

# Theatre in the City

## Course Details

**Course Designator & Number: LNDN 3239**

**Number of Credits: 3**

**Language of Instruction: English**

## Course Description

Plays are written to be appreciated in performance, not only to be read; a play does not truly come to life until it appears on a stage. The course will introduce students to the current variety of theatre being produced in London. The course aims to provide multiple levels of theatre appreciation, and is therefore open to students who both have a background in theatre and those who have a general interest in expanding their knowledge.

## Course Objectives

In this course we'll see many plays acted out, and then we'll consider their possible meanings and the contribution made by the director and his or her team. The plays we see will be contemporary, or modern, but there will also be some classics. This course aims to give you delight, as well as to refine your reading and play-going skills.

## Methodology

The course will blend reading the play, and visits to see the play in performance with class-based discussions and lectures examining the theatrical and social context of plays. Students will be introduced to theatrical terminology, to theatre genres and criticism, and ways of analyzing the play in text and performance, and will utilize their skills in writing and oral presentations. In addition to reading the plays, students will be expected to read and respond to articles of theatre criticism and theatre reviews, and be prepared for a great deal of discursive class participation. We will also visit a museum.

## Required Reading / Materials

Michael Billington, *State of the Nation: British Theatre Since 1945* (Faber and Faber, 2007)

Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (Penguin, 2008)

**Where to buy books:** French's Theatre Bookshop, Fitzroy St. (Warren St. tube, then ask) has a good stock. The National Theatre bookshop also has a good selection.

**Another delight:** A backstage tour of the National Theatre will increase your understanding of how theatre works.

**Theatre tickets:** These will be available for collection at CAPA front desk. They MUST be picked up by 5.30 p.m.

# Grading

## Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

## Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Percentage of Grade</b>
Group discussion/class participation	25%
Assignment 1	25%
Mid-term exam	25%
Final exam	25%
<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Assessment Details

### GRADING CAPA PROGRAM & INSTRUCTOR POLICY

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. This means to gain full attendance you must attend all classes, you must not be late (unless with a valid reason) and you must be respectful of the professor and of other students by not talking/whispering in class when others are talking or presenting. Persistent lateness or lack of attention in class (e.g., reading materials other than the work assigned) may result in a low or zero grade for participation, and possible referral to the CAO. No electronic equipment will be used in class, including laptops, phones, ipods, cell phones, etc, unless you have written permission from the Chief Academic Officer prior to the course. If you are caught using any electronic equipment, you may receive a zero grade for participation.

Plagiarism will be dealt with very seriously, and will be referred to the Chief Academic Officer in London. You may receive an F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, you will receive an F for the course.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all classes is mandated by CAPA; students who miss a class without permission from CAPA's Chief Academic Officer will have their grade for the course lowered. Informed

participation is expected in every class, so students must have read the full assignment carefully before coming and be ready to discuss it if called upon. At any meeting there may be a brief, pass-fail two-minute quiz on some utterly obvious fact in the assigned reading. Students will also be asked to complete informal in-class writing assignments on a regular basis, which will require them to demonstrate their familiarity with the assigned materials. Students who repeatedly demonstrate unsatisfactory performance on these quizzes and exercises will be penalized in the participation grade.

# Course Content

## Unit 1

### A workshop with Cardboard Citizens

- In our first session, we'll meet with the team from British company CARDBOARD CITIZENS. The company works with the homeless to create theatre on a diverse range of themes, often using the extraordinary techniques of AUGUSTO BOAL. The techniques we learn here will be the basis for our CIVIL RIGHTS project in November.

## Unit 2

### The Eye of the Mind

- What is the purpose of theatre? What makes a play a play? How does it set about engaging us, holding us, and making us imagine with it? In this class, we'll consider our own experiences of live performance of all kinds, and consider how dramatic events can create active audiences.
- Film: Agamemnon by Aeschylus (UK National Theatre, 1982)
- Text: Graham Ley: Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theatre Pt 1

## Unit 3

### From East to West

- In this class, we will look at how storytelling became performance, and how drama emerged from ancient ritual and religious practice. What are the possibilities of creating the present moment upon the stage, and what are the implications for audiences? How does mythic story lead us towards the performance of POLITICS?
- Film: Ran by Kurosawa (excerpt)
- Text: Graham Ley: Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theatre Pt 2

## Unit 4

### Tragedy or Comedy 1

- The ancient Greeks gave us two great performance genres: Tragedy and Comedy. But how do they work, and how do they differ? We'll look at examples of both, and how they relate to their modern cultural descendants.
- Film: Rope by Hitchcock/Hamilton (excerpts)
- Text: The Birds by Aristophanes (excerpt); Poetics by Aristotle Pt 1

## Unit 5

### Tragedy or Comedy 2

- Here, we'll examine the opinions of one of the great writers on the theatre: Aristotle. We'll consider his views on Tragedy: how it was done, and the intended effect upon audiences, and weigh this against the dynamics of comedy. Are Aristotle's rule still relevant, and are they in use in modern plays, too? Also in this class, we will begin work on our short performance inspired by the idea of CIVIL RIGHTS.
- Film: Hamlet (Olivier version, excerpts)
- Text: Poetics by Aristotle Pt 2

## Unit 6

### Mysteries & Histories

- In this class, we'll reflect on our visit to Hastings and the Festival, then consider how the medieval theatre morphed into the dramas of the Early Modern period. What was the purpose of a history play, and how did it work? In the second half, we will work on our CIVIL RIGHTS project.
- Film: Henry V (Olivier and Branagh versions, excerpts)
- Text: Martin White: The Renaissance Theatre in Action Pt 1.

## Unit 7

### The Performance Space

- At the end of the 16th Century in London, the theatre began to move indoors. But what did this mean for those making and watching plays during the period? The control of sound and light allowed for the creation of spectacle, but what was the cost of this to audiences, and what new genres were created to capitalize on the changes? We'll also continue to work on our CIVIL RIGHTS project.
- Film: A Midsummer Night's Dream (BBC 1982 version, excerpts)
- Text: Martin White: The Renaissance Theatre in Action (indoor playing spaces)
- **YOUR ASSESSMENT OF YERMA WILL BE DUE IN THIS CLASS!**

## Unit 8

### Theatre & Civil Rights

- In preparation for the Conference on Civil rights on FRIDAY 11TH NOVEMBER, we will work exclusively on our piece on CIVIL RIGHTS.

## Unit 9

### The Melodramatic Mode

- In this class, we'll look at the rise and growth of the most successful genre of the 19th Century: Melodrama. It's a genre that embraced spectacle and sensation, and often divided audiences and critics. We'll consider the origins of melodrama, and the key aspect that makes it possible: villainy!
- Film: Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1936 version excerpt), House of Cards (BBC 1989 excerpt)
- Text: Shepherd and Womack: Melodrama Pt. 2

## Unit 10

### The Real or the Natural?

- The end of the 19th Century saw the rise of Realism, the genre that supposedly vanquished the melodrama. With audiences put in the dark, watching through a 'fourth wall', theatre changed a great deal in a matter of decades. But what were the implications of these changes, and why did audiences want to see 'real life' at all?
- Film: A Doll's House by Ibsen
- Text: Naturalism in the Theatre by Zola (excerpt)

## Unit 11

### Theatrical Environments

- Here, we'll look at the impact of the discoveries of Charles Darwin on the theatre of the 19th Century. How did the theatre-makers of the time react to evolution, and what was the effect on the presentation of drama? We'll consider the works of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, and modern inheritors of 'naturalism'.
- Film: The Cherry Orchard by Chekhov
- Text: The Street Scene (Brecht)

## Unit 12

### The Epic & After

- Here, we'll encounter the work and philosophy of a theatrical revolutionary: Bertolt Brecht. Brecht viewed the theatre as a provocative, political form for representing oppression and proposing solutions. This entailed radical changes to performer-audience relations. We'll consider these, and assess their validity for the contemporary theatre.
- Film: Manderlay by Lars Von Trier (excerpt)
- Text: Brecht by Raymond Williams (excerpt)



## Unit 13

### Theatrical Futures

- Finally, we'll consider the prospects for the theatre in the 21st Century. Are traditional forms of representation still relevant? How will technology change the relationship between performers and audiences, and can the theatre take a more active role in making a better world? Are the conditions for theatrical engagement timeless, or must they change as audiences do?
- Film: NY Homeless Project Forum Film (2011)
- Text: Dan Rebellato: Theatre and Globalization (excerpts)

# Policies

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

## University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

### Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

### Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).