>		
THURS Dec/06	Melodrama	
<b>FINAL EXAM:</b>		

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#### ASSESSMENT:

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

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

## **GRADUATE THEATRE HISTORY 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 5-7 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.

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<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!



## TOY THEATRE:

In the past, theatre was the most popular form of entertainment. Before modern entertainments such as television, cinema and computer games, children would spend their free time coloring, pasting and cutting out miniature theatres.

Toy Theatre originated in Europe at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and played an important part in documenting theatres and their productions in the 1800's because it copied actual theatres, productions, characters, and performances that played during that time. People could purchase pre-painted and designed cut outs that resembled sets, costumes, and props to put together a reproduction in miniature in their home, or they could make them from scratch. Scripts were also available and the imaginative often created their own special effects, smoke pellets for battle scenes, revolving stages and trapdoors for illusions and elaborate lighting sets. The theatre itself was constructed of wood, or mounted on heavy cardboard. Scenes and plays were rehearsed and finally performed for a living-room audience of family and friends. In Europe Toy Theatres can still be purchased today. There are those who perform, those who design and, those who collect.

Your second group project is to design and build a Toy Theatre and to perform a scene from a play from an era we have discussed in this class. You may choose any scene from any play or playwright from this era that we have not read in class. The toy theatres you create are not models - they are miniature sets, with working features. Get creative. Characters do not need to necessarily be paper cut outs that resemble humans, you can use objects to portray characters, suitcases to serve as a box set, and instruments to accompany scenes.

Each person in the group is responsible for helping to create the actual theatrical space, although you may choose to have one or two specific individuals supervise a design for your scenic layout or costumes. The scene you chose must contain at least two characters, but should have no more than four or five depending on how many persons make up your particular group.

You have the remainder of class today to choose your play/scene, begin to discuss design and mise-en-scene, and to assign roles and tasks. These will be presented and performed on Thursday, November 19 and although you will have to meet with your group outside of class time as well to prepare and rehearse, there are 5 15-20 minute class sessions set aside to work on this project. There will be a group grade and an individual grade and you will all be graded by your peers as well as by your instructor.

## **Theatre History 1 Paper Guidelines:**

Choose your 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.

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#### **GRADING RUBRIC**

##### **CONTENT (50 points)**

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- 10) 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?

## Theatre History Writing Guidelines:

### I. Introduction: *introduce your thesis*

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