

Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding Performance

Theatre Studies 2201F

Fall 2021

COVID Statement

Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per Western policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical or religious reasons must seek formal accommodation through Accessible Education at aew@uwo.ca.

Students are expected not to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Department, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Instructor: Dr M. J. Kidnie (I prefer M.J., but you can also call me Dr or Prof Kidnie)
Pronouns: she/her
Email: mjkidnie@uwo.ca
Office: UC 4420
Office hours: On Zoom by appointment until 18 October and thereafter in my office Weds

12:30-2:30 and by arrangement. Zoom link: <https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/93466383692> (Passcode: 646171)

Course Location: UC 3110 (Conron Hall)

Course Date/Time: Mon 10:30-12:30 & Wed 11:30-12:30

Antirequisite(s): None

Prerequisite(s): Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of any 1000-level or above "E" or combination of two 1000-level or above "F/G" courses from any department in the following Faculties: Arts and Humanities, School of Humanities (Brescia), Information and Media Studies (FIMS), or Music; or from any of the following additional Departments: Anthropology, English (King's), English and Cultural Studies (Huron), History (Main and Affiliates), Philosophy (Affiliates), Political Science (Main and Affiliates), the Religious Studies (Affiliates), 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. Much of our work will be pursued through hands-on engagement with live and archived theatre.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Teaching Methods

I teach using a combination of lectures, classroom discussion, and “on your feet” exploration of theatrical texts. There may be people in our class who are completing the vaccination process, so especially prior to October 12 at which point we should all have attained full immunization levels I will try, when possible, to take the class outdoors for movement and table work. Please wear comfortable clothes that will allow you to move and sit on the grass.

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 and theorize that interpretive strategy;
- 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 for purchase (texts are available at the bookstore)

- Tomson Highway, *Rez Sisters*
- “Ticket” to view the streamed recording of the Stratford Festival staging of *Rez Sisters* (more information on pricing will be available in class)
- Most of our viewing and reading materials are available either through our OWL website or through the Drama Online and Digital Theatre Plus databases, which are available through the Weldon database (see next)

Materials available through Western

- There is no “textbook” for this course. I have instead assembled a range of articles and book chapters that will support our study of theatre and performance and they are all posted on our OWL website. These readings are listed in the syllabus below by week. This reading is required for successful completion of the course.
- Apart from *Rez Sisters* (see “Course Materials for purchase” above), all screenings of live theatrical performance, listed by week below, are available through two databases, both found on the Weldon catalogue: Drama Online and Digital Theatre Plus. Students will watch these screenings outside of class.
- You can get an online annotated edition of *Julius Caesar* through the Weldon catalogue (search “New Oxford Shakespeare” and click on the electronic resource). If you already have a print edition of the play that you would prefer to use, that’s perfectly fine.

Course expectations

Attendance at every class is mandatory, but please do *not* come to class if you are feeling ill.

Submission of Assignments

All submission dates are listed below. Submit written coursework on the due date through our OWL website AND in the English and Writing Studies dropbox (or you can hand it to me in class on the due date). The dropbox is located in the hall outside UC 2401.

The secretary will date-stamp your work and put it in my pigeonhole. Anything submitted to the dropbox before 8:30am will be date-stamped with the *previous* day's date. You must also submit any late or early work through the OWL website, which will also provide you with a date-stamp. Please note that in case of uncertainty, the online OWL date-stamp will be taken as final.

LATE PAPER POLICY

If you submit a paper after the due date, the paper will be counted as late. 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), but that the arrangements for date-stamping essays in the Department of English essay box are accepted for late essays. Extensions on any assignment will only be considered if supported by a request for accommodation sent by students' Academic Counsellors in their home faculty (see below, "Accommodation").

Methods of Evaluation (assignment descriptions are below)

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

- Theatrical spaces assignment: Rehearsal scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (groups of six)
 - 15% (group presentation in class September 29 with 800-word individual written submission due October 4; grade weighted 67% write-up and 33% performance)
- Pecha Kucha 20x20 – 15% (20 slides, each for 20 seconds; delivered with a partner and based on ONE staging studied on the course; presentations spread over term)
- 2000-word term paper – 25% (due December 6)
- 2-hour exam – 35%
- Participation – 10%

Description of Assignments

Theatrical spaces assignment: You will rehearse the "rehearsal scene" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (3.1.1-75), specifically considering how it could be staged in different theatrical spaces. This is an "on your feet" exercise and you will explore and block two different stagings. The purpose is to understand how certain spaces provide distinctive opportunities and limitations. You will pick your favourite of the two stagings to present to the class on September 29. No later than October 4, each of you will write and submit an 800-word reflection on different theatrical spaces, specifically as they shaped your rehearsal process. This short essay must include at least ONE quotation from the secondary reading you've been doing for the course and at least ONE quotation from the play. You must also include a Works Cited list (the Works Cited list is not included in the word count).

Pecha Kucha: Oral presentation (format described above). The delivery must be equally shared between the two partners. The topic will be determined by the time slot you choose.

Participation: Based on oral contributions to class (comments, questions, contributions to group work; marks are higher for students who engage knowledgeably with course materials).

Conron Hall has poor acoustics (not helped by masking), but the university is purchasing a

boom that will allow us to pass around a hand-held mic. If you have anxiety about speaking in class, please speak to me separately.

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. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies for adjudication.

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/info%20for%20students.html#grade_

TEACHING PROGRAMME

This class outline is subject to change. Students are expected to stay abreast of coursework through regular attendance at class.

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Introduction to course
- 13 Reading for Performance: Stage Directions and Implicit Stage Directions
REQUIRED READING: Mick Wallis and Simon Shepherd, "Getting Started," in *Studying Plays* (London: Arnold, 1998), pp. 1-11; *Julius Caesar*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 3.1.34-86
- 15 Reading for Performance: Assassination of Caesar
REQUIRED READING: Margaret Jane Kidnie, "Textual Clues and Performance Choices," in *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre*, ed. Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Bridget Escolme (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-13
- 20 Reading for Performance: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and John Logan, *Red*
- 22 John Logan, *Red*
REQUIRED VIEWING: John Logan, *Red* (Digital Theatre Plus)
- 27 Theatrical Spaces
REQUIRED READING: Christopher Balme, "Spaces and Places," in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies* (Cambridge UP, 2008), pp. 47-62; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 3.1.1-75
- 29 Five Presentations: Rehearsal scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

OCTOBER

- 4 Stage Space and Fictional Space: Abstract Thinking and the Art of Make-Believe
REQUIRED READING: Gay McAuley, "Energized Space: Moving Bodies," in *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 2000), pp. 90-125
ESSAY SUBMISSION: Theatrical spaces write-up due today (800 words)
- 6 Complicité, *A Disappearing Number*
REQUIRED VIEWING: *A Disappearing Number* (Digital Theatre Plus)
- 11 THANKSGIVING MONDAY (no class)
- 13 5 Pecha Kucha – Complicité, *A Disappearing Number*
- 18 *Julius Caesar* Three Ways: Shakespeare and Appropriation
REQUIRED VIEWING: Opening scenes of Globe, Bridge (NT), and Donmar Warehouse productions (1.1-1.2.41), all available on Drama Online. Please watch them in the order listed above.
- 20 *Julius Caesar*
REQUIRED READING: *Julius Caesar* (available on OWL)
- 25 *Julius Caesar*, dir. Phyllida Lloyd
REQUIRED VIEWING: Donmar Warehouse production
- 27 Objects, Costumes, and Lighting
REQUIRED READING: Patrice Pavis, "Other Material Elements of Performance," in *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2003),

pp.171-97

READING WEEK – NOVEMBER 1-7

NOVEMBER

- 8 5 Pecha Kucha – Donmar Warehouse, *Julius Caesar*. Second hour: *Death of a Chief*, Native Earth, and Indigenous appropriation
- 10 Stratford Festival and diversity
- 15 Tomson Highway, *Rez Sisters*
REQUIRED READING: Tomson Highway, *Rez Sisters* (available at bookstore)
- 17 *Rez Sisters*
REQUIRED VIEWING: Stratford Festival, *Rez Sisters* (Stratford link)
- 22 *Rez Sisters*
- 24 Audience and the Theatrical Event
REQUIRED READING: Susan Bennett, from *Theatre Audiences* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 125-65
- 29 Young Vic, *The Container*
REQUIRED VIEWING: *The Container* (Digital Theatre Plus)

DECEMBER

- 1 5 Pecha Kucha – either *Rez Sisters* or *The Container*
- 6 Exam review
- 8 Exam review

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

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

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.