

Theater in Berlin

Fall term 2022: 5 September – 9 December 2022

CATEGORY

Literature and Art

COURSE STRUCTURE

3 contact hours à 45 min per week (14 weeks)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Wednesday, 4.00 pm – 6.30 pm

*Please note that the plays may vary depending on the theatre schedules

Place

t.b.a.

COURSE LANGUAGE

English

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

English B2

TARGET GROUP

Undergraduate students of all subjects with an academic background and an overall interest in German literature and theatre. No specific knowledge required.

CREDITS = 6 ECTS

All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Registration on Moodle (HU's e-learning platform)

in case of online classes

- Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC)
- Stable internet connection
- Software: Zoom (video/audio)
- *Recommended* hardware: external headset for better sound quality

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Preparation for lively discussions: be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Assignments: complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

Commitment: pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers).

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

Attendance policy: Students must contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the lecturer.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will focus on contemporary theatre in Berlin. We will read and analyze dramatic texts and discuss different theories on theatre & performance studies. We will also experience real Berlin theatre and visit e.g. the Berliner Ensemble, the Maxim Gorki Theater and the Deutsches Theater, among others. This course offers an academic insight into the diverse Berlin theatre scene, its protagonists, cultural practices and audience structure. The course enables international students to learn about and explore current trends, formats and discourses of Berlin theatre on a deeper academic and performative level. The course will be taught by a director practicing theatre in Berlin.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to equip students with an in-depth understanding of Berlin and enable them to read, understand and critically reflect on the most recent theoretical and empirical research in the field of theatre and performance studies. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Knowledge

- understand, describe and identify the core theories of theatre & performance studies
- provide an academic overview of Berlin theatre, its protagonists and cultural practices

Academic/Transferable Skills

- communicate and discuss key concepts and discourses within Berlin theatre
- analyze and critically reflect on main core theories of theatre & performance studies
- select relevant theories and methods for analyzing topic-related questions (e.g. media studies, acting theories)

Competencies

- read and understand dramatic texts
- apply relevant theories and concepts in independent work to analyze Berlin theatre

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Workload and assignments

In order to be granted 6 ECTS, participants will be asked to

- actively attend all classes (a minimum of 80% class attendance is required),
- prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions
- hand in the following **assignments**:
 - 2 short audio responses on plays we watch on our field trips
 - one written paragraph on the first idea of the individual research project
 - final student presentations on individual research projects at the end of the course

Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.

Assessment Components

The final grade will be composed of the above-mentioned assignments.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Susann Neuenfeldt holds a Ph.D. from Humboldt University in Berlin. She studied English and American Studies, and German literature in Berlin and New York City. (New York University, N.Y.). She has been teaching German and American Studies for many years, specialising in political emotions in the Cold War Era. She is the author of the book *Schauspiele des Sehens* on female observers (Winter Verlag, 2014) She published widely on Cold War cultures – from the perspectives of bodies, emotions, and aesthetic strategies. Her current academic research project focuses on the relation between Techno and deindustrialization. In 2009 she founded the Berlin theatre collective Panzerkreuzer Rotkäppchen (PKRK). Since then she has been directing a lot of plays and performances in on- and off-theatres in and around Berlin. Since then she also has been teaching theatre and performance studies at Humboldt University Berlin and the University of the Arts in Berlin. In her current artistic research project she directs the reenactment of the demonstration 11/4/89 on the Alexanderplatz for the 30th anniversary of reunification in 2019.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Introduction into the course, syllabus, key concepts and methods of the seminar

Discussion: Doing theatre, doing gender, doing politics

Week 2: Epic Theater I

Required reading: Bertolt Brecht: *The good person of Sezuan* (1939-40)

Selected screening in class of *The good person of Sezuan* directed by Fritz Bennewitz (1988)

Discussion in class: Epic theatre and revolutionary times

Week 3: Epic Theater II

Field trip to Berliner Ensemble, watching *Die Mutter / The Mother* directed by Christina Tscharyiski* (2021)

Week 4: Theater and Deep Analysis I

Assignment: Short audio response on *Die Mutter / The Mother* by Jette Steckel (2021)

Analyzing *Die Mutter* by Jette Steckel

Developing a catalogue of analysis in class

Week 5: Theater and Deep Analysis II

Required reading: *Emilia Galotti* by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (Act I & II)

Selected screening of Michael Thalheimer's *Emilia Galotti* at Deutsches Theater (2004) in class

Discussion in class: Thalheimer and his staged secret emotions

Week 6: Theater and Diversity I

Field trip to Maxim Gorki Theater watching *The Situation* by Yael Ronen and collective* (2019)

Week 7: Theater and Diversity II

Analyzing the *The Situation* by Yael Ronen

Assignment: First written paragraph on individual research projects for the student presentations at the end of the course

Required reading: Christel Weiler. "Theater and diversity in the Berlin Republic." In: *The Routledge Handbook of German Politics & Culture*, ed. by Sarah Colvin. Abingdon: Routledge 2015, p. 218-230.

Week 8: Guest lecture & workshop

Guest Lecturer: Choreographer Maike Moeller-Engemann on contemporary dance in Berlin theater

Week 9: Theater and Dance I

Field trip to the techno club #about blank watching the play *TreuhandTechno* by PKRK collective* (2021)

Week 10: Theater and Dance II

Assignment: Short audio response on the play by PKRK collective

Analyzing the play by PKRK

Required reading: Ann Rider. "Not Peasant Stew!" Real Theater for the People!", In: *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Volume 4, Issue 2 (1995), p. 59-69.

Week 11: Theater and Monster I

Field trip to Deutsches Theater watching the play *Frankenstein* directed by Jette Steckel*

Week 12: Theater and Monster II

Analyzing the play *Frankenstein* by Jette Steckel (2021)

Selected reading of the script of Jette Steckel's *Frankenstein* in class

Required reading: Laura Davidel. "Monstrosity, Performativity, and Performance." In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Gothic* (11 July 2011), p. 569-585.

Week 13: Student Presentations on Individual Research Projects of Berlin Theater

Assignment: Final presentations in class on individual research projects

Week 14: Theater and the Internet - a contradiction or a perfect match?

Final discussion and wrap up

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 15 February 2022