TH 640  SEMINAR IN ACTING AND DIRECTING——#10755

Mondays 4:30-7:15 PM
Nordhoff Hall 104

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Office Hours:  Mondays:  3:30—4:30 PM
Fridays:  1:00—2:00 PM—and by appointment Mondays/Fridays

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Course Content and Objectives:

Theatre 640 will review the European foundations of acting, actor training, and theatre/performance practice in the United States. The primary focus of readings and discussion will be the evolution of acting from realism to postmodernism. Alongside this study, we will explore the theories and production history of selected 20th century directors, with special consideration of their impact upon the development of American and Global Actor Training.

My objective is to endorse and to de-mysitify Stanislavki’s training methodology by highlighting the rich heritage of multicultural influences upon the development of his system. The seminar will, subsequently, analyze the emergence of varied approaches, alternative interpretations, and counterpoints/rejections of the “system” and the “method.” We will, for example, examine the European Avant-Garde, as well as the dynamic explosion of creativity in the Group Theatre and the American Alternative Theatre.

En route, and in conclusion, participants will contemplate and theorize the contemporary theatre scene—at home and abroad. Awareness of current trends in performance training and mise en scène will play a vital role in our discourse and analysis of mainstream and experimental American Acting. Therefore, the final sessions of the seminar will investigate the increase in internationalism, cross-cultural exchange, and interculturalism in Acting, Dance-Theatre, Performance, and Directing.
Required Texts


- *Fifty Key Directors*, Shomit MITTER and Maria SHEVTSOVA (Editors), Routledge, 2005.

Recommended Text:

- *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, Maria M. DELGADO and Dan REVELLATO (Editors), Routledge, 2010.
  ISBN 978-0-415-46251-8


Additional Texts of Interest: *(listed alphabetically by author/editors)*

  Arthur BARTOW

  David BRADBY and Annie SPARKS

  David BRADBY and MARIA M. DELGADO

  Susan Letzer COLE

  Toby COLE and Helen Krich CHINOY (Eds.)

  Toby COLE and Helen Krich CHINOY (Eds.)

- *Director’s Theatre*. (1974)
  Judith COOK
**Assessment:**

- Written and verbal responses to Readings, Participation in Theoretical Discussions, and History-based Short Reports: 25%
- History and Theory Critical Reports and Writing Project: 25%
- Research, Analysis, and Final Writing Project: 50%

**Reports:**

Each participant will lead discussion for part of one session of the seminar; this presentation will feature a major figure representative of the day’s theme. Selection of this figure will be made in consultation with the professor. Also, at least one additional brief presentation during the semester is anticipated. This secondary report will take place on a separate day. It might be advantageous, for instance, to feature an Actor on one occasion and a Director on the other. Details will be finalized once the Seminar is underway. The specifics of short written projects, too, will be articulated after the first few sessions of the seminar are completed.
Research Paper:

A major research paper is required for completion of the course. The topic of choice should become apparent during the semester. It is more than an expanded version of the report. It may, in fact, be unrelated to the themes of your presentations. It is advisable to investigate issues field that are totally new to you. I certainly would like to encourage an adventurous spirit.

The length of the paper will be discussed in class; I anticipate, however, an essay of approximately 15 pages. More importantly, I desire an essay which expresses an individual perspective and passion. Research can be a sort of surprising entertainment; I feel it is my responsibility to assist graduate students with the discovery of exciting research topics with publication potential.

The precise date and time for submission of the essay will be determined following a seminar discussion on student/TA commitments. Once this due date is fixed, I would appreciate compliance with the decision. Please let me know—in advance—of any absences or anticipated interruptions in your attendance and participation.

I look forward to a productive semester and the prospect of learning from your individual interests and research.

Administration and Policies

Disabilities Statement
Students who have disabilities or special needs and require accommodations in order to have equal access to classrooms must register with the appropriate campus office in order for us to serve their needs.

Respect for the rights of others

- Respect for the rights of others seeking to learn and for the general goals of academic freedom must be maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms that show respect even in dissent.
- If you carry a cell phone, please turn it off during class. If you have a reason for leaving it on, please turn it to vibrate instead of ring, and let me know that you may be receiving a call. Then, if you must answer it, do so outside the classroom. Text-messaging is not allowed during class at any time.
- If you need to use a lap-top computer in the classroom, you may only use it to record class lectures, discussions, and activities. Other electronic devices (head-phones, iPods, etc.) are only permitted with the instructor’s approval.

Attendance

- It is your responsibility to notify me, in advance when possible, about any absences. If you are absent, you must catch up the work when you return to class.
- CSUN provides all students with a free e-mail account; this is our official means of communication. It is your responsibility to monitor your CSUN account, either directly or by forwarding mail to an external account.

Plagiarism

All work that you submit as your own work must, indeed, be your own work.
SEMINAR SESSIONS:

AUGUST 26
1. “Actors and Directors Theorize the Natural.”
   The Mid/Late 19th Century American & European Context.

   Part One: Virtuoso Acting

   ALDRIDGE, BERNHARDT, BOUCICAULT, DELSARTE, IRVING, JEFFERSON, MODJESKA, RACHEL, RISTORI, SALVINI

   Part Two: Ensemble Acting

   ANTOINE, APPIA, BELASCO, BRAHM, CHRONEGK, CRAIG, DALCROZE, DUNCAN, DUSE, FRANZ

SEPTEMBER 9
   “On the frontiers of mise en scène.”
   “The difference between mise en scène and performance.”
   (PAVIS, Chapters 1, 2, and 3)

SEPTEMBER 16

   “Stanislavsky’s System: Pathways for the Actor.”
   “Meyerhold and Biomechanics.”
   (HODGE, Chapters 1 and 2)

   “Introduction.”
   “The Actor’s Presence: Three phenomenal modes.”
   “Meyerhold’s Biomechanics.”
   (ZARILLI, Chapters 2, 3, and 9)

   GRANOVSKY, MEYERHOLD, MIKHOELS, NAMIROVICH-DANCHENKO, STANISLAVSKI, TAIROV, VAKHTANGOV
SEPTEMBER 23  4.  “Acting and Gestural Expression: Figure and Form.”

“Brecht and Actor Training: On Whose Behalf Do We Act?”
(HODGE, Chapter 7)

“Brecht and the Contradictory Actor.”
(ZARRILLI, Chapter 19)

BRECHT, JESSNER, JOOS, LABAN, PISCATOR, REINHARDT, SCHLEMMER, WEIGEL, WIGMAN


“Jacques Copeau: The Quest for Sincerity.”
“Michel Saint-Denis: Training the Complete Actor.”
(HODGE, Chapters 3 and 5)

ARTAUD, BING, COPEAU, DASTÉ, DECROUX, DULLIN, JOUVET, PITOËFF, SAINT-DENIS


“Joan Littlewood.”
“Peter Brook: Transparency and the Invisible Network.”
(HODGE, Chapters 8 and 11)

“Max Stafford-Clark.”
(SHEVTSOVA & INNES, Chapter 9)

BROOK, GRANVILLE-BARKER, GUTHRIE, HALL, LITTLEWOOD, STAFFORD-CLARK

OCTOBER 14  7.  “Stanislavski Remembered, Stanislavski Transformed.”

“Michael Chekhov on the Technique of Acting: ‘Was Don Quixote True to Life?’
“Strasberg, Adler and Meisner: Method Acting.”
(HODGE, Chapters 4 and 9)

ADLER, BOLESLAVSKY, CARNOVSKY, CHEKHOV, CRAWFORD, HAGEN, LEWIS, MEISNER, MOORE, OUSPENSKAYA, STRASBERG
OCTOBER 21  8.  “Acting the Epic, the Cruel, the Silent, and the Unspeakable.”

“Jacques Lecoq, Monika Pagneux and Philippe Gaulier: Training for Play, Lightness and Disobedience.”
(HODGE, Chapter 13)

BARRAULT, BERGMAN, FO, LECOQ, MARCEAU, PAGNEUX, RAME, RENAUD, STREHLER, VITEZ

OCTOBER 28  9.  “Acting Up Behind the Curtain.”

“The Knebel Technique: Active Analysis in Practice.”
“Grotowski’s Vision of the Actor: The Search for Contact.”
(HODGE, Chapters 6 and 12)

CIULEI, GROTOWSKI, KANTOR, KNEBEL, LYUBIMOV, MÜLLER

NOVEMBER 4  10.  “Acting Without Creating a Character.”

“Joseph Chaikin and Aspects of Actor Training: Possibilities Rendered Present.”
(HODGE, Chapter 10)

“Elizabeth LeCompte.”
(SHEVTSOVA & INNES, Chapter 4)

“On Acting and Non-Acting.”
(ZARRILLI, Chapter 4)

AKALAITIS, BREUER, CHAIKEN, FORNÈS, LECOMPTÉ, MALINA, VALDEZ, WILSON

NOVEMBER 18  11.  “Directors Rewrite Acting.”

“Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil: Theatricalising History; The Theatre as Metaphor; The Actor as Signifier.”
(HODGE, Chapter 15)

“Lev Dodin.”
(SHEVTSOVA & INNES, Chapter 2)
“A. Mnouchkine: Activism, formalism, cosmopolitanism.”
“Lev Dodin: The director and cultural memory.”
“Patrice Chéreau: Staging the European crisis.”
(DELGADO & REBELLATO, Chapters 1, 2, and 3)

BAUSCH, CHÉREAU, DODIN, LAVELLI, MNOUCHKINE, RONCONI, SERBAN


(HODGE, Chapter 16)

“Piotr Borowski and Poland’s Studium Teatralne: Where process becomes performance.”
“Romeo Castellucci: The director on this earth.”
“Calixto Bieito: Staging excess in, across and through Europe.”
“Rodrigo Garcia and La Carnicería Teatro: From the collective to the director.”
(DELGADO & REBELLATO, Chapters 7, 8, 12, 14, 15)

BIEITO, BOROWSKI, CASTELLUCCI, GARCIA, KORŠUNOVAS, NEKROŠIUS, PASQUAL, STANIEWSKI


“Anne Bogart and SITI Company: Creating the Moment.”
(HODGE, Chapter 17)

“Declan Donnellan,” “Simon McBurney,”
“Katie Mitchell.”
(SHEVTSOVA & INNES, Chapters 3, 6, and 7)

“D. Donnellan & Cheek by Jowl: To Protect the Acting.”
“Simon McBurney: Shifting under/soaring over the boundaries of Europe.”
“Katie Mitchell: Learning from Europe.”
(DELGADO & REBELLATO, Chapters 7, 11, and 16)

BOGART, DONNELLAN, McBURNEY, MITCHELL, TAYMOR
“Acting Goes Global: Directing Across Cultures.”

“Training with Eugenio Barba: Acting Principles, the Pre-expressive and ‘Personal Temperature’.”

“Augusto Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed.”
(HODGE, Chapters 14 and 18)

“Eugenio Barba,” “Robert Lepage,” “Peter Sellars.”
(SHEVTSOVA & INNES, Chapter 1, 5, and 8)

“P. Sellars: Identity/culture/politics of theatre in Europe.”
(DELGADO & REVELLATO, Chapter 19)

“Culture is the Body.”
(ZARRILLI, Chapter 13)

BARBA, BOAL, LEPAGE, SELLARS, SUZUKI

Wrap-Up on Course and Individual Research/Writing

“Conclusion: What’s Next in Acting?”

DECEMBER 16  15.    Scheduled Final for Course
5:30 – 7:30 pm

Research Paper Due