

Department of English & Writing Studies
Special Topics in Theatre Studies: Post-Pandemic Theatre
Theatre Studies 3951F (001)
Fall 2021

Instructor: Taylor Marie Graham
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UC 1423

Course Location: Talbot College, Room 341

Delivery Type: In Person

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 pm;
Thursdays 12:30-1:30 pm

Prerequisites: 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

Welcome to Post-Pandemic Theatre!

As a traditionally communal art form, theatre was deeply impacted by global gathering restrictions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It’s time to dissect this impact in detail in order to imagine the possible futures for theatre as the pandemic slowly comes to an end.

From significant technological innovations to understandable existential dread to important highlighting of societal inequities, Canadian theatre makers have been busy throughout the pandemic! Their art to come will no doubt be in relationship to their recent/current experiences.

In this seminar style class, we will first examine the implications of the pandemic on the iconic Tarragon Theatre together as a group. This will create a jumping off point for the rest of the semester which will be dedicated to student led seminar presentations and class discussions. For your seminar presentations, you can pick from a wide range of Canadian or Indigenous plays, theatre organizations, or major artists active throughout the pandemic. You will research the company/artist’s work pre-pandemic, throughout the pandemic, and if available, post-pandemic. This will help us as a class to understand what the future holds for them and as a result for all of us!

Throughout the semester, you will workshop your final assignments which can either be a creative project or an essay. For the essay option you should engage with one or more plays/artists/organizations examined this semester using a decolonial or feminist lens. For the creative option you can develop your own 10-20 minute piece of theatre inspired by the works we examine throughout the semester.

Together as a class, we will use this time to search for answers to the all important questions of our times for our country's theatre makers/audience/scholars: How was Canadian theatre impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and what are the possible futures for Canadian and Indigenous theatre to come?

Objectives:

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

- Recognize and engage with themes of identity within Canadian pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic theatre;
- Expand personal creative horizons by experimenting with playmaking theatre practices as experiential learning;
- Apply critical theoretical frameworks to theatrical outputs;
- Research, critically examine, and present findings to the class focused on a pandemic Canadian theatre play/artist/organization;
- Debate and revise interpretations of ideas/texts/histories in dialogue with other students in class with a high degree of professionalism;
- Self manage a project through all stages of development including: researching, planning, drafting, building a theoretical framework, and writing/creating the final version of the project;
- Reflect on personal understanding of core class concepts, creative engagement, and other progress throughout the semester

Course Materials

Texts/video/audio will be available through the library's online resources or open source online. Students will help pick the Canadian weekly play presentation/reading schedule based on their personal interests and the overall needs of the class from a list provided. No book purchases are required. The final text/video/audio list will be posted in Week 3 with links to all online materials.

Methods of Evaluation

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

Seminar Presentation (Presentation to Class 15%, Class Handout/Slides 5%)	20%
Seminar Response	15%
Class Participation	10%
Semester Journal / Commonplace Book (Midterm 10%, Final 10%)	20%
In-Class Workshopping Final Assignment (Proposal 5%, Update 5%, & Workshop 5%)	15%
Final Critical Essay or Creative Project	20%

Note: Each assignment has a full description and a marking rubric available on OWL with full details about evaluation.

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>.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see

Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department program.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Note From Taylor

Because we are still in the midst of a global pandemic, it is very possible that things may need to change throughout the semester. I am very aware that students may experience a range of emotions and personal difficulties throughout the semester due to the pandemic as well. In setting up this course, I have made it as barrier free as possible including having all required reading/listening/watching available online. It is my hope that this class experience is welcoming to all students. Please feel free to reach out at any point throughout the semester with questions or just to check in.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence:

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation. Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical

grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

For the **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)**, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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.

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/>

Academic Support & Engagement <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

Thursday, September 9th

Introductions, Class Expectations, Course Outline, Course Central Questions

Tuesday, September 14th

Performing Canada, Tarragon Theatre & the pandemic, Borders & Identity, Discuss Seminar Presentation List

READ: *Fronteras Americanas* by Guillermo Verdecchia (online from Western library)

WATCH: *Guillermo Verdecchia shares some stories and images from Fronteras Americanas* (online Tarragon Theatre YouTube Video)

Thursday, September 16th

Creative Workshop, Performing Canada continued, Borders & Identity, Discuss Seminar Presentation List

READ: "Restaging, Reframing, Remembering: The Role of Collective Memory in Guillermo Verdecchia's *Fronteras Americanas*" by Pablo Ramirez found in *Latin American Identities After 1980* Edited by *Huras, Amy and Gordana Yovanovich* (online from Western library)

TO DO: Email Taylor (tgraha46@uwo.ca) your top three seminar presentations choices by 11:59pm (0%)

Tuesday, September 21st

Pandemic Technological Innovations, Tarragon Theatre & the Pandemic, Digital Translation, Discuss Seminar Presentation Schedule and Updated Timetable

WATCH: *Orestes* by Rick Roberts (online archival video); *Playwright Rick Roberts talks about the upcoming Orestes from Tarragon Theatre* (Tarragon YouTube Video)

Thursday, September 23rd

Creative Workshop (please bring your phones and laptops to class), Pandemic Technological Innovations continued, Digital Translation continued

READ: "Chapter 3: Popular Yet Political Audiences in The Penelopiad and If We Were Birds" found in *Political Adaptation in Canadian Theatre* by Kailin Wright (online from Western library)

Tuesday, September 28th

Podcast Performance, Digital Translation continued, Performing Canada continued

LISTEN: *Sir John A: Acts of A Gentrified Ojibway Rebellion* by Drew Hayden Taylor (PlayME Podcasts)

READ: "Playing on Indigenous Land" by Alan Filewod from *Theatre and (Im)migration* Edited by Yana Meerzon (article on OWL by permission of author)

Thursday, September 30th

In-Class Seminar Presentation Workshop, Incorporating Research, Presentation Skills, Presenting with Technology, Reciprocal Research, Leading Creative Workshops

READ: "Chapter 7: How" from *Presentation skills: educate, inspire and engage your audience* by Weiss, Michael (online from Western library)

Tuesday, October 5th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 1 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Communities Speak, BIPOC Voices

Thursday, October 7th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 2 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Communities Speak, BIPOC Voices

Tuesday, October 12th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 3 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Communities Speak, BIPOC Voices

Thursday, October 14th

In-Class Critical Essay Writing for Theatre Workshop, Discuss Final Assignment Expectations and Workshopping

RESOURCES: *Citing Sources According to MLA* (online from Western library); *McGraw-Hill's Concise Guide to Writing Research Papers* by Carol Ellison (online from Western library); *The Basics of Theatre Criticism: The Parking Lot Rule* by Danielle Rosvally (HowlRound Online)

DUE: First submission of Journal / Commonplace Book at 11:59pm (10%)

Tuesday, October 19th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 4 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Communities Speak, BIPOC Voices continued

Thursday, October 21st

In-Class Final Project Proposals (5%)

Tuesday, October 26th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 5 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre, Back to Basics

Thursday, October 28th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 6 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre, Back to Basics continued

Tuesday, November 2nd & Thursday, November 4th

Fall Break! No Class!

Tuesday, November 9th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 7 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre and Into Your Brain

Thursday, November 11th

In-Class Final Project Update (5%)

Tuesday, November 16th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 8 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre and Into Your Brain continued

Thursday, November 18th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 9 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre and Into Your Brain continued

Tuesday, November 23rd

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 10 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre and Into Your Brain continued

Thursday, November 25th

Seminar Presentation & Discussion Day 11 (reading/listening/watching schedule will be updated on OWL), Out of the Theatre and Into Your Brain continued

Tuesday, November 30th

VR Experiment!

DUE: Final submission of Journal / Commonplace Book at 11:59pm (10%)

Thursday, December 2nd

In-Class Workshopping Final Assignments Day 1

Tuesday, December 7th

In-Class Workshopping Final Assignments Day 2

2 Days Workshopping Final Assignments (5%)

Final Assignment Submission Date TBA (20%)