

THEA 204 (CRN 9145) CLASSIC THEATRE WORKSHOP

Co-ordinator and teaching staff

Course co-ordinator is Megan Evans
(77 Fairlie Terrace, 302; ph 463 9793).
Office hours posted on door.
Email: megan.evans@vuw.ac.nz

Lecturing will be shared by David Carnegie
(77FT/308, ext. 6825) and Matt Wagner
(77FT/310, ext 6712).

Workshops will be directed by staff, guest
directors, and MTA students.

Mentoring for design and technical elements will
be handled by Jim Davenport (77FT/203, ext.
6842).

Class times and venue

2/3. LECTURES: Mon and Wed, 2.10-3.00pm (77FT/306) plus one two-hour workshop (**Mon 3.10-5 pm, 5.10-7 pm, Tues 2.10-4 pm, 4:10-6pm**).

SCHEDULED WORKSHOPS will be in Studio 77 weeks 1-3, 93KP weeks 4-9 and the
amphitheatre weeks 10-12.

MORNING CLASSES with Bronwyn Tweddle will continue Mon & Wed morning at 9-10am
in Studio 77. You should plan to attend at least 2 classes per module and this will be taken
into account in your Contribution mark discussed below. You are welcome to attend as many
classes as you like and are especially encouraged to attend all sessions during modules in
which you are performing a major role.

Communication

Note that any additional information or changes will be announced in class and posted on
Blackboard as well as the course notice board at 77FT level 3. Please check notice locations
regularly.

Course aims and content

This course provides a critical and practical study of the dynamics of performing plays from
four major periods of Western drama: Elizabethan, Neoclassical, Expressionist and Greek.
Investigation of historical conditions of performance will form the basis for workshop
exploration and presentation of scenes from selected plays.

Course objectives

By the end of the course students should:

- be conversant with the principal features of theatrical style, convention, and place in
society of four periods of Western theatre history;
- be aware of the performance possibilities of selected plays;

- have developed skills in cooperative creative work;
- have a secure grounding in the dramaturgy of four traditions.

Required Texts

The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama, ed. W. B. Worthen, 4th ed (Boston, 2004).

History of the Theatre, Oscar G. Brockett, 9th ed (Boston, 2004).

Course Reader (available from Student Notes)

including *Masses and Man* by Ernst Toller and *The Frogs* by Aristophanes

IMPORTANT: Additional time commitments

In addition to the scheduled two-hour workshop each week, you will be expected to undertake an additional 10 to 15 hours or so of rehearsal time per three-week module with your director. These times will be arranged by directors with their groups, as much as possible to suit everyone, but **you must be prepared to make yourself reasonably available. Attendance at every rehearsal is compulsory.** It is essential that people be on time for all classes and rehearsals, and that comfortable clothes be worn that allow easy movement. It is also vitally important to realize that the practical work is undertaken on a co-operative basis. Every individual will be reliant on group support and will be expected to offer the same support to the other students in the class.

Please note: During **weeks 3, 6, and 9** there will be a **dress rehearsal on the Tuesday evening prior to the performance at which attendance is mandatory.** Please plan ahead.

Workshops

You will stay with the same workshop group for the course, which will thus become, briefly, a company. Over the course of the four plays, each person may expect to be cast in at least one substantial acting role, probably one or two supporting roles, and at least one production role. The aim of each workshop production is to present an excerpt from the play that explores and demonstrates its dramatic shape, emotion, and meaning. Each excerpt should not exceed 10 minutes. While we are not trying to recreate historical conditions and conventions exactly ('museum theatre'), our aim is to start from an understanding of the original stagecraft, and to honour that dramaturgy as we work to make the play speak to a modern audience. Our fundamental assumption is that respect for the playwright, combined with sympathy for his or her working conditions and assumptions, will give us a secure base from which to interpret the play anew. A key element of this will be the recreation of actor-audience spatial relationships applicable to each period.

Each production will typically have the following production crew:

- i) Stage Manager: who will organize rehearsals, prepare the promptbook, and obtain any hand props
- ii) Designer: who will establish the actor-audience relationship and the playing space, decide on any set-piece properties, and coordinate the costume design
- iii) Lighting Designer: who will design, hang and operate stage lighting – if any
- iv) Music/Sound Designer: who will create live – not recorded – music and sound effects
- v) Dramaturg: who will have special responsibility for research into historical information vital to understanding the play

However, all design elements will be minimalist. Costume, for instance, must be from the personal clothes of the student group, not from the theatre wardrobe. The costume design job, therefore, is one of thinking carefully about a coherent style with everyday

contemporary clothes.

Similarly, set design will be principally the way in which audience arrangement defines playing space. It must be possible to change the set from one presentation to the next in **under 45 seconds**, and the designers for each piece must co-ordinate with the other designers.

Lighting will probably consist of a general wash for everyone, with individual designers allowed perhaps two special circuits, and a maximum of six cues. **'Less is more'** is our motto. This is workshop theatre, but the aim should be for a clean and clear style in every decision that is made. Students undertaking production roles should do full research on the original conditions of performance, and then refine this down to what is possible for us.

Assessment

Assessment is based on **Analytical Reports** derived from the practical work and reading in each of the four modules, and **Contribution** to the creation of each performance.

Each of the four modules contributes 25% to the total mark for the course:

- a) report 15%
- b) contribution 10%

a) Analytical Reports should not exceed 1,000–1,500 words, but feel free to include diagrams or illustrations in support of your arguments. Since you will be doing a lot of practical work, the word limits are short, and concision will be valued by markers.

Content of the Analytical Report is to be made up of the following:

- The play in historical context: theatre, criticism, society (200–300 words)
- The dramaturgy and creation of your scene of the play (600–900 words)
- Dramaturgical comment on achievement of the other groups (200–300 words)

The **Analytical Report** allows you to demonstrate the breadth and depth of your learning about the theatre and drama of each period, and to analyze the intellectual, creative, and practical work you and your group do on your scene, and what that teaches you about the play in performance. Although you are not absolutely required to go beyond the listed readings from Brockett and Worthen, you are encouraged to read other plays of the period and further critical and historical material.

The play in historical context You will want to identify what you think are the salient points about the conditions of performance of the drama in its historical period. What were the important aspects of physical conditions of staging? What dramatic and theatrical conventions were especially significant? Where might we fail to note important elements of the time? What was the critical, social, political, religious climate, and why should we be aware of it? Don't simply paraphrase the theatre history text; you won't have room to cover all topics. You'll need to think carefully about what is really important, especially for the scene you are doing.

Dramaturgy and creation of your scene This requires analysis of your particular excerpt and choices made by the group in creating the performance. For example, what were the important structural divisions of the excerpt? What was the effect of acting decisions on emotion and meaning? Which aspects of the original staging were used? What contemporary equivalents were found and did they work successfully? How did audience/actor relationships affect the actors' performance? What would have been the dramaturgical effect of different creative decisions at any point in the process?

Dramaturgical comment on the achievement of the other groups Use the guidelines from THEA 201 on dramaturgical reports, modified as necessary to the workshop conditions, educational intentions, and word limit. We are particularly interested in what illumination each group can offer into the dramaturgy of the play, and how the group's sensitivity to historical conventions may make the play more accessible to an audience now.

b) Contribution to the performance: attendance (including morning classes), reliability, ability to work collaboratively with others, and creative contribution will all be considered in awarding this mark

In support of this you are expected to keep a **Journal**. This journal will not be assessed as such, but **must be submitted** with each Analytical Report for reference by the marker, and may be useful in supporting a positive assessment of your work. Your journal should be a **daily** record. It will include, e.g., records of discussions, meetings, workshops and rehearsals, notes on additional reading, thinking and queries, and a record of practical, intellectual and creative tasks. Do **not** include lecture notes. Unlike the Workbooks of THEA 203, the journal need not have decoration or proof of creativity beyond what is demonstrated in your group work, and documented here. It is a day-to-day working document, minimum of A4 size for ease of reading by the markers. We recommend you have one journal for *The Tempest* and *Masses and Man*, and a separate book for *Tartuffe* and *The Frogs* (to allow for marking turn around). Your journal will be invaluable in helping you to start working early on the Analytical Report, which is due soon after the presentations.

Deadlines: <i>Tempest</i>	2 pm Mon 30 July
<i>Tartuffe</i>	5 pm Mon 20 August
<i>Masses and Man</i>	2 pm Mon 24 September
<i>Frogs</i>	5 pm Mon 22 October (but earlier is better!)

Both your Analytical Report and your Journal are to be submitted. Please note the 2pm and 5pm cutoff times; work is late if submitted after these times.

Relationship between assessment and course objectives

The historical context element of each analytical report allows you to demonstrate an understanding of the intellectual and social environment within which particular dramatic and theatrical conventions have their meaning. The report on creative and dramaturgical work is an opportunity both to write about the relationship between play and performance, and to place individual and group creative achievement within a coherent intellectual framework of dramaturgical analysis. The critique of the presentations of the other groups allows you to apply what has been learned to a positive and analytical criticism of drama in performance.

Extensions and Absolute Deadlines

Unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical reasons with certificate) work handed in late will lose a grade (e.g. drop from B+ to B, etc.) for each day or part day late, starting from the hour the work is due. Work submitted more than a week late without an extension may not be marked. Requests for extensions (which will not be given lightly) must be made well before the due date, in writing, attaching any relevant documentation, and must be signed by the course co-ordinator and attached to the report when submitted. Comments on late work will be minimal. **If you fail to hand in work before the one-week deadline, you may be considered as having failed to meet the mandatory course requirements and therefore fail the course.** Extensions will not be granted beyond Mon 22 October, except under exceptional circumstances. The University does not permit the School to accept work after the last day of the examination period.

Aegrotat provisions may apply if you are unable to submit your final project for unavoidable reasons. The Aegrotat procedures are listed in Section 6 of the Examination Statute in the University *Calendar*. In such a case you should also contact the course co-ordinator.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In order to pass the course, a high standard of attendance (at least 80% of lectures, and 100% at workshops/rehearsals - attendance will be noted) and completion of all assignments is required as well as achieving an overall passing grade.

Workload

It is always difficult to specify the workload in courses that have a high practical and creative content. The university anticipates that you should be able to devote about 15 hours per week to a 22-point course at 200 level. Therefore you should probably expect to spend, on average, about 10 hours per week (apart from workshop time) in reading, thinking and writing your journal and reports. Some students can pass (though not necessarily well) on less, and some will find they need or want to do more. Rehearsal (up to 15 additional hours per three-week module), practical tasks, learning lines, etc. will then add considerably to the time commitment. Because of the heavy time commitment, **undertaking theatre work additional to this course is not permitted, and may result in a failing grade**, with the exception of acting in **ONE** of the THEA 304 productions; but you **must** discuss the timing first with the course co-ordinator. Commitments to THEA 204 performances must take precedence over THEA 304 productions.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarize themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or go to:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy

For information on the following topics, see the course Blackboard page under "Course Documents" in the file labeled "General University Policies and Statutes":

Academic Grievances
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
Student and Staff Conduct
Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
Student Support

Theatre Facilities

There are standard requirements regarding conduct within 77 FT, 93 KP and 225 Aro St:

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted. Please smoke outside and dispose cigarette ends in the ashtray provided outside the main door at 77 FT.

Food

Food and beverages (with the exception of water) **may only be consumed in the Green Rooms.** There is strictly no food allowed in the studio theatre, dressing room, film room, library, foyer area, and 93 KP or 225 Aro St (except kitchen area). Strictly no food or drink in the AV suite. Alcoholic drinks are not to be brought onto the premises unless authorized.

Green Room

The Green Rooms at 77FT and 93KP are available to students working in the Theatre Programme. **You are expected to clean up after yourselves** (this includes returning any mugs removed from the Green Rooms and washing dishes or operating the dishwasher).

Library

Students are encouraged to make full use of the Robert Lord Library at 77 Fairlie Terrace; however, please note that **books and other materials do not leave the building.** Please return books to shelves before you leave the library. There is also a small theatre video collection in the cupboard in the seminar room, for viewing within the building. Apply to the Administrator for the key.

End of Class

Rooms 306 (lecture theatre), 205 (film room), 209 and 305 (seminar rooms), studios, studio foyer, 93 KP and 225 Aro St must have the **desks and chairs returned to order for any following classes or rehearsals**

Lockers

Lockers are available to majoring Theatre students on Level 0. There are only 52 so once they run out those with double lockers may have to share. Students provide their own lock and key. See the Administrator in room 307. Access your lockers via back stairs through Green Room. Please make sure the outside door to this stairwell remains shut Access will not be available during the trimester break so please take everything with you at the end of this trimester and inform the Administrator if you are not taking a Theatre subject next trimester.

Theatre Rules

Safety and security within the premises occupied by Film and Theatre is the responsibility of everyone who uses these facilities. While we make every effort to ensure that our premises are safe and hazard free, we need the cooperation of all students and visitors.

1. If you have an accident there is a first aid kit in the Green Room. You must fill out an accident report form that you will find in the first aid kit.
2. If you are unsure of the operation of a piece of equipment or feel unsafe in what you are doing, **stop**. Seek advice or help from someone else. Do not put yourself in a dangerous situation.
3. Any student or visitor who discovers an actual or potential hazard must report it without delay to either the Theatre Technician or Administrator or to any other member of staff. Where possible a written report is appreciated.
4. If you are working on the floor of Studio 77 and there is work being done overhead, wear one of the safety helmets provided.
5. Floor traps are an extreme hazard. An open floor trap must never be left unattended.
6. All equipment used in the studios must be handled carefully and in the appropriate manner with due regard to safety. Any breakages or damage must be reported as soon as possible.
7. Drapes, balcony rails and bungee cords are only to be taken down after consultation with the Theatre Technician. Under no circumstances are they to be used for other purposes or removed from the building. They are to be rehung or replaced during pack-out.
8. Equipment, rostra, furniture and drapes are not to be removed from 93KP, 77FT and 225 Aro St without the express permission of the Theatre Technician.
 - Equipment, rostra, furniture, drapes and studio floor are not to be painted or altered in any way without the permission of the Theatre Technician
 - Red theatre chairs are not to be used for classes or rehearsals – only as audience seating during productions
 - Materials necessary for teaching purposes (whiteboards, AV equipment etc.) must be accessible at all times – even when a set is in place
9. All students are expected to assist with security by making sure that doors are locked, windows closed, heaters switched off and the security system activated before the building is vacated. After hours, please ring Security on 5398 (463 5398) to have them check and lock the building.
10. It is the responsibility of individual students to read the safety notices relating to fire, earthquake etc. and act as indicated in the notices.
11. Pack-outs. Mandatory for all personnel involved in the current production. No one is released from pack-out duty until authorized by the supervising technician.

WK	LECTURE Mon 2.10-3 77 FT/ Rm 306	LECTURE Wed 2.10-3 77 FT/ Rm 306	WORKSHOP M 3.10-5; 5.10-7; T 2.10-4, 4.10-6	READING
1	9 July Intro/Elizn Staging	11 July Elizn Dramaturgy	<i>Tempest</i>	<i>Tempest & Worthen</i> 199-223
2	16 July <i>The Tempest</i> text anal.	18 July <i>The Tempest</i> text anal.	<i>Tempest</i>	Brockett chap 5
3	23 July <i>Tempest</i> in performance (Tues eve dress rehearsal)	25 July Presentation of <i>Tempest</i> scenes STUDIO 77	<i>Tempest</i>	Read <i>Tartuffe</i> for next week
4	30 July DUE 2pm: <i>Tempest</i> Analytical Rpt + journal Discussion of <i>Tempest</i> ; Intro to Neoclassical comedy	1 Aug Neoclassical staging	<i>Tartuffe</i>	Worthen 373-77, 382-86, 523-25
5	6 Aug Commedia dell'Arte	8 Aug <i>Tartuffe</i> text analysis	<i>Tartuffe</i>	Brockett chap 8
6	13 Aug <i>Tartuffe</i> in performance (Tues eve dress rehearsal)	15 Aug Presentation of <i>Tartuffe</i> scenes 93 KP	<i>Tartuffe</i>	Read <i>Masses and Man</i> (Course Reader) for next session
	Mid-Trimester BREAK 20 Aug 5pm DUE: <i>Tartuffe</i> Analytical Rpt + journal			
7	3 Sept Discussion of <i>Tartuffe</i> ; Intro to Expressionism	5 Sept Expressionism design and stagecraft	<i>Masses and Man</i>	Brockett 432-438, 449-451
8	10 Sept <i>Masses and Man</i> text analysis	12 Sept <i>Masses and Man</i> text analysis	<i>Masses and Man</i>	Nothing ass'd, do some of your own research
9	17 Sept <i>Masses and Man</i> in performance (Tues eve dress rehearsal)	19 Sept Presentation of <i>Masses and Man</i> scenes 93 KP	<i>Masses and Man</i>	Read <i>The Frogs</i> for next week (Course Reader)
10	24 Sept DUE 2pm: <i>Masses</i> Analytical Rpt + journal Discussion of <i>Masses and Man</i> ; Intro to Greek Comedy	26 Sept Classical festivals and staging	<i>The Frogs</i>	Brockett chap 2
11	1 Oct <i>Frogs</i> text anal.	3 Oct <i>Frogs</i> text anal.	<i>The Frogs</i>	Worthen 9-22, 97-105
*12	8 Oct <i>Frogs</i> in performance (Dress rehearsal times negotiated with workshop group)	10 Oct Presentation of <i>Frogs</i> scenes Amphitheatre	<i>The Frogs</i>	Fri 13 Oct 4pm: Spring finale—end of year party
	DUE Mon 22 Oct, 5pm: <i>Frogs</i> Analytical Rpt + journal			