

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Department of English Language & Literature
Graduate Course Descriptions
Winter Quarter 2010

31100 History and Theory of Drama 2

History and Theory of Drama I is not a prerequisite. A survey of major trends and theatrical accomplishments in Western drama from the late-seventeenth century into the twentieth: Molière, Goldsmith, Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, Wilde, Shaw, Brecht, Beckett, Stoppard. Attention will also be paid to theorists of the drama, including Stanislavsky, Artaud, and Grotowski. The winter-quarter course, like the autumn-quarter course, features voluntary but highly recommended end-of-week workshops in which individual scenes will be read aloud dramatically and discussed. Assignments at mid-quarter and at the end of the quarter will give the option of two substantial essays, or (in place of either or both) the putting on of a short scene in cooperation with some other members of the class. Acting skill is not required; the point is to discover what is at work in the scene and to write up that process in a somewhat informal report. Crosslisted courses are designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students.

Bevington, David

Coleman, Heidi

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 12:00-1:20

32800 Theories of Media

This course will explore the concept of media and mediation in very broad terms, looking not only at modern technical media and mass media, but at the very idea of a medium as a means of communication, a set of institutional practices, and a habitat in which images proliferate and take on a "life of their own." The course will deal as much with ancient as with modern media, with writing, sculpture, and painting as well as television and virtual reality. Readings will include classic texts such as Plato's Allegory of the Cave and Cratylus, Aristotle's Poetics, and modern texts such as Marshall McLuhan's Understanding Media, Régis Debray's Mediology, and Friedrich Kittler's Gramophone, Film, Typewriter. We will explore questions such as the following: What is a medium? What is the relation of technology to media? How do media affect, simulate, and stimulate sensory experiences? What sense can we make of concepts such as the "unmediated" or "immediate"? How do media become intelligible and concrete in the form of "metapictures" or exemplary instances, as when a medium reflects on itself (films about films, paintings about painting)? Is there a system of media? How do we tell one medium from another, and how do they become "mixed" in hybrid, intermedial formations? We will also look at recent films such as *The Matrix* and *Existenz* that project fantasies of a world of total mediation and hyperreality. Students will be expected to do one "show and tell" presentation introducing a specific medium. There will also be several short writing exercises, and a final paper. PQ: Any 100-level ARTH or COVA course, or consent of instructor.

Mitchell, W.J.T.

WINTER, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

33000 Academic and Professional Writing (LRS)

This course teaches the skills needed to write clear and coherent expository prose and to edit the writing of others. The course consists of weekly lectures on Thursdays, immediately followed by tutorials addressing the issues in the lecture. On Tuesdays, students discuss short weekly papers in two-hour tutorials consisting of seven students and a tutor. Students may replace the last three papers with a longer paper and, with the consent of relevant faculty, write it in conjunction with another class or as part of the senior project. Materials fee \$25.

McEnerney, Larry

Cochran, Kathryn

Weiner, Tracy

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 3:00-4:20

33212 Poetry from the Outside

"I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect," wrote Poe in his famous essay on the composition of "The Raven." This class approaches poetry with a similar concern. We will explore what it means to write from outside the first-person perspective by reading modern and contemporary poets who regard their work as similar to that of historians and reporters, as well as poetry composed by chance operations and machines. This class is open to both creative and critical writers. Some classes will be organized as creative writing workshops, others as seminar discussions. Both creative and critical final projects will be accepted.

Regan, Matthias

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 10:30-11:50

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35104 Newberry Library: Law & Literature in Anglo-Saxon England

Law and literature are both narratives that reveal much about the community that produces them. This seminar will explore legal issues such as feud, marriage and status of women, and theft. We will read and translate the legal texts that discuss these issues and then see how literary texts incorporate legal elements to create tension and drive the narrative. Some texts include laws from Aethelberht, Alfred, Edmund, and Cnut, as well as selections from Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Juliana, and the Wife's Lament.

Schulman, Jana

WINTER, 2010 F 2:00-5:00

37310 Shakespearean Comedy and Romance

Ben Jonson thought that Shakespeare was equal to the ancients in tragedy, but better than them all in comedy. Shakespeare's comedies need to be studied with as much care as the tragedies. He spent the first half of his career writing comedies and history plays, and in the final phase of his career, he came back to a comic form (the "romance"). We will study in detail the development of Shakespeare's comic art and the use he made of source materials from the early experiments, *Comedy of Errors* & *Taming of the Shrew*, through *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the presence of comedy in the History play (*I Henry IV*), to the final "festive comedy," *Twelfth Night*, all the way to the final plays, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and possibly *The Tempest*. There will be a midterm exercise and a final paper.

Strier, Richard

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 1:30-2:50

42407 "Whose Culture Is This, Anyway?"

The past few decades have seen an explosion of debates over the question of who should own cultural goods. The particular goods in question -- the Elgin marbles, artworks looted by the Nazis, the skeletal remains of Kennewick Man, shared files -- are as various as the stakeholders (individual victims, nation-states, museums, musicians, etc.). This course explores the philosophical bases for claims to own artifacts, sounds, words, and ideas, and the policy conundrums posed by these claims (restitution, cultural rights, assertions of national control over cultural patrimony, copyright). We will also look at the ways in which some of these issues have entered the popular imaginary via fiction and film.

Rothfield, Lawrence

WINTER, 2010 Tu Th 9:00-10:20

43706 Poetics of Dislocation

This course constructs a route through placelessness as 20th- and 21st-century poetry has attempted to map it: in the wake of a perceived homogenization and abstraction of space, the verse we will study torques and tortures any stable relation that "speaking" might have to "standpoint." We will give traction to abounding discussions surrounding site-specificity and the non-site, non-place, ubiquity, and virtuality within postmodern aesthetics through studies of modernist and postwar poetry of exile, migration, diaspora, and of the wayside. We will study the formal and social repercussions of experiments in polylingualism, barbarism, dialect and creole, and thwarted translation, as well as generic innovations in the form of new-media, installation and otherwise ambient poetics. Poets to include T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, Paul Celan, Amelia Rosselli, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Edouard Glissant, Kamau Brathwaite, Andrea Zanzotto, John Ashbery, Jenny Holzer, C.S. Giscombe, Renee Gladman, Caroline Bergvall, Kenny Goldsmith, Tan Lin. Readings in geography and aesthetics by David Harvey, Robert Smithson, Marc Auge, Miwon Kwon, Toni Morrison, Timothy Morton.

Scappettone, Jennifer

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

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44507 Decolonizing Literature and Film in Southern Africa

While 'postcolonialism' may turn a complex and contradictory history into a tidy theory, decolonizing highlights the uneven and unfinished processes of writing and filming national, transnational and anti-national narratives, from the cultural nationalism of the 1940s and 1950s to the possibly post-national present. We will explore the links as well as the differences among the textual and cinematic cultures of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique and examine the potential and pitfalls of applying postcolonial and other theories to these cultures. Authors may include Nadine Gordimer, Athol Fugard, Zakes Mda, Shimmer Chinodya, Yvonne Vera, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Bessie Head, Luandino Vieira, and/or Mia Couto; theory and political analysis may include anticolonial writing by Fanon, Mandela, Neto, and Cabral and contemporary critics: Ann McClintock, Njabulo Ndebele, Kwame Appiah, Robert Mshengu Kavanagh and others.

Kruger, Loren

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

45300 Post-Modern Autobiography

This course will look at experimental autobiographies such as Berryman's *Dream Songs*, Lorde's *Zami*, Nabokov's *Invitation of a Memory*, Millet's *Loony Bin Trip*, Hejinian's *My Life*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and *Maus*. We will ask how these autobiographies shape postmodern theories of identity as well as how these theories have influenced self-representation.

Nelson, Deborah L.

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

45302 History of the Book in America

This course considers recent scholarship in the theory and sociology of textual production and reception—the histories of authorship, publishing, dissemination, distribution, and transmission on the one hand; and the histories of reading, listening, and viewing on the other. Our initial sessions explore classic and cutting edge statements about what the history of the book is (or was, or should be). Then, focusing especially on literary history, we survey the history of the book in America from the colonial period to the present (or from the hand-press period to the internet). Though we range widely over texts, periods, and locations we will concentrate on two primary ways of conceiving of book history: the book as a materialization of social relations and the book as a mediator of social relations; in other words, the book understood as a historical effect and as a historical cause of social life.

Slauter, Eric

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 9:00-10:20

53601 Commercial Affects of 18th Century Britain

In an earlier global moment, eighteenth-century Britons intensely debated the fundamental, affective disposition of an expansively commercial culture. We will take as our starting point the contemporary accounts of a commerce that varyingly refines, enervates, vulgarizes or intensifies the realm of possibilities for emotional being; but we will also take a closer look at more particular instances of the commercial cycles and circulations that induce, distribute, and transform affect. To what extent can the motions of commerce be felt, what do the various practices and sites of commerce feel like, and what does this cultural moment understand or reveal to be the limits of commercialized, emotional apprehension? And how enduring, finally, are the structures of feeling to which this period of commerce gives rise? Primary authors will likely include Aphra Behn, Bernard Mandeville, Daniel Defoe, David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith, John Millar, Laurence Sterne, George Colman, Olaudah Equiano, William Cowper, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Edmund Burke, and William Godwin. We will consider foundational secondary work by Albert O. Hirschman and J.G.A. Pocock as well as more recent criticism by Ian Baucom, Laura Brown, Colin Campbell, Julie Ellison, Lynn Festa, Kevis Goodman, Erin Mackie, Adela Pinch, Mary Poovey, Charlotte Sussman, and others. Requirements include two brief presentations and a final essay.

Campbell, Timothy

WINTER, 2010 TU 9:00-11:50

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55901 Melville

Of Melville, Hawthorne famously wrote, "He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other." In this course we will focus on the problem of meaning in the works of Herman Melville. Beginning with the sanguine assumptions Jonathan Edwards and R.W. Emerson that human meaning was secured by a system of correspondences between nature and super-nature, we will trace how this confidence is ruptured for Melville by the political upheavals of the 1850s and by his own commitment to skepticism. *Moby Dick* will dominate our inquiries in the first part of the quarter. In the second half of the quarter we will turn to *The Confidence Man*, "Benito Cereno," "Billy Budd" and Melville's poetry. Students will become familiar with contemporary critical work on Melville as well as the historical and theological contexts informing his work.

Knight, Janice

Gilpin, Clark

WINTER, 2010 Tu 2:00-5:00

59304 Catharsis and Other Aesthetic Responses

This seminar is the second required core course for ComLit PhDs. PQ for other humanities PhDs: ACTIVE working knowledge of at least one of the following: French, German, (classical) Greek or Spanish.

This PhD seminar examines the ramifications of catharsis and other responses to texts and images, in other words it investigates the relationship between effect and affect. Beginning with Aristotle and present day responses to catharsis, we will investigate the kinds of aesthetic response invoked by tragic drama and theory (esp Hegel), realism (Lukacs, Bazin and Brecht), as well as theories of pleasure (Barthes, Derrida), judgment (Kant, Bourdieu) and boredom (Spacks). We will conclude with a test case, exploring the potential and limitations of catharsis as an appropriate response to the literary and cinematic representation of trauma in and after the Argentine 'dirty war.' An essential part of the discussion will be the problem of translating key terms, not only from one language to another but also from one theoretical discourse and/or medium to another.

Kruger, Loren

WINTER, 2010 TH 1:30-4:20

66701 Postcolonial Theory and Beyond

This course intercepts postcolonial theory at an important moment in its disciplinary mutation. In recent years critics and commentators both within the field and hostile to it appear increasingly at one in their dramatisation of a certain theoretical "exhaustion" with questions hitherto raised under the banner of postcolonialism. What are the reasons for this new critical ennui? What relation does it bear to earlier critiques of the field? What, if any, are the (epistemological and political) costs of giving full credence to this recent version of anti-postcolonialism? To what extent may we map a future for postcolonial theory? In our readings and discussions we will review crucial and canonical moments in the gestation of the field (Bhabha, Spivak), canvass some recent critiques (Hardt and Negri, Badiou), and review some new directions (cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, ethics).

Gandhi, Leela

Chakrabarty, Dipesh

WINTER, 2010 TH 1:30-4:20

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67802 Ordinarity: An Introduction

To encounter the ordinary is to encounter the saturation of predictable life by details vibrating with history while calmed by processes of ongoingness, even when conditions are extreme. Sometimes those processes are normatively ideological: for example, Žižek writes that what is to be defined as ahistorical is a primary anxiety of political struggle. But the literature suggests that all sorts of explanations are necessary to locate people at the juncture of being historical and feeling simple, ahistorical, transhistorical, beside the point, private, detached, and/or contingent, not held well by any temporality in particular. The analytic and aesthetic mediation of the ordinary has increasingly become reflected on in anthropology, everyday life theory, histories and theories of sexuality, urban/global geography, architecture, psychoanalysis and affect theory, and literary study. We will amass and read in a bibliography, beginning with: Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Stanley Cavell, Michel DeCerteau, Tom Dumm, David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, John Ricco, Kristin Ross, Nadia Serematakis, Georg Simmel, Katie Stewart, Carolyn Steedman, Melodrama, (Hansen/Dyer/Gledhill), Realism (Fisher/Lutz/Howard/Warren). The main aim of this course is to encounter how a stream of thinkers conceives the mediations, affects, built environments, and ideologies of the ordinary, the everyday, the banal, and the taken for granted; we will also inhabit these scenes in aesthetic material derived from recent and contemporary US minimalist fiction (Lydia Davis, Junot Diaz, Charles Johnson, Ben Marcus), but after a few weeks this material will be reshaped by student scholarly interests. Seminar paper and presentation required.

Berlant, Lauren

WINTER, 2010 W 1:30-4:20

68702 Cinema Post-Cinema

As the emergence of new media has been dislodging cinema from the central position it held in public culture throughout most of the twentieth century, and as digital technologies play an ever greater role in the production and dissemination of films, some critics are speaking of the present era as “post-cinematic.” Likewise, in celebrations of a new “convergence culture,” cinema is said to be disappearing into a larger stream of audiovisual media. In this seminar, we will discuss such claims by tracing some of the developments and changes that would support them, along with the rhetoric that mounts them. At the same time, we will ask about salient features that continue to distinguish cinema as a sensory-perceptual regime, associated with particular forms of aesthetic experience and publicness, even as these developments have significantly destabilized the institution and affected the way we approach film history. Finally, we will consider examples of hybrid forms of moving-image practice as they have evolved in contemporary art as well as new film cultures all over the world (e.g. China, Nigeria), in the context of political and social movements and alternative modes of distribution and venues. Readings include texts by Shaviro, Jenkins, Manovich, Rodowick, Rosen, Gunning, Mulvey, Sobchack, Galloway, Kirschenbaum, Galloway, Kinder, Bellour, Larkin, and Zhang Zhen. MA students by permission of instructor only.

Hansen, Miriam

WINTER, 2010