

THA 11B-1 - European Theater Texts and Theory I
T/W/R 11:10 AM-1:40 PM

paulmasters@brandeis.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Zoom:

<https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/4680193989?pwd=ZWQ1QmhLTWdWS0V1eHBtZ2lmSGRPUT09>
Password: Ebkaf4

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Brandeis resides on the ancestral homeland of the Pawtucket, Massachusetts, Nipmuc, and Wampanoag tribal nations. We honor these communities and the elders of these nations—past, present, and future—whose practices and spiritualities are tied to the land.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Nineteenth Century was a period of rapid change, particularly in Europe. These changes were social, economic, and political, touching every sphere of life. New technologies of production and industrial practices, rapid transportation, and the continued growth of urban centers, transformed the way people lived, while the rise of first-wave feminism and the abolition of slavery drew attention to inequality and oppression. Beyond European borders, the division of the world by colonial powers for resource exploitation, increasing trade, and the importation/appropriation of far-flung cultural influences, were felt aesthetically and philosophically across the West. Not surprisingly, the theatre absorbs and adapts to these changes, expanding and transforming the social, philosophical, and artistic practices of the age to include formerly unprecedented numbers of people. This is our point of entry: a Europe and European theatre that is decidedly *in process*.

Starting in the Nineteenth Century then, this course will seek to explore theatre and theatrical practices from Romanticism through Realism and the Avant-Gardes of the Twentieth Century. However, in addition to thinking about the historical aspects of these traditions, we will also interrogate their reverberations across time and into our contemporary theatrical environment. This will include postcolonial adaptations of plays, representations of hitherto marginalized identities/genders, and contemporary reimaginings of European artistic and theatrical practices. This methodology lends itself to the practical: in what places and spaces do these historical ideas appear *now* and how? Why? What do we want to keep?

ACCOMODATIONS

Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS) (781-736-3470, access@brandeis.edu). You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the [SAS](#)

website, including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS. If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure effective implementation of accommodations for this class. In order to coordinate exam accommodations, ideally you should provide the accommodation letter at least 48 hours before an exam.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Differentiate and grasp defining elements of past ideologies and perspectives of, for, and about the theatre
2. Analyze performance from acting, directing, spectatorial, and dramaturgical perspectives
3. Engage in informed, investigative discourse about differing theatrical forms
4. Be capable of viewing contemporary theatre through the perspective of past narratives, aesthetics, and material culture
5. Understand and appreciate the process of cultural adaptation, appropriation, and signification.

COURSE MATERIALS*

Living Theatre: A History of Theatre. New York: WW Norton. (Ebook available)

<https://wnorton.com/books/Living-Theatre>

Dukore, Bernard ed. *Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. (PDF ebook provided)

(All other materials will be made available on LATTE)

GRADING/PROJECTS

This course is going to work a little differently than most of the others you've taken; you will receive extensive feedback from me on all of your projects, but—because much of the work we do in college (and in life) is invisible to the teachers (and bosses, and coworkers and so on) who only get to see your final product—YOU will be responsible for helping me evaluate your progress before any grades are recorded.

To be clear, you will still receive a letter grade for the course. This is a requirement of Brandeis. However, that letter grade will be a collaborative effort related directly to your own assessments of progress, engagement, and learning.

I know that this may feel weird or even a little anxiety-inducing for some of you. That's OK. We'll work through it together. As a start, here's the work you'll be responsible for completing this semester, and the extent to which each aspect will contribute to your final grade.

Participation (attendance, engagement, preparedness for class, self assessments)	50%
Journals (completeness, content, depth of response)	25%
Presentations (quality/depth of research, organization, clarity)	25%

- Readings
 - For each class, you will have readings (and/or videos/audio, or etc) assigned. Doing the readings prepares you for a substantive class discussion, allowing us to create deep, sustained discourse about the work at hand. Your level of engagement with the reading will radically affect your ability to participate in discussion, and doing so will create a richer experience for your classmates as well. Doing the readings/other daily work is a large part of your overall grade, indicating your willingness to engage with, and think about, the material being discussed.
- Digital Journal
 - In most class sessions we will begin with a guiding question designed to prompt a one-paragraph response. You will collect these responses in a digital “journal” (a Google Drive file) that you will share with me. Your responses may include thoughts, questions, or considered reactions to the work for that day. These responses are *critical* to your grade because they allow me a glimpse into your thoughts, responses, and level of preparation for the day’s material.
- Mini Presentations
 - Starting in Week Two, you will be responsible for a rotating slate of topics relevant to our readings/discussions for that day. These should be related to the readings in a broad sense (e.g. when we read about Roman Performance, you might give a presentation on Roman philosophical schools, or Roman visual arts, or etc.). These presentations should be approximately 10-20 minutes in length. These are informal opportunities to present a small piece of outside research to the class. I will expect you to submit a Works Cited page for each presentation.
- Self-Assessment/Process Letters
 - At two points during the session (Week 3, Week 5) you will write a self-assessment of your work in the course. These “process letters” will describe your progress in the course, how you feel about learning the material, and ultimately provide me with the grade you feel you deserve. You will be provided with more detail on these letters in a separate document. These process letters provide a way for you to reflect on your methods and processes of working/learning/engaging with the course and material, and provide me with detailed insight into efforts that may or may not be evident in the products produced for class. These letters represent a large part of your grade, *and* your recommended grade is seriously taken into account.

COURSE CALENDAR *LT=Living Theatre

Week I

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Topic: Syllabus overview, classroom format and discussion, what is theatre?, classroom working agreement

Reading:

Due: Journal Link/Journal entry

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

Topic: Historical narratives and bias, primary vs. secondary sources, evidence-based research in theatre history, peer review and article databases,

Reading: <https://tinyurl.com/yyn6fyud>, <https://tinyurl.com/v8puurn>

Due: Journal entry

Thursday, July 13, 2023

Topic: The practice of research, the origins and purposes of theatre and performance, ritual and performance

Reading: [The CRAAP Test](#)

Due: Journal entry

Week II

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Topic: The Restoration Theatre in England

Reading: LT: 273-301, Aphra Behn—*The Rover*

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Topic: Romanticism, Neoclassicism, and Melodrama

Reading: LT: 303-341, Heinrich von Kleist—*The Prince of Homburg*, Stendahl, from *Racine and Shakespeare* and Victor Hugo, from *Preface to Cromwell* (Dukore, 677-692)

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Thursday, July 20, 2023

Topic: Acting and Directing in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

Reading: *The Player's Passion*, 116-159, Richard Wagner, from *The Artwork of the Future* (Dukore, 777-795)

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Week III

Tuesday, July 25, 2023

Topic: Realism and Naturalism

Reading: Émile Zola, from *Naturalism on the Stage* and August Strindberg, from *Preface to Miss Julie* (Dukore, 692-719, 564-574), Strindberg–*Miss Julie*, Yael Farber–*Mies Julie*

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Topic: Ibsen and “The door slam heard ‘round the world”

Reading: Henrik Ibsen–*A Doll House*, Lorraine Hansberry–*A Raisin In The Sun*

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Thursday, July 27, 2023

Topic: Stanislavski, Chekhov, and The Moscow Art Theatre

Reading: Anton Chekhov, from *Letters to A.S. Suvorin*, *Letter to Nemirovich-Danchenko*, and Leo Tolstoy from *What is Art?* (Dukore, 913-927), Chekhov–*The Seagull*

Due: Journal entry, Self Assessment I, Mini-Presentation

Week IV

Tuesday, August 1, 2023

Topic: Manifestos: Anti-Realism and Experimentation

Reading: Alfred Jarry–*Ubu Roi*, August Strindberg–*The Ghost Sonata*

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

Topic: Manifestos: Anti-Realism and Experimentation

Reading: Mina Loy–*The Sacred Prostitute*, Gertrude Stein–*Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights*

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Thursday, August 3, 2023

Topic: Brecht and the Epic Theatre

Reading: Karl Marx from *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* and Bertolt Brecht from *Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction* (Dukore 849-854), Bertolt Brecht–*Mother Courage and Her Children*

Due: Journal entry, Mini-Presentation

Week V

Tuesday, August 8, 2023

Topic: Site-Specific/Site Sympathetic Performance

Reading: *Site-Specific Performance*, 7-17, *The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography*, 175-197

Due: Journal entry

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

Topic: Immersive Theatres and the Future

Reading: *Immersive Theatres*, 21-49

Due: Journal entry

Thursday, August 10, 2023

Topic: Reflection and Summation

Reading:

Due: Journal entry, Self Assessment II

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Credit Hours:

“Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for the exams, etc.”

Academic Integrity

Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student's own effort. Infringement of academic integrity by a student subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions. Please consult [Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work via TurnItIn.com or similar software to verify originality. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic integrity as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at [Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources](#).

Classroom Health and Safety

- Register for the [Brandeis Emergency Notification System](#). Students who receive an emergency notification while attending class should notify their instructor immediately. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911. As a precaution, review [this active shooter information sheet](#).
- Brandeis provides [this shuttle service](#) for traveling across campus or to downtown Waltham, Cambridge and Boston.
- On the Brandeis campus, all students, faculty, staff and guests are required to observe the university's policies on physical distancing and mask-wearing to support the health and safety of all classroom participants. Face coverings must be worn by all students and instructors in classes with in-person meetings. Students and faculty must also maintain the appropriate 6 feet of physical distance from one another when entering, exiting, or being in the classroom and continue to sit in seats assigned by the professor to assist the university in its contact-tracing efforts. All faculty and students must also clean their work areas

before and after each class session, using the sanitizing wipes provided by the University. (Classrooms will also be professionally cleaned by Brandeis custodial staff multiple times per day.) Review up to date [COVID-related health and safety policies](#) regularly.

CONTENT WARNINGS

Theater explores a range of complex human experiences, and this course may include the study of plays with sensitive topics such as sexual, political, racial, religious, or violent situations or themes. Sometimes the goal of the author is to make us feel uncomfortable or challenge our ideas and beliefs. When discussing dramatic texts and their themes, our language should reflect both academic freedom and a respectful commitment to inclusion. Charged language regarding racial, ethnic, religious, and gender identities will not be used casually. If such language or topics are included in the text, they will be discussed for their specific cultural and historic context.

If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, please share your concerns with me before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material within class or with me independently, such discussions are welcomed as an appropriate part of our classwork. If you should feel the need to step outside during a class discussion you may do so. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

Course Materials/Books/Apps/Equipment

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options, including vouchers for purchases made at the Brandeis Bookstore.

LATTE

LATTE is the Brandeis learning management system. Login using your UNET ID and password. For LATTE help, contact Library@brandeis.edu.

Library

The Brandeis Library collections and staff offer resources and services to support Brandeis students, faculty and staff. Librarians and Specialists from Research & Instructional Services, Public Services, Archives & Special Collections, Sound & Image Media Studios, MakerLab, AutomationLab, and Digital Scholarship Lab are available to help you through consultations and workshops.

Privacy

To protect your privacy in any case where this course involves online student work outside of Brandeis password-protected spaces, you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias. You must share the pseudonym/ alias with me and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.

Student Support

Brandeis University is committed to supporting all our students so they can thrive. If a student, faculty, or staff member wants to learn more about support resources, the [Support at Brandeis](#) webpage offers a comprehensive list that includes these staff colleagues you can consult, along with other support resources:

- The Care Team
- Academic Services (undergraduate)
- Graduate Student Affairs
- Directors of Graduate Studies in each department, School of Arts & Sciences
- Program Administrators for the Heller School and International Business School
- University Ombuds
- Office of Equal Opportunity.