

THEA 201/ENGL 232: Theatrical Revolution: Drama from Realism to the Postmodern

Trimester 1 2014

3 March to 2 July 2014

20 Points



Publicity photo from *In the Next Room: or, the Vibrator Play*. Auckland Theatre Company, 2012.

http://www.atc.co.nz/handlers/ImageStream.ashx?mode=resize&maxside=900&side=1&path=/media/192560/atc_next_room_mid_006.jpg

IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 3 March to 6 June 2014

Easter/Mid-Trimester break: 18 April to 4 May 2014

Last assessment item due: 6 June 2014

Withdrawal Dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Wednesdays	14.10 – 15.00pm	SUMT 228
Fridays	14.10 – 15.00pm	HMLT 205

Seminar Times

Thursday	10.00 – 11.50am	FT77 305
or Thursday	13.10 – 15.00pm	FT77 305/FT83 203
or Friday	10.00 – 11.50am	FT77 305
or Friday	3.10 – 5.00pm	FT77 306

Seminars begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the THEA 201/ENGL 232 site on Blackboard: go to “Seminars” and then follow the instructions under the “S-Cubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions” link. Please read the instructions carefully. Seminar rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board outside the administration office, 83 Fairlie Terrace.

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator:	James McKinnon	james.mckinnon@vuw.ac.nz	463 6115	Room 307, 77FT
Additional Lectures:	David O’Donnell	david.odonnell@vuw.ac.nz	463 6828	Room 308, 77FT

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information, or changes to the course, will be posted on Blackboard. Additional learning materials will also be posted on Blackboard. **It is the student’s responsibility to regularly check Blackboard and their email.** It is also your responsibility to ensure that your tutor has your *current* email address and that you check your emails on a regular basis. We will endeavour to respond to emails from students within 48 hours, and we will assume that students check Blackboard and their email every 48 hours.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

PRESCRIPTION

A study of modern drama and theatre from the development of realism in the late 19th century up to contemporary plays, playwrights and production. Dramatists studied normally include the formative Europeans Ibsen, Chekhov and Brecht (read in translation), as well as Beckett, Kushner and a contemporary New Zealand playwright.

COURSE CONTENT

Beginning in the 1870s, European drama and theatre entered a sweeping aesthetic and philosophical revolution: most of the genres and styles common today, including realism, did not exist 150 years ago. What aesthetic, ideological, and technological developments brought about this theatrical revolution? And why did realism become – and remain – the dominant genre, the norm against which all others are considered “avant-garde,” experimental,” or “alternative”? This course traces developments in dramatic writing beginning with formative European playwrights such as Chekhov (read in translation), and moves through expressionism, Brechtian theatre forms to postmodernism. It also deals with aspects of the theatrical response to feminist and postcolonial questions, including in Aotearoa New Zealand. The course highlights the study of drama in performance by looking at performance elements such as theatre architecture, scenic design and approaches to acting.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate, in oral and written expression, critical awareness of styles and theories of dramatic writing
2. Develop and demonstrate creative and critical vocabularies for analysing, synthesizing, evaluating, and producing dramatic texts & theatrical performances
3. Develop a specialized understanding of the discipline through studying a selection of major plays and playwrights from the late nineteenth century to the present
4. Demonstrate, through writing and performance, fluency with the conventions of modern and postmodern drama – and the ability to abstract general attributes from specific examples of drama and theatre
5. Discuss the relationships between modern and postmodern drama, and the historical, cultural and performance contexts which they influence and are influenced by
6. Discuss the influence of modern and postmodern international drama on the development of theatre in Aotearoa, including Māori theatre
7. Develop and practice intellectual and creative autonomy by using the skills and techniques mentioned above to develop and present ideas about the discipline and the subject.
8. Develop and practice both independent and collaborative working skills.

TEACHING FORMAT

Classes consist of two lectures and one seminar per week. Seminars include discussions of plays and explorations of practical questions of their staging. While no acting skills are required, students must be willing to participate in small staging exercises. Seminars will also include structured discussions of assigned reading.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Complete assignments two and three (see below), and a minimum of 8 critical reflection journal entries (assignment one).
- Attend *and participate actively* in at least 8/11 seminars. To prove you are prepared to participate, you need to have submitted a critical reflection journal response to the weekly reading assignment before you attend that week's seminar (CLO 7, 8).

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the trimester, including in-class time. In other words, you should expect to do about 152 hours, or around 12 hours per week, on reading, writing, rehearsing, etc. See assessment workload estimates below.

ASSESSMENT

This course is internally assessed, with assessment comprising written and performance-based assignments.

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 Critical Reflection Journal: students will write short written responses (300 words) to assigned readings and in-class content. (1-2 hrs per week = 8-20 hrs. + reading time)	40	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Weekly.
2 Performance Research Project: Working in groups, students will develop short performance pieces based on an assigned text. (10-15 hrs.)	25	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8	Once during term as scheduled in seminar.
3 Performance Analysis: A 1500-2000 word response to one of two selected live performances. (10-15 hrs.)	25	1, 2, 4, 7, 8	June 6.
4 Performance Critiques: A one-page response to an in-class seminar performance, posted on Blackboard within 24 hours of the performance. (1-2 hrs)	10	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8	Twice during the term.

Assignment 1: Critical Reflection Journal (35%). You will write up to 10 (minimum 8) short written responses to assigned readings and in-class content as preparation for the weekly seminars. It works like this:

- 1) Every Friday, we will post a question (in class and on Blackboard) related to the next week's assigned readings.
- 2) You will post a short (300 words MAX) response to a question about an assigned reading on Blackboard before the following week's seminar.

- 3) After the seminar, you will have 24 hours to post a short reflective follow-up: how did the seminar discussion affect your ideas about the topic? Which member of your group offered the best response to the question?
- 4) Each entry will be marked out of 5 as follows: 1 mark each for on-time submission of a) the response, and b) the follow-up reflection; 1 mark for answers that demonstrate exceptional critical engagement with the reading/question; 1 mark for reflections that articulate how your initial position has shifted in response to the seminar discussion/performance; 1 mark for responses (or reflections) that make significant connections between the material at hand and the broader concerns of the course and the discipline.
- 5) Each week you can earn up to five points. The instructor may award bonus points for responses that the class deems particularly good or helpful to everyone's comprehension of the material.

Rationale:

- 1) Develop better communication skills (CLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 7): regular practice at expressing your ideas and responding to feedback will help you improve communication and critical thinking skills more effectively;
- 2) regular interaction with classmates will enhance seminar participation and build on in-class activities;
- 3) discussion and collaboration skills are increasingly common and valued in the workplace;
- 4) keeping up with the reading will make better use of class time;
- 5) regular critical reflection enhances learning, development, and retention.

Due: Submitted and marked weekly from Weeks 2 through 11.

Assignment 2 (30%): Performance Based Research. Working in small groups, students will conduct performance-based research into the genres and classic texts of Modern and Postmodern drama. They will concentrate on problems of history and canonisation, and investigate the boundaries of the relevant genres. Each project will consist of a short performance that uses creative methods to perform a focused critical investigation of a particular aspect of the assigned play, followed by a group discussion, led by the performers and focusing on the questions they explored, and the methods they used to explore them. Assessment will be individual, based on a) the product (presentation and discussion), and b) a brief post-mortem report from each student in the group.

Rationale:

- 1) Writing essays is not the only, or even the most valued, form of communication or critical thinking. This project develops a full suite of creative, critical, and communication skills (CLO 1, 2, 7).
- 2) This project facilitates the development of skills specific to the discipline and practice of theatre (CLO 3, 4).
- 3) Experimenting with performance conventions will allow you to recognize how dramatists make new work by putting familiar conventions and material to use in new contexts (CLO 4).
- 4) To gain a full understanding of the discipline, you need to *experience* it, not just observe and write about it.

Due: As per schedule decided on in seminar at the beginning of the trimester.

Assignment 3 (25%): 1500-2000 word performance analysis of either *Wild Man* or the THEA 302 production. Unlike dramatic text, live performance is ephemeral, dynamic, and elusive. As such, reading and writing about performance requires very different skills than those developed for "close reading" or

text analysis. You will learn, and then practice, how to document and critique live performance in ways that demonstrate and communicate your insight, and provide a valuable document of the performance. *This is not a “play review.”* You will attend and critique either

Rationale:

- 1) Developing and practicing performance analysis skills will complement your text analysis skills, and help you focus on form, not content. (CLO 1)
- 2) As NZ’s future artists and audiences, you need to be able to recognize and reveal the influence of world theatre and drama covered in the course on actual, contemporary performance practice in your community (CLO 6).
- 3) If you have aspirations to a career involving live performance, you need to see as much theatre and live performance as possible to become fluent in the conventions and traditions of the discipline (CLO 3).

Due: 6 June. (Submissions will be accepted without late penalty until 9 June.)

Assignment 4: In-Class Performance Critiques (10%). You can practice your performance analysis techniques by submitting a one-page response to any in-class seminar performance project (see above), within 24 hours of the performance. Each critique is worth up to 5 points, to a maximum of 10 points.

Rationale:

- 1) Practicing writing and analysis skills more often is the most effective way to improve skills and enhance learning and retention. (CLO 1, 7, 8)
- 2) As a performer, you will benefit from feedback from more sources and different perspectives.
- 3) You will pay closer attention to performances if you plan on writing about them, and you will remember more about them when you do write about them.
- 4) This will help you train yourself to watch for form, not content.
- 5) Getting and responding to feedback from a peers will help you understand how your work is received, reduce your dependency on the approval and authority of teachers, and lead to greater creative autonomy.

Due: within 24 hours of the performance you choose to critique.

Marking criteria are included in detailed assignment handouts (available on Blackboard).

Group Work: This course involves a significant group work component: see Assignment 2, above.

Note that it is possible to complete up to half the assessment work or more by the mid-term break, and up to 75% of the assessment in the first three quarters of the term.

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Written assignments for this course should be submitted and returned electronically, through the THEA 201/ENGL 232 Blackboard site. See assignment instruction sheets (on Blackboard) for specific instructions. Work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin the online plagiarism prevention tool. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the “Assignments and Turnitin” section. Your marked assignment will be found on Blackboard in the same section.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **No assignment without an extension will be accepted after Wednesday 25 June 2014. The Course Coordinator will not give an extension beyond Monday 16 June 2014**

Penalties

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

Note: No late work can be accepted after Monday June 16 under any circumstances.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT AND/OR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Students must attend a performance in order to complete Assignment 3. The performances take place in Studio 77 during week 10 and 12, as listed on the schedule below.

The cost of attending the performance is \$8. You may attend a performance free of charge, by volunteering as an usher.

SET TEXTS

Ibsen, Henrik. *Hedda Gabler*.

Kaiser, Georg. *From Morning to Midnight*.

Brecht, Bertolt. *The Threepenny Opera*.

Ruhl, Sarah. *In the Next Room; or, the Vibrator Play*.

Grace-Smith, Briar. *When Sun & Moon Collide*.

Bovell, Andrew. *When the Rain Stops Falling*.

*Boucicault, Dion. *The Colleen Bawn*.

*Gao, Xingjian. *Wild Man*.

**von Krneta, Guy. [Trans. Bronwyn Tweddle.] *The Horses Are Ready*

* *These texts, as well as other assigned weekly readings, are available online.*

** *This text will be distributed in class, TBC.*

You can order textbooks online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

There are several new features of this course, about which we will seek feedback from students, including the timing and structure of assessment, the efficacy of assessment items and promoting learning (particularly Assignment 1), and the pros and cons of orienting part of the course to observing and critiquing live performance. Feedback will always be anonymous, and your feedback will not and cannot be attributed to you as an individual. Feedback supplied by students may be used to improve this or other courses, and may be used as data in research on teaching and learning.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies
THEATRE PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE THEA 201/ENGL 232

- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:
www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz
- School website: www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms

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THEATRE PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE THEA 201/ENGL 232

THEA 201/ENGL 232 COURSE PROGRAMME

Date	Topic	Play	Assignments Due
Week 1	Introduction		
Week 2	Melodrama & Romanticism	Colleen Bawn	CRJ 1
Week 3	Rise of Realism	Hedda Gabler	CRJ 2
Week 4	Avant Garde 1	From Morning to Midnight	CRJ 3
Week 5	Avant Garde 2		CRJ 4
Week 6	Materialist Musicals!	Threepenny Opera	CRJ 5
Week 7	Modernism to Postmodernism		CRJ 6
Mid Trimester Break: Friday 18 April to Sunday 4 May 2014			
Week 8	Feminist	In the Next Room	CRJ 7
Week 9	NZ	When Sun and Moon...	CRJ 8
Week 10	Asian Dramaturgy	Wild Man	CRJ 9
Week 11	Contemporary	When the Rain Stops...	CRJ 10
Week 12	Contemporary	The Horses Are Ready	Performance Analysis