

Department of English & Writing Studies
Theatre Studies Program**Understanding Performance
Theatre Studies 2201F (001)**

Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. M.J. Kidnie
AHB 0N05

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Office hours: M 2:30-3:30; W 2:30-3:30, and
by appointment**Course Location:** AHB 1B08**Course Date/Time:** Mondays 1:30-2:30 pm
and Wednesdays 12:30-2:30 pm**Prerequisite(s):** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course will equip students with the primary tools necessary to conduct basic performance analysis. From costumes to lighting and sound effects to textual alterations, students will learn to analyze a production while exploring the social, political, and aesthetic meanings of the required texts.

Objectives:

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

- Recognize and analyze the component parts of live or archived performance;
- Use specialized terminology relevant to the study of performance;
- Engage with scripts as blueprints for performance;
- Think critically about the reception of performance;
- Locate and search library databases to find critical and theoretical analyses relevant to a topic of study;
- Write an essay about a piece of theatre that contains an effective thesis

Course Materials (all required)

- *Romeo and Juliet*. The New Folger edition is available free online at <http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/>. Our discussion of *Romeo and Juliet* will reference this edition's readings and line numbering.
- Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*. Available at the bookstore.
- Coursepack of readings. Available from instructor. Two additional articles are available online through Weldon (see teaching program for details).

Field Trips:

We will be participating in four theatre field trips. Student pricing (where applicable) and promo codes have been negotiated. More information about these trips will be communicated at our first meeting.

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

- *Romeo and Juliet* oral presentation with written submitted Bibliography (5%)
- Performance analyses (submit three, and keep your two highest marks: 2 x 20% = 40%)
- *Godot* group presentation (20%)
- In-class test (35%)

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. Please note: The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

Due Dates:

- *Romeo and Juliet* assignment – 20 September
- Performance analyses due:
 - 2 October, 30 October, 8 November
- *Godot* presentation – 27 and 29 November

Submission of Assignments:

- These may be handed in at class, given to me in person, sent to me (at the Department) by post or courier, or may be submitted to the essay box outside the Department of English office, where they will be date/time-stamped.
- Do *not* put assignments under my office door
- Essays submitted before 8:30 a.m. in the essay box are stamped with the previous day's date, and I accept those datings. (This means you can get a Friday date, up to 8:30 a.m. Monday.)
- Assignments posted to me will be counted as submitted on the postmark date; so, obtain and carefully keep proof of posting (ie., priority post receipt, recorded delivery receipt, etc).
- The Department will not accept assignments by fax or e-mail.
- Because of the prevalence of viruses, etc., on the internet, I will not open attachments to e-mails whose authenticity has not been independently verified.
- ***Be sure to keep a copy of all assignments submitted.***

Attendance:

Class attendance is crucial: missing more than two classes without medical documentation will result in a failing grade in the course. Attendance will be kept: all students will be required to sign in at the beginning of each class. Any student who comes late to class is responsible for making sure that they have been signed in before they leave.

Additional information about the Stratford trip:

Booking Tickets

There are two available price ranges: \$31.64 and \$22.60 (tax inc), and tickets are first come, first served. To book your Stratford ticket to *Romeo and Juliet* follow the steps below:

- Login to www.stratfordfestival.ca with promotion code **75543** (or create an account and then log in with the same code).
- Choose September 27 from the performance calendar.
- When selecting your seats, choose "**Western University Offer**" as the price type
- Pay and check out
- You can choose to have your tickets emailed right to your inbox by selecting the "**Deliver by Email**" delivery option

Or you can phone the Festival's box office. Choose the Groups and Schools option when prompted and quote promotion code **75543** to the call centre agent. A handling fee of \$10 will be added to your order if you call the box office to book your tickets (the handling fee does not apply if you book online).

NOTE: Globe ring seating is excluded from this offer. Please be advised that \$2.50 will be added to your order for a post-performance Q&A with company actors. This promotional code will be active until September 26, 2017. Offer may not be combined with any other offer and is not redeemable on previously purchased tickets. Offer is subject to availability.

Transportation

Two buses will take students to the Stratford Festival and return after the show and post-performance Q&A. We will leave from outside the Arts and Humanities building at 11am, and you will be dropped off at the same place at approximately 6:30pm. Return transportation is \$15. Please confirm a place with me with payment of the fee.

Workshops

There are TWO WORKSHOPS on offer at Stratford the same day, in which you can participate. They run simultaneously from 12:30-1:30 on the day, and students can opt to participate in one of them. Cost is \$8/person, and each workshop is capped at 30. One is a performance workshop, and the other is a combat workshop. First come, first served, and you confirm your place with payment of the fee to me.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Late Policy:

If you submit a paper after the due date (plus whatever grace days you have remaining, see below) but within two weeks of it, the paper will be counted as late and the following procedures will apply:

- The paper will not be read until all the assignments handed in on time have been read and returned (all papers are read in order of receipt).
- The paper will be read and a grade given, but NO COMMENTS OR CORRECTIONS will be made on it.
- The grade will be reduced by a penalty of two marks (2%) for each calendar day that it is late. Note that when a paper is late, every day counts (including weekends); however the arrangements for date-stamping essays in the Department of English essay box are accepted for late essays.

PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IF SUBMITTED MORE THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE DUE DATE UNLESS PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

Grace Days:

- You are each given three “grace days” in a half-year course which you can use all at once, or allocate between your various term assignments (first essay, second essay, or whatever).
- These “grace days” are intended to accommodate the accidents that commonly happen (got writer’s block, had computer problems, ran out of toner, couldn’t get books, etc.).
- Grace days are not transferable, nor do they have any value if unused.
- Grace days include only “academic days” – that means that Saturdays and Sundays are free. A wise course is to save your grace days until you really need them, particularly in second term when you will probably be under a lot more pressure than in first term.
- When your Grace Days are gone, they’re gone, and you’re faced with a late assignment (see above).
- Students requiring further extensions based on medical or compassionate grounds must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty (see above)

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Timetable

Weekly readings are set out below. These readings are required and will be intensively discussed in class. Make sure you complete your reading before class and bring all required reading to class on the day.

SEPTEMBER

- 11 Introduction
- 13 Topic: What's in a Text?
Required reading: Pavis, "Staging the Text" (25pp)
Bring your text of *Romeo and Juliet* (on a laptop is fine). We will be engaging in hands-on, exploratory work of scenes from the play.
- 18 *Romeo and Juliet* activity
- 20 *Romeo and Juliet* activity + 10 min presentations (5%)
- 25 Topic: Analyzing Performance
Required reading: Pavis, "The Tools of Analysis" (21pp)
- 27 Stratford trip, 11am-6:30pm
Buses leave campus at 11am. Please also sign up for one of two workshops from 12:30-1:30pm:
- Performance workshop – students learn acting techniques and/or Alexander techniques and breathing and projection techniques based on the requirement of the teacher
 - Stage combat workshop – students learn stage combat techniques (led by actors from our season or past seasons)
- Performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, 2-5pm. Q&A session with actors immediately following. Please see above for information about booking tickets, transportation, and enrolling in a workshop.

OCTOBER

- 2 *Romeo and Juliet* discussion and analysis + Performance analysis due (20%)
- 4 Topic: Finding your Voice
Required reading: Conkie, "Introduction" (24pp); Conkie, "Sudokothellophobia: Writing Hypertextually, Performatively" (15pp); Hartley, "The Schrödinger Effect" (13pp)
- 9-13 READING WEEK
- 16 Class visit by Daniel McIvor, Writer in Residence
- 18 Topic: Theatre as Experience; Theatre as Politics
Required reading: Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance" (21pp); Knowles, "Theory: Towards a Materialist Semiotics" (15pp)

23-25 Self-directed reading (I'm in Switzerland this week).
Please see Ronnie Burkett's *Daisy Show* at the Grand Theatre, London this week (23 Oct-24 Nov). Your analysis of it is due in class 30 October.

30 Ronnie Burkett discussion and analysis + Performance analysis due (20%)

NOVEMBER

1 Topic: Historicizing the Present and Audience Reception
Required reading: Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences* (79pp); revisit Knowles, "Theory"

Sunday 5 November – *Kiinalik* at Buddies in Bad Times, 2:30pm
Book online or by phone with promo code: UNDERSTANDING. Tickets are \$24/person.
We will try to carpool to Toronto. Please note: this is a pay-what-you-can performance,
and you may wish to book your ticket separately. Just make sure you get a ticket!

6 *Kiinalik* discussion and analysis

Required reading: Bharucha, "Interculturalism and its Discriminations" (24pp)

8 *Kiinalik* + Performance analysis due (20%)

13 *Waiting for Godot* – Introduction

Required reading: *Waiting for Godot* (available at bookstore)

15 Topic: The materials of archival study

Required reading: Fischer-Lichte, "Theatre Historiography and Performance Analysis" (14pp)

20 Archival study – video, DVD documentation

Required reading: Sarah Bey-Cheng, "Theatre Squared: Theatre History in the Age of Media", *Theatre Topics* 17:1 (2007): 37-50; Marco de Marinis, "'A Faithful Betrayal of Performance': Notes on the Use of Video in Theatre", *New Theatre Quarterly* 1:4 (1985): 383-9. Both articles available online through Western Libraries.

22 Stratford archive trip + tour of warehouse: *Godot* (1968, 1984, 1996, 1998, 2013)

27 *Godot* presentations

29 *Godot* presentations

DECEMBER

4 Course review

6 In-class test (35%)

Performance Analyses:

[Live performance is] an event for that moment in time, for that [audience] in that place – and it's gone. Gone without a trace. There was no journalist; there was no photographer; the only witnesses were the people present; the only record is what they retained.

—Peter Brook

We will be seeing three live productions this fall. The purpose of these 1000-word essays is to strengthen your critical analysis of live performance.

Whether or not you liked the production is not especially relevant. This sort of evaluative judgement will probably emerge over the course of your essay, but the primary emphasis must be on *analysis*. In particular, focus on one or two production choices that you consider especially important in terms of the company's staging. You might be struck by costuming

decisions, lighting and sound effects, striking gestures or unexpected emphases introduced by actors that introduced a reading of the play that hadn't occurred to you – the list of production choices to which you might attend is endless. In your essay, describe the production choice(s) concisely, and then analyse how it or they shaped a certain interpretation of the action, either in terms of the overall action, or in that particular scene. You might analyze the choices in terms of the tone of the production (happy, melancholy), power dynamics between characters on stage, individual characterisations, homoerotic tensions, the treatment of revenge – again, the potential interpretive significances are endless.

Your essay will be graded according to the following criteria:

- An ability to notice and build into your analysis significant production details;
- An ability to construct an argument that analyses how these staging choices shaped a particular interpretation;
- An ability to communicate your insights effectively: I will be looking for grammatically correct sentences, coherent essay structure, and careful presentation (no typos, titles italicized, pages numbered, essay titled, footnotes and bibliography presented according to MLA guidelines, etc).

I would recommend taking a notepad and pen into the theatre with you, so you can jot down striking details as they occur: you might otherwise have trouble remembering how exactly a scene or moment was played. You should also keep the theatre programme that you'll be given when you enter, as it will tell you who played which parts, who directed the show and wrote the music for it, and perhaps also provide some insight into what the company was trying to achieve. We'll discuss each of the productions in class.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.