

5AAEB017 Modern Theatre: Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Expressionism (Fall 2010)

Level/semester taught	2 nd Year Module Band 2 taught Semester 1
Convenor & Teacher	Theron Schmidt
Teaching Arrangements	1 hour lecture & 1 hour seminar weekly
Credit Value	15 credits
Assessment	One Scene Analysis of 1,000 words (25%), due Monday November 15, 10.30am-12.30pm One Critical Essay of 3,000 words (75%), due Monday January 10, 10.30am-12.30pm

Convenor details

Theron Schmidt
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Strand 2.04 / 020 7848 2180
Office hours: Monday 10-11, Friday 10-11

Class hours

Lecture: Monday 9-10, Strand -1.06
Seminars: Friday 9-10, Strand 2.39
Friday 3-4, Strand 3.05
Friday 5-6, Strand 2.39

Recommended texts

Christopher Innes (ed), *A Sourcebook on Naturalist Theatre*, (London: Routledge, 2000)
Maggie B. Gale and John F. Deeney (eds), *The Routledge Drama Anthology and Sourcebook: From Modernism to Contemporary Performance* (London: Routledge, 2010)

Recommended performances

Henrik Ibsen, *The Master Builder* (1892)
Almeida Theatre
2 Nov - 8 Jan 2011
http://www.almeida.co.uk/production_details/production_details.aspx?code=98
free under-26 tickets released 27 Oct

Marc Blitzstein, *The Cradle Will Rock* (Federal Theatre Project, dir Orson Welles, 1937)
23 Nov - 18 Dec
Arcola Theatre
<http://www.arcolatheatre.com/?action=showtemplate&sid=441>

Georg Büchner, *Danton's Death* (1835; first produced 1902)
National Theatre
17 Sep - 14 Oct
<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/57275/productions/dantons-death.html>
Free ticket details: <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/entrypass>

Outline and aims

This module offers a comparative survey of major developments in European theatre from the 1870s to the 1930s, focusing in detail on specific plays by significant authors. Plays are studied in relation to the dramatic movements of which they are a part, as well as in relation to contemporary adaptations and interpretations. In their assessed work, students are required to demonstrate their ability to connect analyses of thematic and political content with questions of dramatic structure.

General questions for the course include:

- What are the origins and ongoing resonances with regard to ideas of dramatic realism and naturalism?
- How have these playwrights and theatre-makers regarded the task and problems of theatrical representation?
- How are these works both part of and interventions within surrounding social and political issues?
- How have the plays from this period shaped our understanding of what it is to be 'modern'? What are the relations between the 'modern' of 'modern theatre' and the 'modern' of 'modernist literature'?

Course outline

Seminar

'Introduction' in Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968)

'Introduction' in *A Sourcebook on Naturalist Theatre*, ed. by Innes, Christopher (London: Routledge, 2000)

Also recommended:

W. B. Worthen and others, 'Disciplines of the Text/Sites of Performance', *TDR*, 39.1 (Spring 1995), 13-44

Raymond Williams, 'Argument: Text and Performance' [1954], in *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, ed. by Michael Huxley and Noel Witts (London: Routledge, 1996), 369-83

Lecture

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (1879)

Seminar

Joan Templeton, 'Updating *A Doll House*: Bergman, Ostermeier, Kimmig, and Breuer', in *Ibsen on the Cusp of the 21st Century*, ed. by Paal Bjoerby, Alvild Dvergsdal and Ida Stegane (Lakesvaag, Norway: Alvheim and Eide, 2005), 183-92

Also recommended:

Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler* (1890)

Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin* (1873) (in Gale and Deeney)

Zola, 'Naturalism in the Theatre' (1881) (in Gale and Deeney, Innes, various sources)

Joan Templeton, 'The Doll House Backlash: Criticism, Feminism, and Ibsen', *PMLA*, 104.1 (January 1989), 28-40

TDR: The Drama Review, 13.2 (1968): Special issue on 'Naturalism Revisited' (available online via KCL library / Athens login)

Week 1

Week 2

Lecture

August Strindberg, *Miss Julie* (and author's preface) (1888)

Week 3

Seminar

excerpt from Rachel Fensham, 'Performativity and Desire in the Romance Plot: *Miss Julie*', in *To Watch Theatre: Essays on Genre and Corporeality* (Oxford: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009), 105-35

Also recommended

Strindberg, *A Dream Play* (1901), *The Ghost Sonata* (1907)

Lecture

Henrik Ibsen, *When We Dead Awaken* (1899)

Week 4

Seminar

excerpt from Mark B. Sandberg, 'Ibsen and the Mimetic Home of Modernity', *Ibsen Studies*, 1.2 (2001), 32-58

Also recommended

Ibsen: *Brand* (1865), *The Master Builder* (1892)

Ibsen Studies journal (available online via KCL library / Athens login)

Lecture

Anton Chekhov, *The Seagull* (1896)

Seminar

Selections from Innes on Stanislavski and Chekhov

Week 5

Also recommended

Chekhov: *Three Sisters* (1901), *The Cherry Orchard* (1904)

Konstantin Stanislavski, 'Intuition and Feeling: "The Sea-Gull"' [1926], trans. by Oksana Korneva, in *Konstantin Stanislavsky: Selected Works* (Moscow: Raduga, 1984), 81-87

Stanislavski: *An Actor Prepares*, *Building A Character*, and *Creating A Role* (various editions)

Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993)

Guest lecture

Chris Goode, director of ... *Sisters* (2008), winner of the Headlong/Gate Theatre New Directions award

Reading to be assigned

Week 6

Seminar

Arnold Aronson, 'The Scenography of Chekhov', in *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*, ed. by Vera Gottlieb and Paul Allain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 134-48

Week 7

Reading week (scene analysis due 15 November)

Week 8

Lecture

W. B. Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well* (1917)

Maurice Maeterlinck, *Interior* (1895)

Seminar

Heinrich von Kleist, 'On the Marionette Theatre' (1810)

excerpt from Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002)

Also recommended

Elinor Fuchs, *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theater after Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996)

Edward Gordon Craig, *Craig on Theatre*, ed. by J. Michael Walton (London: Methuen, 1983) (or Craig, 'The Actor and the Über-Marionette' [1907], in *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, ed. by Michael Huxley and Noel Witts (London: Routledge, 1996), 142-51)

Maeterlinck, 'The Modern Drama' and 'Tragedy in Everyday Life' in Gale and Deeney

Yeats, 'The Play, the Player, and the Scene', in *W. B. Yeats, Explorations* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 164–80

Week 9

Lecture

Elizabeth Robins, *Votes for Women!* (1907)

Seminar

Susan Carlson, 'Suffrage Theatre: Community Activism and Political Commitment' in Innes, 435-444

Week 10

Guest lecture

Lara Shalson on Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein, 'Plays' and *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* [1938] in *Last Operas and Plays*, ed. by Carl van Vechten (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995)

Seminar

Reading to be assigned

Week 11

Lecture

Ernst Toller, *Hoppla, We're Alive!* (1927, directed by Erwin Piscator)

Seminar

Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' [1935], trans. by Harry Zohn, in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (London: Cape, 1970), 219-53

Week 12

Essay preparation

Williams, 'Conclusion' in *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*
