

**Carleton University
Fall 2018
Department of English**

ENGL 3609: *Drama Studies: Contemporary Criticism*
Prerequisites: 3rd year standing, or permission of the Department

Time/Day: Tuesday/Thursday 2:35 - 3:55 p.m.

Location: 2400 CB

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Prof. Janne Cleveland

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Office: DT 1913

Phone: 613-520-2600 ext 2320

Office Hours: TBD

Course Outline:

Writing theatre criticism is more than just summarizing the text being staged; it requires a deep analysis of the mechanisms and staging strategies that go into a production, as well as an understanding of the script. This course focuses on developing the skills to analyze the fundamental elements of staged productions. In class, we will explore the rudiments of a theatre production, such as acting and directing; relationships between a given dramatic text and its mise-en-scène; theatre and stage space; fictional time and performance time; set and costume design; use of stage objects and hand props; sound and lighting design; significance of music; use of mask and make up. Students will attend a series of live performances throughout the term, assigned by the Instructor, and learn how to analyze and write critically about their experiences of theatrical performance. Throughout the course, we will consider such questions as:

- what is the correlation between the theatre elements presented in a theatrical performance?
- what is the significance of set, light, and costume design?
- how is the stage space utilized?
- how does the design of the theatre space contribute to the meaning of a production?
- what are the choices a director makes in creating their mise-en-scène? are these choices effective or not, and why or why not?

Mandatory Performances

In order to effectively learn how to observe and write critically about performance, we will attend a number of live performances throughout the term. All students must attend the following performances. Discounted/student tickets are available for most performances (with the

exception of the Cineplex Met Live operas). Instructions on how to access discounted/student rate tickets will be provided at the beginning of the term.

Sept 11 - 30 *The Virgin Trial* (GCTC)
Oct 11 - 13 *Xenos* (NAC dance)
Oct 13 *Le Dire de Di* (surtitles - Nouvelle Scene)
Oct 17 - 28 *Silence* (NAC theatre)
Oct 23 - Nov 11 *The Drowning Girls* (GCTC)
Oct 25 - 27 *Solo 70* (NAC dance)
Nov 3 *Aida* (Met Live HD - Cineplex)
Nov 13 - 24 *Chasing Champions* (NAC studio)
Dec 1 *The Magic Flute* (Met Live - Cineplex)

Course Objectives:

1. To introduce students to the fundamental elements of theatrical presentation in order to write about them effectively
2. To help students develop their skills of critical analysis
3. To help students develop a vocabulary of performance analysis
4. To teach students the elemental devices of theatre criticism
5. To train students to develop their skills of observation when attending live performance

Required Reading:

Course pack available at Haven Books (Seneca & Sunnyside)

Highly recommended:

Composition handbook (e.g. *The Broadview Guide to Writing*)

Course Evaluation:

Critical review papers (3 X 15% = 45%)

Students will write **3** short critical reviews of **2 - 3 pages** (double-spaced). In each case, students will give primary focus to one theatrical element in a particular production in relation to the material studied during the course (i.e., lighting, use of stage space, costumes, etc.) Class readings will help you focus your observations and comments, along with prompt questions corresponding to these topics.

Due Dates:

First review due by **September 26** (midnight) on cuLearn
Second review due by **October 15** (midnight) on cuLearn
Third review due by **November 7** (midnight) on cuLearn

cuPortfolio Reflections (15%)

Students will be given access to cuPortfolio for this course, and will be given a tutorial in class on how to copy the template provided. Students will create reflections on 2 of the 3 critical review papers, as well as an overall course reflection, each of which is worth 5% of the total

grade. The performance review reflections are due after you have had these assignments and their feedback returned to you. The final course reflection is due in the week of our last class.

Final paper/take-home exam (a critical performance review of **7 - 8** double-spaced pages **30%**)

This assignment will operate as a take-home exam.

Note: The final due date of this assignment will be during the formally scheduled exam period, and will be announced during the term.

This final assignment will represent the cumulative knowledge acquired throughout the course that includes critical commentary on all applicable elements of the production in question. These will include such aspects as set/lighting/sound, use of stage space, acting, directing, costumes, multi-media, and the relevance of the performance space in relation to the production. All students will write their final paper on *The Magic Flute*, which will be shown only on **December 1** at area Cineplex theatres. You will need to purchase these tickets in advance because this production is likely to sell out.

Attendance/Participation 10%

Students are expected to attend all mandatory productions, and come to class having read the assigned materials in order to fully participate in discussion. Discussion will be divided into a focus on the readings as well as the productions.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

IMPORTANT: All assignments are submitted electronically, either on cuLearn or cuPortfolio.

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or

pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- ☐ reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- ☐ submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- ☐ using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- ☐ using another’s data or research findings;
- ☐ failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- ☐ handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

The policy can be found at: <http://carleton.ca/fass/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Sept-2017.pdf>

Class schedule*

September 6	Introduction: Reading the syllabus; what to expect from the course
September 11 September 13	cuPortfolio tutorial - bring your laptop/device What is Performance? Some thoughts
September 18	Brockett & Ball. "Performance, Audience, and Critic." <i>The Essential Theatre</i> (8th ed.)
September 20	guest lecture: Patrick Langston, theatre reviewer
September 25	Pavis, Patrice. "Space, Time, Action." "Staging the Text." <i>Analyzing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film</i> .
September 27	(Will discuss <i>The Virgin Trial</i> on this date) * First performance review due September 26

October 2	Fingerhut, Arden. "The Scenic Designer." <i>Theatre: Choice in Action</i> . Greenwald. "The Designers." <i>Evaluating a Performance</i>
October 4	Fingerhut cont'd
October 9	Bracewell, John. "Art and Design." <i>Sound Design in the Theatre</i> . Fingerhut, Arden. "The Lighting Designer." <i>Theatre: A Choice in Action</i> .
October 11	cont'd
October 16	Aston & Savona. "Reading the Image." <i>Theatre as a Sign System</i> (Will discuss <i>Xenos</i> and <i>Le Dire de Di</i> this date)
October 18	* Second performance review due October 15 cont'd
October 23 October 25	Reading week - no classes
October 30	Fingerhut. "The Director". <i>Theatre: Choice in Action</i> ; Greenwald. "The Director". <i>Evaluating a Performance</i>
November 1	(Will discuss <i>Solo 70</i> and <i>Silence</i> on this date)
November 6	Cameron & Gillespie. "Actors." <i>The Enjoyment of Theatre</i> Third performance review due November 7
November 8	cont'd (Will discuss <i>The Drowning Girls</i> and <i>Aida</i> on this date)
November 13	Fingerhut. "The Costume Designer." <i>Theatre: choice in action</i> ; Motley. from <i>Theatre Props</i>
November 15	cont'd
November 20	Brockett & Ball. "The Playscript." <i>The Essential Theatre</i>
November 22	cont'd
November 27	Pavis. "Other Material Elements of Performance." <i>Analyzing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film</i> ; Greenwald. "Writing the Review". <i>Evaluating a Performance</i> . (Will discuss <i>Chasing Champions</i> on this date)
November 29	cont'd

December 4

Fingerhut. "The Audience and Performance."
Theatre: Choice in Action (**Will discuss *The Magic Flute* on this date**)

December 6

Wrap up!

*** Schedule may be subject to change; check frequently on cuLearn for any changes**