THE 1041: Introduction to Theater Arts

Freshman Learning Community
Africa in World Culture

Baruch College, Vertical Campus 4-212
Fall 2016, Fridays 11:10 – 2:05
http://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/the1041africa/

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Office: NVC 7-229 Phone: 646-312-4057
Office Hours: Fridays 2-3 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is an introduction to the art of theater. We will examine how theatrical productions are developed via artistic collaborations between writers, actors, directors, designers, producers, and audience members. Students will read plays and theater reviews, attend theatrical productions, and participate in workshops and conversations with guest artists. Attendance at professional performances in New York City outside of class is a required part of the course.

GLOBAL FRESHMAN LEARNING COMMUNITY
Africa in World Culture is a Global Freshman Learning Community (LC) that introduces students to the African continent’s many and varied ties to other cultures from around the world. While African cultures have in fact been “global” for centuries, popular narratives often depict these cultures in terms of their difference from the more self-consciously cosmopolitan cultures of Europe and North America. This LC seeks to redress this longstanding stereotype by asking students to investigate the global dimensions of a number of different African cultures.

This section of THE 1041 will introduce students to key concepts in theater with a focus on theater of, about, and related to the African continent. A significant portion of the class will be spent on postcolonial African theater and the image of African in contemporary theater, music, and film abroad. Each student will conduct an independent research projects on a topic of their choice related to African theater, and these projects will be presented at the end of the semester in an in-class mock research conference.

Students will be expected to complete a joint assignment coordinated between THE 1041 and ENG 2100.

LEARNING GOALS
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Identify the basic components of live theatrical performance
• Indicate how these elements produce an effect on audiences
• Explain practical aspects of creating, participating in, and attending theater
• Critically analyze a script
• Distinguish between different dramatic genres and historical periods
• Navigate New York City’s theater scene
• Critique theatrical performance and respond aesthetically to theater
• Articulate how theater is understood and created differently in cultures around the world

**GRADING**

| Attendance and Participation | 10 points |
| Performance Reviews (2) | 20 points |
| Midterm Paper | 20 points |
| Quizzes (2) | 20 points |
| Final Project | 30 points |
| **Total possible:** | **100 points** |

**EXTRA CREDIT:** You may earn **up to 2 points** of extra credit for attending additional theater productions not required for this course. Attendance at any live performance (other than a music concert or standup comedy) will count towards this requirement, including theater, musical theater, dance, opera, performance art, and circus. Each performance is worth 1 point of extra credit added to your final grade for the course.

To receive the extra credit, you must write a two-page analysis of what you saw and how it relates to the topics covered in this course. **A ticket stub or program MUST be attached in order to receive credit.** Ticket stubs and write-ups for extra credit must be submitted by December 9th.

**COURSE OUTLINE**
Readings are to be **completed** prior to the date for which they are listed.

**UNIT ONE: UNDERSTANDING THEATER**
What is theater? How is it made? How do we read a play? How do we interpret a production? What is the role of the theater artist in society?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READ / WATCH</th>
<th>DUE</th>
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| 8/26  | Introduction: Theater and Performance in Africa  
Elements of Drama: How to Read a Play | | |
| 9/2   | From Page to Stage | Ayad Akhtar, “On Reading Plays”  
Suzan-Lori Parks, *Venus*, 1st half | |
| 9/9   | What Makes a Play Good? Theater Spaces and Audiences  
Discuss Midterm Paper and Topic Selection | Finish *Venus*  
Selected reviews of *Venus*  
TDF Videos: Blackbox, Thrust Stage, House, Fourth Wall, Rush | |
| 9/16  | Actors and Directors: | Excerpt from Stella Adler, *The* | |
| Date | Activity
|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| In-class workshop | Technique of Acting
Anne Bogart, “Embarrassment”
TDF Videos: Cattle Call, Callback, Chewing the Scenery, Cheating Out, Missed Cue |
| 9/23 | Theatrical Collaborations: Designers, Stage Managers, Producers, and Others
In-class workshop: Designing Venus | TDF Videos: Catwalk, Booth, Dry Tech, Strike, Fight Director, Rigged Costume, Scrim, Thanks 5 |

**UNIT TWO: AFRICAN THEATER AND THE GLOBAL STAGE**
A brief tour of the highlights of global theater history, with a focus on African theater and performance.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| 9/30 | Early African theater | Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali
Oyekan Ogomoyela, “Folklore and Yoruba Theater” (Nigeria) | Quiz #1 |
| 10/7 | From Traditional Theater to Modern African Drama | Ama Ata Aidoo, Anowa (Ghana)
Assimina Karavanta, “Rethinking the Specter: Aidoo’s Anowa” | |
| 10/14 | No Class – Baruch Tuesday Schedule | |
| 10/21 | Colonial Encounters: Nigeria | Wole Soyinka, Death and the King’s Horsemen
Soyinka, “Drama and the African Worldview” | Midterm Project |
| 10/28 | Apartheid and Theater in South Africa
Discuss Final Paper Topic Selection | Athol Fugard, Master Harold . . . and the boys
Errol Durbach, “Athol Fugard and the Psychopathology of Apartheid”
W.B. Worthen, “South Africa” | |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 10/29</td>
<td>Class trip to see <em>Master Harold and the Boys</em> at Signature Theater (480 W. 42nd Street, required)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Tradition and Modernity: Ghana At home activity in lieu of class</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td><em>Master Harold</em> discussion African Dance Performance In-class African dance workshop with instructor and performers from the CUMBE Center for African and Diaspora Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>African Dance Performance In-class African dance workshop with instructor and performers from the CUMBE Center for African and Diaspora Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Post-Apartheid South Africa</td>
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<td>11/25</td>
<td>No class – Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>12/2</td>
<td>Africa in American Theater 2</td>
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<td>12/9</td>
<td>Student Research Conference</td>
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<td>12/15</td>
<td>Final Projects Due (via email)</td>
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**REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES**

A) **Attendance**

The simplest way to do well in this course is to attend all classes and contribute regularly.
to discussion. Attendance will be taken at each class session. Attendance will be taken at the instructor’s discretion. Sometimes attendance will be taken at the beginning of class, other times in the middle, and sometimes at the end. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be marked absent.

As this class only meets once per week, you are only permitted one absence without penalty. If you must miss class, you are responsible for all work due and assigned on that day. Assignments not turned in due to an absence will be considered late. Lateness Policy: Three latenesses (more than 5 minutes) will count as one absence.

The success of this class depends on your preparedness and willingness to share your ideas and to take a regular and active role in discussion. Your participation is essential. Students will be evaluated for their participation in class discussions.

C) Two Performance Reviews (2-3 pages each)
Short reviews of theatrical productions. One review must be on the performance of Master Harold and the Boys at Signature Theater on October 29th that we will be attending as a class.

D) Midterm Project (4-5 pages)
This project will focus on primary sources about a contemporary African theater company of your choice (in ENG 2100, you will follow up on this assignment with a related paper using secondary sources). I will provide a list of potential theater companies as suggestions. Students will report on the goals, audience, style, and marketing approach of their chosen company using primary sources only, including the theater’s website, programs, marketing material, published interviews, social media, and at least one interview (via Skype, phone, or email) with a person involved with the company. You will be required to submit evidence of this interview (i.e. a transcript email record, or recording) along with your paper. Note: in this paper, you will not be required to make an argument. The goal of this assignment is information collection and reporting.

E) Quizzes (2)
Two quizzes. The first, on September 30th, will cover material from the first unit on defining theater and will focus on theatrical vocabulary. The second, on December 2nd, will focus on plays, playwrights, and historical and literary context.

F) Final Project
In lieu of a final exam, you will develop a final project on a topic of your choice relating to the theme of “Africa in World Theater.” Your topic can build upon a play or tradition we’ve covered, or can consider an area that has not been explored. Your topic may be related to your midterm paper, but it may not be identical to your topic for ENG 2100. To ensure this, you will be required to submit your ENG 2100 topic to me along with your final project topic.

Final projects must include a written component and a creative component.

The written component of your project is a 5-7 page academic essay that
advances an original argument about your topic. You must demonstrate that you have researched your chosen topic by including a bibliography of sources consulted (minimum of 5 sources). At least three of your sources must be print sources (i.e. not internet sources), unless you receive special permission from the instructor to use additional digital sources.

The creative component of your project is a creative engagement with your topic in a format of your choice, subject to instructor approval. You may:

- Stage a scene from a play in class
- Develop a costume, scene, lighting, sound, or set design for a production
- Write a scene for a new play of your own
- Make a short comic about your topic (using ComicLife or by hand)
- Make a short film
- Build a website
- Write a poem, short story, or television pilot episode

Students will present their topics and creative projects to the group during the last week of classes. Final project grades will be assigned according to the following rubric:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Paper</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Component</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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**Recommended Resources**

There are no required textbooks for this course. All material will be provided online on our Blogs@Baruch site.

However, the following books are recommended to help with topic selection and research.

- *A History of Theatre in Africa* by Martin Banham (Baruch library electronic resource)
- *Shakespeare In and Out of Africa* by Jane Plastow (Baruch library electronic resource)
- *African Theater Today* by Martin Banham (Baruch library)
- *African Theater: Women*, edited by Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan (Baruch library)
- *African Drama and Performance* by John Conteh-Morgan (Baruch library electronic resource)
- *Performative Interactions in African Theatre* by Igweonu Kenechukwu (Baruch library)
- *Resistance and Politics in Contemporary East African Theater* by Samuel Kasule (Baruch library electronic resource)
- *Culture and Identity in African and Caribbean Theater* by Osita Okagbue (Baruch library electronic resource)
- *Women, Politics, and Performance in South African Theater Today* by Lizbeth Goodman (Baruch library electronic resource)
• *Contemporary African Plays*, ed. by Martin Banham and Jane Plastow
• *Modern African Drama*, edited by Biodun Jeyifo
• *The Performance Arts in Africa*, edited by Frances Harding
• *African Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Peek and Yankah
• *African Drama and Performance*, edited by John Conteh-Morgan and Tejumola Olaniyan
• *A History of Theater in Africa*, edited by Martin Banham
• *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission* by Catherine Cole
• *How to Write about Theater and Drama* by Suzanne Hudson

**EMAIL CONTACT**

Please allow 48 hours for receipt and response to all emails. Email correspondence should be reserved for setting appointments outside of office hours and for quick clarification questions. If you have questions that require a longer explanation, it’s best to make an appointment.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

**FORMATTING:**

All written work should be typed in 12 point font and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

One day late – 1 letter grade reduction (i.e. A to B)
Two days late – two letter grade reduction (i.e. A to C)
Three days late – three letter grade reduction (i.e. A to D)
PAPERS 4+ DAYS LATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. **My policy is to give a failing grade to any assignment that has been plagiarized**, I am also required to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students. This report becomes part of your permanent file.

**Cheating** is the attempted or unauthorized use of materials, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to:

• Copying from another student or allowing another to copy your work
• Unauthorized collaborating on a take home assignment or examination
• Taking an examination for another student
• Asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
• Changing a corrected exam and returning it for more credit
• Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to two classes without consulting the second instructor
• Allowing others to research and write assigned papers including the use of commercial term paper services

**Plagiarism** is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own:

• Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes
• Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledgment
• Using information that is not considered common knowledge without acknowledgment
• Failure to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignment

For further discussion of plagiarism and clarification of its parameters, see the online plagiarism tutorial prepared by the Newman Library faculty: http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/help/plagiarism/default.htm. If questions remain, ask me. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for unacceptable practices.

DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

Please turn off your phone and/or other electronic devices before you enter the classroom. You will learn more if you can concentrate on the course while you’re in the classroom. For this reason, I ask that students not use laptop and tablet computers in class. If you have a documented disability that requires you to use a laptop or tablet, please speak with me. Recording of lectures and classroom discussions is strictly prohibited.