

Theatre 3900G: Destination Theatre!

Winter 2018

Alternate Thursdays 7-9pm (AHB 1B02)

1. Course Description

We're going to London! One of the Anglophone world's greatest theatre cities, and one of global capitalism's most important "world" cities. It's a strange time in the UK right now: in June 2016 Britons voted 52% to 48% to leave the European Union, a choice that has thrown the financial and political motors of globalized Britain into turmoil. London is a world city in flux, today – but it remains a city powered by cultural as well as economic capital. What work does theatre and performance do in London in 2018? How do the performing arts touch and affect its many different spaces, cultures, and citizens?

These are just a few of the questions we'll explore as we prepare to travel to, and immerse ourselves in, performing London.

2. Meet your Teaching Team!

Instructor: Dr M.J. Kidnie (mjkidnie@uwo.ca)

M.J.'s office and hours: IGAB 0N05; Mondays 12:30-1:30pm; Thursdays 6:30-7pm, 9-9:30pm

3. Our course on the web

We will use OWL, but only for the basics: announcements and messages; some course resources; assignment submission; and logging grades.

For everything else – including regular, public blog posts authored by each of you! – we will use <https://destinationtheatre.wordpress.com>.

You will want to find and bookmark this site now!

4. Objectives and Outcomes

Outcomes

Students who commit seriously to our shared labour in TS3900 can expect to:

- Discover and practice a number of different approaches to reading theatre and performance as engaged, public art;
- Explore connections between theatre and performance studies and their own areas of study and interest;
- Develop strong teamwork skills;
- Develop skills necessary to communicating with a public audience;
- Build personal resilience and self-reliance, alongside like-minded others;
- Take risks, make mistakes, and have a mountain of fun.

Objectives

In order to achieve the above outcomes, students should expect to:

- Read a wide variety of introductory theatre studies material, with the option to dig deeper into some of it during independent study;
- Attend approximately a dozen live performances, both in London, ON and in London and Stratford-upon-Avon, UK, and debrief these performances thoroughly in class;
- Work regularly in small pairs and teams;
- Contribute regularly to our class blog;
- Create one major research project (format of your choosing), based on the exploration of connections between your own areas of interest and those focused on in our course;
- Spend substantial time both before and after departure thinking about how to practice self-care, group care, and take responsibility while in a new and challenging environment.

5. Required Texts

We will read the following books together in class; they are short, designed for undergraduate readers, and cost approximately \$15 each through the bookstore (generally less online). They are also all in the library.

Theatre & The City (Jen Harvie)

Theatre & Audience (Helen Freshwater)

Theatre & Politics (Joe Kelleher)

Theatre & Feeling (Erin Hurley)

We will also watch some theatre online before we head to London, in order to practice the theatre-reading skills the above books will help us to develop. Each of these online performances is available for you to watch at home prior to class. Please check the schedule below for details about when to see these.

Finally, as part of your pre-departure assessment for the course, I am asking you to see one piece of theatre on your own this winter term. You can, of course, see anything you like, in LonON, Stratford, Toronto, or beyond, but in the interests of saving time and money, I recommend that you consider either work at the Grand downtown or one of the shows taking place on campus this winter: *Purple Shorts* (Theatre Western), *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged* (AHSC), or *If/Then* (Theatre Western).

Note that the Grand makes discounted tickets for select performances available to Western Theatre Studies students; the discount works in one of two ways:

“Under 30” Pricing

Tickets to select Sprit Stage performances are only \$29.95. Available online anytime or over the phone at 519-672-8800.

The Rules

- You must be between 18 and 29.
- Limit of 2 tickets per performance.
- You (the purchaser) must be there for the performance.
- You have to choose one of the Under 30 selected performances.
- Under 30 pricing available for A and B seating.
- Tickets must be picked up at the box office. ID will be requested as proof of age at ticket pick up (tell them you are in Destination Theatre, TS3900, with M.J.)
- Tickets are non-transferable.

Silence

- Thursday, January 25, 2018 - 7:30pm
- Friday, January 26, 2018 - 8:00pm
- Saturday, January 27, 2018 - 2:00pm
- Thursday, February 1, 2018 - 7:30pm
- Friday, February 2, 2018 - 8:00pm
- Saturday, February 3, 2018 - 2:00pm

Blind Date

- Thursday, February 22, 2018 - 7:30pm
- Friday, February 23, 2018 - 8:00pm
- Saturday, February 24, 2018 - 2:00pm
- Thursday, March 1, 2018 - 7:30pm
- Friday, March 2, 2018 - 8:00pm
- Saturday, March 3, 2018 - 2:00pm

A Thousand Splendid Suns

- Thursday, March 22, 2018 - 7:30pm
- Friday, March 23, 2018 - 8:00pm
- Saturday, March 24, 2018 - 2:00pm
- Thursday, March 29, 2018 - 7:30pm
- Friday, March 30, 2018 - 8:00pm
- Saturday, March 31, 2018 - 2:00pm

OR!!

25% off any ticket to the shows on the Spriet stage (same three listed above), so long as you arrange it in advance with Monica Hodgson, Sales and Partnerships Manager, Grand Theatre, mhodgson@grandtheatre.com, 519-672-9030, ext. 291 (tell Monica you're with M.J.).

6. Assessment

The Basics

Your grade in TS3900G will consist of the following parts:

- Two posts to our public “Destination Theatre” blog (10% each; 20% total)
- Two short reflection papers, based on your independent theatre/performance viewing (15% each; 30% total)
- Final project (30%)
- Participation (20%)
- Pre-departure online modules (mandatory)

PLEASE NOTE: if you are in fourth year, AND you wish to graduate in June 2018, I will need to receive all of your course work by Thursday 12 April, including your final project. You will of course be free to continue contributing to our class blog and participating actively throughout our June experience in London, but your final mark for the class will need to be submitted to the registrar before we leave. This will require YOU to be active in ensuring your work is complete and with me before term's end.

The Specifics

1. TWO BLOG POSTS

Length: 500 words each

Value: 10% per post; 20% of final grade

Due: first post winter term; final post during our June experience in London, unless you plan to graduate in June

Method of submission: by email to M.J., for light copyediting, then returned to and posted to our blog by you.

Destination Theatre is an opportunity for you to indulge your love of live performance, to expand your world as we travel to a major global city together, and to discover aspects of yourself that you may never have considered before. Using theatre as our touchstone, we will together become fledgling global citizens. What will this experience mean, to each of us? What will it teach us?

Twice over the course of DT you'll reflect on these and related questions on our public blog (<https://destinationtheatre.wordpress.com>).

In your first post, you'll reflect on what brought you to Destination Theatre, what you hope to get from it, and what you perhaps fear, or are perhaps unsure about, as we begin our journey together. This post will be personal, but should still incorporate proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. It should read a bit like a "comment" piece for the *Gazette*; imagine you are writing for your friends, peers, maybe some teachers and parents. Imagine an audience for your writing, then address that audience.

In your second post, you will reflect on one of the experiences we will share together in London: a theatre visit, a city walk or away trip, or perhaps a presentation from one of our guest experts. Here, you should emphasize how your chosen experience has encouraged you to think in a new, fresh way about something we discussed in class during winter term. You should incorporate some secondary material into this post - maybe one of our readings, something from your final project research, reviews of the performance you're discussing, etc. Think of this as the more "academic" of the two posts, but note that you are still addressing a public audience; it's not as formal, nor as argument-based, as an essay would be, but it has a strong critical dimension.

Images are welcome, for both posts. Be creative! Remember to think about copyright.

If you wish, you may complete one of these posts in pairs. If you choose to do so your post should be approximately 800-1000 words long, and should demonstrate a shared voice and shared reflections. Both members of a pair will receive the same grade.

2. TWO SHORT REFLECTION PAPERS

Length: 750 words

Value: 15% per paper; 30% of final grade

Due: paper one is due Thursday 29 March; paper two is due either Thursday 12 April (if you are graduating in June) or Friday 13 July (everyone else)

Method of Submission: via OWL

For each of these papers you will analyze a work of live theatre using a critical lens borrowed from one of our course readings. (So, for example: you might see *A Thousand Splendid Suns* at the Grand, and then use one aspect of Joe Kelleher's argument in *Theatre & Politics* to talk about how it politicizes Kabul, Afghanistan. [This is just an example.]

You must use different reading (that is, a different *book*) for each of your reflections.

If you are graduating in June, you should see two pieces of theatre in the winter term, and use each of these to complete both reflection tasks by 12 April.

If you are not graduating in June, one of these reflections should be based on your independent winter-term theatre viewing, and the other should be based on a piece of live theatre you see during our experience in London (with the class, or not, as you prefer).

3. FINAL PROJECT

Length: 2000 words, or 6-8 minutes of audio/video (your choice of format)

Value: 30% of final grade

Due: Thursday 12 April (if you are in fourth year and wish to graduate in June); Friday 13 July (everybody else)

Method of Submission: via OWL

Your final project will combine your own interests/areas of study with some aspect of the work we will have done in class / will do during our experience in London. It will be conceived and shaped by you, in consultation with M.J.

Your interests (what do *you* want to do? What are *you* curious about exploring further?) will shape the direction your project takes; M.J. will help you determine what form your project might evolve into (an essay? A performance pitch/proposal? A report? A video? Something else?) as well as what research areas you might want to consider as you develop it.

For those of you completing your final project after our London experience, M.J. will help you connect with scholars, artists, companies and others in the UK who might be of use and support as you work. You should plan to use our time in London to inform your project and influence its path; after seeing theatre in and experiencing the city, your project may take a fresh turn – and that's just fine.

Every project will look and feel different; this open-endedness might sound scary now but it will, I promise, give you the chance to exercise scholarly creativity like you've rarely had before. **In order to ensure you make the most of the opportunities this task presents for you, you should begin speaking to M.J. about possible avenues of investigation after reading week, and no later than mid-March.**

4. PARTICIPATION

Length: ongoing

Value: 20% of final grade

This class is about having an experience unlike that an everyday classroom affords. It's a chance for us to work together to expand our horizons, test our boundaries, and shift our

comfort zones. In order to do that safely we will work toward becoming a community during winter term, and we will act as an ad-hoc family during our time in London.

All this means that participation is crucial: you need to come to every winter term meeting, on time and prepared; you need to take part in the exercises and workshops we do in class; you need to visit M.J. regularly in order to talk about your blog posts, readings, papers, and/or final project – anything you aren't sure about or need to think in more detail about. M.J. is available to support your work, but YOU also need to be *engaged*, and you need to be *involved*.

In London, you'll need to take care of and support each other. You will need to keep each other safe and help each other make smart choices. You will need to take responsibility for one another. You'll need to help each other have fun!

M.J.'s goal is to give everyone 100% for participation – REALLY. If you're worried that you are not doing what you need to be doing in order to achieve that goal, speak to her.

Note the one incontrovertible rule regarding participation: if you miss more than THREE sessions (during winter term and/or during our London intensive, **combined**) without accommodation, you will forfeit your participation mark. Really. (You don't want to do that!)

5. PRE-DEPARTURE ONLINE MODULE

Western International's pre-departure online module is delivered through OWL, and will be live from mid-January. It's engaging, interactive, and fun, and it's filled with case studies, information, and quizzes. You access it in your own time and you can refer back to it at any time. There are seven modules, and each module will take about 20 minutes to complete ("Critical and Ethical Global Engagement" is a bit longer, as it includes case studies, but the other modules are shorter than 20 minutes).

Please note that although there isn't a grade for this module, its completion is compulsory for each student. You are asked to complete it one month before departure (Western International tracks through OWL your successful completion of each module), and you won't be allowed to join the course in London until it's done, despite having paid your fees, as you'll be in breach of contract. Western International is really quite serious about this. On the upside, you'll be provided with plenty of useful and even essential information, which will help make our trip a huge success!

6. THE FINE PRINT

Late assignments are penalized at 2% per day.

Submissions more than seven days late will be eligible for a grade of no more than 50%.

M.J. cannot grant you an extension. If you have a medical or compassionate reason for requiring accommodation, please see your home faculty's academic counselors as soon as possible. They will contact M.J. to request accommodation on your behalf.

All written, video, or performance material you pass in must be your own work, with all references clearly documented. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and may be punishable with sanctions up to and including expulsion from the university. If you're unsure whether or not you are citing your sources correctly, just ask M.J.

7. Week by week schedule, winter term meetings

Note that we will meet *every second week* in winter term; that will amount to 14 contact hours before our intensive in London. In London we will spend a minimum of 32 contact hours together (four hours per day, four days per week, over two weeks), and together these periods of time will equal one half-course equivalent.

Week 1 | January 11

Welcome! Introduction to the course and each other; what's happening when we go to London?; what does it mean to say that theatre does "work" in a city?

READ: your syllabus (during and after class)!

Week 2 | January 18

NO CLASS

Week 3 | January 25

READ: Harvie, *Theatre & The City*

Group research into theatre opportunities while we are in London

Week 4 | February 1

NO CLASS

Week 5 | February 8

READ: Freshwater, *Theatre & Audience*

WATCH: *As You Like It*, Shakespeare's Globe (Course Readings on OWL)

Week 6 | February 15

NO CLASS

Week 7 | READING WEEK!

Week 8 | March 1

READ: Kelleher, *Theatre & Politics*

WATCH: *A Doll's House*, dir. Carrie Cracknell (Course Readings on OWL)

Week 9 | March 8

NO CLASS

Week 10 | March 15

Pre-departure workshop with Eunice Isidro (mandatory)

Week 11 | March 22

READ: Hurley, *Theatre & Feeling*

WATCH: *The Shipment*, dir. Young Jean Lee (Course Readings on OWL)

Week 12 | March 29

NO CLASS

Reflection paper #1 due

Week 13 | April 5

Final class meeting before departure! Logistics, questions, details.

Discussion of final projects in process. Course evaluations + cake.

Week 14 | April 12

Reflection paper #2 due (for June-graduating fourth-years)

Final project due (for June-graduating fourth-years)

8. Week by week schedule, in London

Note that this schedule is tentative; a complete, comprehensive schedule will be made available to you before the end of winter term.

Weekend of June 16-17: arrival and orientation at Queen Mary, University of London. Plan to arrive Saturday in order to get settled. (NB: QMUL is at Mile End tube station, approximately 75 minutes from Heathrow airport and two hours from Gatwick airport.)

Monday through Saturday, June 18-23:*

Morning sessions with M.J., 9:30-11:30, on campus at QMUL

Afternoon sessions with guest lecturers and artists, 1-3pm, and/or matinee performances

Sunday June 24: FREE DAY

Monday June 25: FREE DAY

Tuesday, June 26

Morning sessions with M.J., 9:30-11:30, on campus at QMUL

Afternoon session with guest lecturers and artists, 1-3pm, or matinee performance

Wednesday through Saturday, June 27-30:

Travel to Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

We will attend performances of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Miss Littlewood*. These tickets are already purchased – I was able to snap up

five pound student tickets to each of the three shows in repertory at the RSC. In addition to some sightseeing around this beautiful town, we'll have a voice class, a workshop on "Shakespeare and Directing" with an RSC director, pre-performance talks, two Q&As with RSC actors, and we'll hear Professor Sir Stanley Wells speak the first day on "What Makes a Great Shakespeare Actor?". All of these events are pencilled in, but still subject to confirmation.

Saturday, June 30:*

Coach travel at 3pm back to QMUL residence.

Sunday 1 July: class ends; departure from QMUL residence.

**You can expect, as a group, to see a total of EIGHT shows over the course of our two weeks in London and Stratford; these will typically take place in the evenings.*

You may choose to see additional shows on your own; I'd recommend going to at least two more things. M.J., and the QMUL staff and students, can offer advice.