

Course Syllabus

THTR 428: Radical Theatre

Instructor: Deb Currier

Radical* Theatre, Fall 2017

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Required Text: THTR 428 coursepack from bookstore.

Course Objectives

This is a special topics seminar based on *praxis*- which aims to mix intensive readings and discussion with experimental exercises, resulting in an experience of both theory and *practice* (not perfection).

This course will provide you with a working knowledge of the theory and practice behind the radical/social change theatre of the 1960s through the current iterations and explorations of Theatre of the Oppressed in its varied forms. It also hopes to provide a forum to investigate the performative aspects of radical theatre forms.

Therefore, you are asked to read, question, probe, explore and be open to experimenting with “unfinished theatre.”

This course meets the following Theatre and Dance Department Student Learning Outcomes and Program Goals:

- Knowledge of major works of dramatic literature representative of diverse cultures
 - Knowledge of the role of theatre in shaping our past, present and future
 - Function effectively as a member of a collaborative team in the preparation and realization of a public performance
- *Departmental Assessment and learning objectives can be found at: www.wvu.edu/theatre*

Course Requirements and Expectations

Participation 5 points per class meeting: This course is based on a balance of theory and practice, so not only will your reflective journal entries be counted as participation, but your performance in the “experiments” will also count toward your grade. Attendance and active participation are key elements to your success in the course. The subject matter can raise issues and questions that are uncomfortable, unfamiliar, funny, horrible, gut-wrenching or meaningless... **it is your job to examine the texts and subjects and bring not only a perspective to class, but also an open mind ready to reflect on the input of others.** It is perfectly fine to disagree (the *essence* of drama is conflict, after all), but be wary of critical and/or judgmental statements aimed at classmates (or professor) rather than the material.

Course Readings: You are to **bring the coursepack to each class meeting.** Your highlighted readings and reflective notes will be used to generate the responses, activities and discussions of the material for that day.

Reflections: These are online entries on the Canvas course site. There is no word limit on your reflection entries, but you are required to write a *minimum* of 500 words (about 1 page, single-spaced, 12 point font). You are expected to provide a thoughtful, personal response to what was read and/or discussed/done in classes (or thoughts generated after...).

Group Projects: You will be engaged in 2 short group projects in this class (see assignment parameters on Canvas and details given in class).

Final Paper Project This is a WP course, and you will be generating a **10-page (typed, 1” margins, 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing) research response paper** on a topic of your choice. The due dates for specific portions of the project are listed in the course schedule.

Your thesis should be an evolving idea, which is why I ask for a topic/question and a working bibliography rather than a thesis statement. Your topic will guide your research, but your research will narrow your question. Go to <http://www.bibme.org/citation-guide/mla/> for clear rules about citation within a research paper. You will be using MLA citation throughout the paper and in the bibliography.

WWU Writing Center 650-3219 Wilson Library, across from Zoe's Bagels, 2nd floor
<http://library.wvu.edu/writingcenter>. M-R 10-4; F 10-2; Sun., Mon., Wed. evenings, 7-9 pm.
Always open for online draft submissions at www.acadeweb.wvu.edu/writingcenter

ALL written assignments are due on Canvas as either a text entry or file upload by 10:00am on the date due. Assignments will close promptly at 10:00am.

Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Participation/Preparedness ... 95 points (5 points per class meeting)
- Reflection 1 (writing) ... 15 points
- Research Paper Rough Draft ... 15 points
- Happening (group project) ... 70 points
- Reflection 2 (writing)... 15 points
- Reflection 3 (writing) ... 15 points
- Final Paper ... 60 points
- Total: 300 points possible**

Note: Evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in failure of this course- refer to the Student Conduct Code in the university catalogue.

Letter equivalents are determined by dividing the top half of the total points for any assignment into 4 equal lettered "zones." The same is true for the final total, which is how I will ultimately arrive at a letter grade to report to the university. So...

- 300-263 = A range: 300-276 = A; 275-263= A-
- 262-225 = B range: 262-250 = B+; 249-237 = B; 236-225 = B-
- 224-186 = C range: 224-212 = C+; 211-199 = C; 198-186= C-
- 185-150 = D range: 185-173 = D+; 172-160 = D; 159-147 = D-
- 146 and below = F

Planned Course Schedule

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>What's Due?</u> |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 9/27 *** | Housekeeping... | Content Policy (On Canvas) |
| 10/2 10/4 *** | What are we resisting? | Reading 1 |
| 10/9 10/11 | Writing Center Workshop 1: Getting Started- Alternative Theatre in the U.S. | meet in HH 210 Reading 2 |
| *** | | |
| 10/16 10/18 *** | Groovy Happenings, Man | Reading 3 Reflection 1; RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC |
| 10/23 10/25 *** | Early Theatre of Social Change | Reading 4 |
| 10/30 | Writing Center Workshop 3: Finding and using Sources- | meet in HH 210 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| 11/1 *** | Brecht and Boal | Reading 5 |
| 11/6 11/8 *** | More Theatre of the Oppressed fun... | Reflection 2 |
| 11/13 11/15 *** | Ethical Dilemmas | Reading 6; RESEARCH PAPER ROUGH DRAFT |
| 11/20 11/22-26 *** | More Ethical Dilemmas... <i>Thanksgiving Break</i> | |
| 11/27 11/29 *** | Radical Practice | Reading 7 Reflection 3 |
| 12/4 12/6 *** | Happening Projects Group Happenings responses/discussion | Happening Projects |

Final Paper Due on Canvas: Mon Dec 11th, 10:00am

*“Radical” comes from the Latin, *radix*, which means, “root.” So it’s more about digging to the root of things to find the genesis of antiquated or frozen ideas/beliefs/perceptions– to *fully* understand what you are wanting to see change, rather than coming from a reactionary place that is not grounded (rooted) in **knowledge** of what has led up to what you want to change. To be “radical” means to be rooted not only in your own **beliefs** which lead you the passionate need to shift the paradigm you see as “broken,” but also to **understand**, from the root, that which you are attempting to transform.

Theatre is the most perfect artistic form of coercion. -Augusto Boal

TURN YOUR LIFE INTO A WORK OF ART. -Phillipo Marinetti

Performance artists are the kamikazes of the theatre world. – Yoshiko Chuma

Never underestimate the power of presence.
Social media is to communication what phone sex is to love. – D. Currier

Happening Rubric: “*The Politics of Education*”

This rubric is on Canvas. Make a note of the areas that are being evaluated and the points allocated for each. Use this rubric as a guideline to help you know what the expectations of the project are.

Group:

Members:

| CATEGORY | 10-9 points | 8-6 points | 5-3 points | Comments |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|----------|
| Quality of Work | Represents highest quality work from all participants | Represents quality work from group members but seems unbalanced | Does not represent quality from all members; work load in preparation and performance is not equally shared | |
| Preparedness | All members are prepared to perform; piece has obviously been rehearsed | Members are not as ready as they need to be to perform; piece seems under-rehearsed | Group is not ready to go... | |
| Compartments | Creative and relate to larger theme | Lacking in originality but still relate to larger theme | Compartments are confusing and unrelated | |
| Performance Space | Locates best possible space for the piece; fully and creatively utilizes non-traditional performance space; has obtained permissions needed from University | Uses non-traditional performance space in ways that serve the project but not as thoroughly as possible; has obtained permissions needed from University | Does not utilize space well; has not obtained permissions needed from University | |
| Emphasis | Successfully integrates audience as participants; shifts piece from artistic intention/ego to audience awareness | Successfully integrates audience as participants but doesn't fully engage them; neglects aspects of audience awareness in favor of artistic ego | Does not successfully engage audience as participants; piece is more about artist ego than audience awareness | |
| Timely and Socially Aware | Piece is culturally specific, timely, fearless and engages audience in <i>recognizable</i> social issue being addressed; shakes up the normative behaviors of audience | Piece is specific, timely and contains social commentary but is not as clear in intent or audience expectations; shies away from truly shaking up norms | Piece does not have a clear focus/issue it is exploring/addressing; does not demand artistic courage; does not attempt to shake up audience normative behaviors | |
| Variety of Tactics | Creatively employs multiple methods of communication and disruption: simultaneity, multiple focus, non-verbal, multi-media, etc. | Employs more than 2 differing methods of communication but lacks some creativity | Does not explore or employ more than 2 types of communication/performance; lacks creativity | |

Total: _____/70

Final Paper Rubric: THTR 428 Radical Theatre

This rubric is on Canvas. Make a note of the areas that are being evaluated and the points allocated for each. Use this rubric as a guideline to help you know what the expectations of the final paper are.

| Areas evaluated | Point spreads | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Bone | 4-5 - Excellent | 2-3 -Average | 0-1 Below Average |
| Clear thesis | | | |
| Clear proposal/intent | | | |
| Muscle | 7-10 | 3-6 | 1-2 |
| Organization: logical and orderly argument; clear introduction; appropriate background | | | |
| Conclusion: Is there a suitable conclusion? | | | |
| Balance: Is vocabulary consistent? Is it balanced between response and research? | | | |
| Skin | 4-5 | 2-3 | 0-1 |
| Paper has been proofread | | | |
| Length Paper is 10 pages, 1.5 spaced and typed | | | |
| Citation: Proper MLA parenthetical citation is used | (10 points possible) | | |
| Works Cited: Is it formatted appropriately accordingly to MLA? | | | |