

# THTR 310 Theoretical Approaches to Theatre and Performance

Winter 2014-15

## COURSE INFORMATION

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**Tues. & Thurs.**      **12:30-14:00**

**Classroom**              **Jack Bell Building for the School of Social Work – Room 124**

**Instructor:**              Selena Couture

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**Office:**                   Auditorium Annex A Rm 244J

**Office hours:** Thursdays 14:00-15:30 (Please book in advance if you would like to meet.)

**Mailbox:**               Theatre Department Office, Frederic Wood Theatre, 2nd Floor

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

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In Theatre 310 we investigate critical concepts from theatre and performance theories that have shaped production and reception in a range of global performance contexts. This course will introduce students to a range of theories used to analyze meaning created through theatre and performance in order that they may thoughtfully apply them.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain definitions and key terms of eight theoretical approaches to theatrical performance analysis and recognize or be able to classify a given analysis.
- Demonstrate the use of a theoretical approach to interpret more than one performance.
- Illustrate a theoretical approach through a proposed design of a production.
- Assess the most appropriate theoretical approach for a specific performance experience.
- Support peers in achieving course goals through engaging in learning activities and peer reviews.

## COURSE MATERIALS

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Required Texts:

*Theory/Theatre: An Introduction -- 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* by Marc Fortier (Routledge, 2002)

**Available online as an ebook through UBC library. Print or download permitted 27 pages at a time.**

*Critical Theory and Performance: Revised and Enlarged Edition* edited by Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach (University of Michigan Press, 2006)

**Available at UBC Bookstore and also as an ebook through UBC library, although downloading or printing is not permitted.**

Required Theatre Attendance: UBC Theatre's *The Bacchae* 2.1 during the week of January 21-24 and one other performance from a recommended list (see below).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### 1. Performance Analysis: 15%

**Due February 12 at the beginning of class.**

Performance analysis of UBC Theatre's *The Bacchae* 2.1. Assignment details to follow in class.

### 2. Essay: 25%

**Due April 7 at the beginning of class.**

Standard research essay. Details to follow in class.

### 3. Group Presentation: 10%

In the second week of classes, students will note their top presentation topic choices. All efforts will be made to ensure everyone gets at least one of their top choices. There will be 4-5 people per group and clear criteria for participation. Collaboration as well as delegation of tasks are both encouraged.

Each group will be responsible for presenting a production concept for a play illustrating the theory we are studying that day as well as including 3 design elements which align with the week's topic. After hearing responses from the rest of the class to the presentation, the group will answer questions about their analysis and describe the research and development process behind them. Self-assessment will also include a reflection on how this theory complemented and/or diverged from the play script.

### 4. Final Exam: 40%

A cumulative exam based on the concepts, figures and ideas studied since the beginning of term. Date as scheduled by the Registrar.

### 5. Class Participation and Weekly Quizzes: 10%

Participation marks are based on the expectation that you will read the assigned texts prior to the class time when they are scheduled for discussion, take notes on your reading and formulate questions before coming to class. Spirited and thoughtful participation in class discussion, as well as thoughtful peer reviews of presentations, will lead to strong marks. Excessive absences (more than 2) and lack of engagement with course material will result in penalty to the final grade.

### Course Policies follow those set out in the UBC Calendar:

Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes. Students who neglect their academic work and/or miss more than three classes may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.

#### Accommodations:

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for theatre activities, varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date. If you encounter medical, emotional or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance in this course, please notify the instructor AND/OR the Faculty of Arts Advising Office. For a more thorough discussion of academic concession, please refer to the 2014-15 UBC Calendar.

**Academic Integrity:** Please review the UBC Calendar "[Academic Policies and Regulations](#)" for information on academic honesty and standards. Also visit this [Learning Commons Resource Guide](#) for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

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## THEATRE 310 CLASS SCHEDULE 2014-15 (WINTER TERM 2)

PLEASE NOTE: THE READING SCHEDULE MAY BE ADJUSTED (WITH NOTICE) IN ORDER TO ADAPT THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE AS THE TERM PROGRESSES. ANY CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS AS WELL AS EMAILED.

### Week 1: Conceptualizing Theory and Theatre

Tues. Jan 6 Introduction to course aims and expectations

Thurs. Jan. 8 **Thinking Theory and Theatre: I**  
Read: Fortier, "Introduction" (1-16) in *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) [Note: hereafter referred to as Fortier, *T/T:I*]

#### *Key Reading Questions:*

How does Fortier frame the field of theatre theory?  
What critical debates does he emphasize?  
How does he draw distinctions between theatre and drama?  
What kinds of relationships between theory and theatre does Fortier trace?  
How does Fortier argue that theory and theatre are similar? Dissimilar?  
On what kinds of theatre and theory does Fortier place his focus?

### Week 2: Theories –Critical Foundations

Tues. Jan 13 "Zeami" and "On the Art of No Drama" (96-107)  
And "Bharata" and "*Nāṭyaśāstra*" (84-95)  
in Gerould, Daniel. Ed. *Theatre/Theory/Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel*. New York: Applause & Cinema Books, 2000. [Access all on Connect]

#### *Key Reading Questions:*

What was the historical context for Zeami's original text? Bharata's?  
Following Zeami what is the audience's responsibility in the performance even? What is the performer's? Following Bharata what is the audience's responsibility in the performance even? What is the performer's?  
How is a repertoire conceived in Zeami's account? What are the sources of pleasure and the sublime?  
How is performance space prepared in Bharata's account? How is taste understood in this text?

Thurs. Jan. 15 Aristotle, *The Poetics* excerpt. "Critical Contexts" (88-96) in *Wadsworth Anthology of Drama, Brief Sixth Edition*. Ed. W.B. Worthen. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011. [Access on Connect]

#### *Key Reading Questions:*

What was the historical context for Aristotle's original text?  
What theatre does he consider and why?  
Following Aristotle, what is the purpose of tragedy?  
What is the audience's responsibility in the event? The poet's? The performer's?

**Week 3:**

**Required to go see UBC Theatre's The Bacchae 2.1 on Wednesday Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> . Cost \$7. Also recommended performances at PuSh Festival – Human Library (Jan. 23-25 Fri/Sat/Sun) or Le Grand Continental (Jan. 24-25 Sat/Sun). Both are free.**

Tues. Jan 20 Charles Mee *The Bacchae 2.1* (68 pages) [Available online <http://www.charlesmee.org/bacchae.shtml> ]

Thurs. Jan 22 No readings for this day –viewing of *The Bacchae 2.1* and other PuSh performances instead.

**Week 4: Performance Analysis – Semiotics**

**Recommended Performance at PuSh – Preuzmimo Benčić (*Take Back Benčić*) film 5:30 pm on Jan. 29. Free.**

Tues Jan. 27 “Introduction” (1-6) and “Performance Analysis” (7-12) and “Semiotics and its Heritage” (13-25) by Marvin Carlson in *Critical Theory and Performance* [Note: hereafter referred to as *CT&P* ].

Thurs. Jan. 29 “Alceste in Hollywood: A Semiotic Reading of *The Misanthrope*” by Jim Carmody (37-48) in *CT&P*

**Week 5: Theories—Phenomenology**

**Recommended Performance – UBC Kanjinchô – “The Subscription List” (film presentation of Kabuki/Noh) at IK Barber Monday Feb. 2. Free.**

Tues. Feb. 3 “The Phenomenological Attitude” (26-36) in *CT&P* and Fortier, *T/T:I* “Phenomenology” (37-57)

Thurs. Feb. 5 **Presentation #1**  
“Every Transaction Conjures a New Boundary” by Josette Féral (49-66) in *CT&P*

**Week 6: Phenomenology and Gender**

**Recommended Performances at PuSh – Steppenwolf and The Road Forward . Cost: \$19 and up.**

Tues. Feb. 10 Butler, Judith. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.” *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519-31. Print. [Access reading through UBC library or on course Connect site]

Thurs. Feb. 12 **First paper due on *The Bacchae 2.1***  
No reading – course midterm review (Formative Assessment)

**Tues. Feb. 17 – Reading Week – [Talking Stick Festival](#) starts – recommended performances and volunteer opportunities TBA.**  
**Thurs. Feb. 19 – Reading Week**

**Week 7: Gender and Sexualities**

Tues. Feb. 24 Reinelt and Roach “Gender and Sexualities” (311-316) in *CT&P*. And “Feminist and Gender Theory” (107-31) in Fortier, *T/T:I*

Thurs. Feb.26 ***Presentation #2***  
Donkin, Ellen. “Mrs. Siddons Looks Back in Anger: Feminist Historiography for Eighteenth Century British Theater” (317-33) in *CT&P*

**Week 8: Historiography**

Tues. March 3 “Theatre History and Historiography” (191-97) in *CT&P* and Taylor, Diana. “Performance and/as history.” *TDR/The Drama Review* 50.1(2006): 67-86 [access through UBC library or on course Connect]

Thurs. March 5 ***Presentation #3***  
Bank, Rosemarie K. “Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition” (223-44) in *CT&P*

**Week 9: Materialist Theory**

***Recommended Performance: The Unnatural and Accidental Women at SFU Woodward – opens Feb. 25. Cost – approx. \$10.***

Tues. March 10 “After Marx” (259-67) and “Shadows of Brecht” (268-283) in *CT&P*

Thurs. March 12 ***Presentation #4***  
Knowles, Richard Paul. “The Wooster Group.” *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. (148-65).  
**[Access on course Connect]**

**Week 10: Indigenous Theatre Theories**

Tues. March 17 Gilbert, Helen. “Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre” in *The Cambridge History of Canadian Literature* (2009) (518-35).  
Mojica, Monique and Ric Knowles. “Creation Story Begins Again: Performing Transformation, Bridging Cosmologies” in *Performing Worlds into Being: Native American Women’s Theater* (2009), 2-6.  
“Theatre: Younger Brother of Tradition” by Floyd Favel (115-22) in *Indigenous North American Drama: A Multivocal History* (2013).  
**[Access all three readings on course Connect]**

Thurs. March 19      **Presentation #5**  
Mojica, Monique. "Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way" (123-40) in Dawes, Birgit. Ed. *Indigenous North American Drama: A Multivocal History* (2013). [Access on course Connect]

**Week 11: Critical Race Theory**

Tues. March 24      "Critical Race Theory" (135-140) and Lei, Daphne. "Virtual Chinatown and New Racial Formation: Performance of Cantonese Opera in the Bay Area" (156-172). **Both readings in CT&P.**

Thurs. March 26      **Presentation #6**  
Brewer, Mary F. "The borders of whiteness in the new world." (18-41) in *Staging Whiteness* (2005). [Access on course Connect].

**Week 12: Postcolonial Studies**

Tues. March 31      Roach and Reinelt "Postcolonial Studies" (67-70) in *CT&P* and "Post-colonial Theory" (192-216) **in Fortier T/T:I**

Thurs. April 2      **Presentation #7**  
Tompkins, Joanne. "Performing History's Unsettlement" (71-84) **in CT&P.**

**Week 13: Last Week/ Review and Exam Prep**

Tues. April 7      **Final Paper Due at beginning of class**  
Summary Review – No readings

Thurs. April 9      In class work on exam questions

Exam period: April 14 –29 (inclusive)