

Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding Performance
Theatre Studies 2201F (001)
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Jo Devereux
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UC 4433
Office Hours: TBA

Delivery Type: Online



Course Description

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

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. We respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers.

Course Materials

Textbook (no books to buy for this course: all available online):

Balme, Christopher B. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Available online through Western libraries: <https://www-cambridge-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/core/books/cambridge-introduction-to-theatre-studies/3CAA6E67577F418E6EC2D507F27C8ABB#>

Productions to be Studied:

(all on Digital Theatre Plus, available through Western libraries: <https://www-digitaltheatreplus-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/education/plays-and-productions>)

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, directed by Phyllida Lloyd, Donmar Warehouse, London, UK, 2016: <https://www-digitaltheatreplus-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/education/collections/donmar-warehouse/the-tempest>

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, directed by Carrie Cracknell, Young Vic, London, UK, 2014: <https://www-digitaltheatreplus-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/education/collections/digital-theatre/a-dolls-house>

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, directed by Brian Bedford, American Airlines Theater, New York, USA, 2011: <https://www-digitaltheatreplus-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/education/collections/la-theatre-works/the-importance-of-being-earnest-0>

Play texts:

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Digital Text: <https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/the-tempest/>

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, translated by William Archer, 1879. PDF under Resources on OWL. See also: https://myetudes.org/access/content/user/mazu48009/PDF%20Files/DollsHouse_full01.pdf

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Samuel French. PDF under Resources on OWL. See also: http://www.jacneed.com/ASYD/Earnest/the_importance_of_being_earnest.pdf

Methods of Evaluation

1. Monologue Analysis (1000 words) worth 15%
2. Performance Analysis (1500 words) worth 20%
3. Term Essay (2500 words) worth 25%
4. Attendance, worth 5%
5. Final Exam (2 hours) in Christmas exam period, worth 35%

Essay Due dates, Late policy, Extensions, Plagiarism:

Essays must be submitted as an attachment in Word via OWL.

All overdue essays will receive a penalty of 1% per day late.

Essays must follow current MLA 8 format and must include a list of Works Cited at the end.

Essays must be on works studied in **this** section of the course.

IT IS ADVISABLE TO RETAIN AT LEAST ONE COPY OF THE ESSAY IN THE EVENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE TO THE ORIGINAL.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a 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 (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Email Policy: Email is meant for brief inquiries only. Please allow a day or two for a response. Email received over the weekend will be answered the following week.

Assignment Instructions:

MONOLOGUE ANALYSIS: 1000 words, **due Oct. 29**, worth 15%

Choose ONE out of a selected list of six monologues (TBD) and research various performances of this monologue in the past. Based on this research and on your understanding of the monologue, present a clear argument detailing the major challenges in the monologue for performers, directors, and audiences. Be sure to explore the meanings and usages of specific words in the speech, as well as sounds, rhythms, and embodiment. Consider how the historical moment of the performance might affect the delivery and the reception of this monologue.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS: 1500 words, **due Nov. 26**, worth 20%

Analyse ONE of the performances on Digital Theatre Plus that we have studied in the course, considering such elements as space, blocking, movement, sound, light, costumes, props, music, and style of acting. Discuss the focus and aims of the performance and the reaction of the audience. Research the background to the production and be as specific as you can in developing a clear argument about this performance and its relation to the text of the play and the culture of performance at various times in history. Move beyond basic description to a persuasive argument about the performance.

TERM ESSAY: 2500 words, **due Dec. 7**, worth 25%

Compare and contrast the performances with detailed reference both to the text and to production choices found in TWO productions of one of the plays we studied this term in a critical research essay of 2000 words.

N.B. Do **not** simply describe the performances or summarize the plot; instead, present a focused and persuasive argument about the performances based on searching and specific questions about **one main element** of the performances. Aim at specificity rather than generalization.

As well as the text of the play and the two performances, incorporate at least TWO secondary sources that relate to your argument and show clearly how your argument differs from those of the critics you cite.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are temporarily unable to meet academic requirements (e.g. attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) may submit a self-reported absence form online (available on your Student Center) provided that the absence is 48 hours or less and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy are met. Students can self-report only two absences per academic year. See policy here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf.

Students whose absences are expected to last longer than 48 hours, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to Academic Counselling. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. The Student Medical Certificate is available online at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation.

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:

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.

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.

Timetable

Week of Readings and Performances

Sept.9	Introduction (no readings yet)
Sept.14	Balme, Chapter 1: Actors
Sept.21	Balme, Chapter 3: Space; text of <i>The Tempest</i>
Sept.28	Balme, Chapter 8: Performance Analysis; watch <i>The Tempest</i>
Oct.5	<i>The Tempest</i> , performance analysis
Oct.12	text of <i>A Doll's House</i>
Oct.19	watch <i>A Doll's House</i>
Oct.26	<i>A Doll's House</i> ; Monologue Analysis Due Oct. 29
Nov.2	FALL READING WEEK: NO CLASS
Nov.9	text of <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Nov.16	watch <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Nov.23	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> ; Performance Analysis Due Nov. 26
Nov.30	Theatre tech: watch <i>My West End</i>
Dec.7	Wrap up and review; Term Essay Due
	Final Exam , Dec. 2020 date TBA