

**Carleton University
Fall 2021
Department of English**

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

Time/Day: Monday/Wednesday 8:35 – 9:55 a.m.
Location: 4020 Nicol Building

Format: *in-person*

Instructor: Prof. Janne Cleveland (she/her)

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Office: DT 1913

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Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:

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 performance, 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. These elements will be considered in relation to the story being performed. Do the elements support and advance the narrative? Students will watch a selection of performances, some archived and some in person, throughout the term, assigned by the Instructor, and learn how to analyze and write critically about their experiences of witnessing and interpreting a staged performance. Throughout the course, we will consider such questions as:

- what is the correlation between the design 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 itself (the architecture) 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?

Students can expect to achieve the following Learning 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 and expand 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
6. To extend a discussion of what distinguishes live performance from other forms (audio, film archive, etc.)
7. To develop an understanding of the relation between narrative and performance

Required Reading and Viewing:

Brockett, Oscar, Robert J. Ball, John Fleming and Andrew Carlson. *The Essential Theatre*. 11th ed. Cengage Learning, 2017. Print.

Text is available at Haven Books (Sunnyside and Seneca). Haven Books offers curbside pick-up. You need to order your text from them online at <https://www.havenbooks.ca/>

Productions:

I, Cinna (youtube)

Negative Space

A Disappearing Number

11:11

Trace

The Tempest

Copenhagen

The Woodsman

Things I Know to Be True

We will examine a selection of archived performances through which we explore the elements of staging (sound, lighting, costume, directing, etc.) in order to learn how to write about them. The performances listed are available on Digital Theatre Plus (a database accessible through the MacOdrum Library). We will adjust our viewing schedule depending on what other opportunities present themselves throughout the term. You might expect at least 2 live productions to be added to our viewing list as other things become available, but the number of assignments will **NOT** change. Check the schedule on Brightspace and your email regularly for changes/additions to the viewing schedule. Students will be expected to view the assigned performances asynchronously prior to discussion in our regular class meeting.

Highly recommended:

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

Students will be expected to view the performances mandated and have read the assigned chapter on their own time prior to the class in which they will be discussed.

Quick Calendar

Date	Topic	Assignment
September 16	<i>I, Cinna</i>	
September 25	<i>Negative Space</i>	1 st Critical Review
October 9		cuPortfolio reflection
October 16	<i>A Disappearing Number; 11:11</i>	2 nd Critical Review
October 21	<i>The Tempest</i>	
October 19 – 23	<i>Trace (in person NAC)</i>	
November 2		cuPortfolio reflection
November 6	<i>The Tempest</i>	3 rd Critical Review
November 6	<i>Copenhagen (livestream NAC FREE)</i>	
November 18	<i>The Woodsman</i>	
November 20		cuPortfolio reflection
November 27	<i>Things I know to be True</i>	Final Critical Review
December 11		Final cuPortfolio reflection

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.

cuPortfolio Reflections (15%)

These assignments are an opportunity for students to reflect on their own learning as it develops throughout the term. Students will be given access to cuPortfolio, along with a tutorial on how to use it, for this course. A template will be provided along with prompt questions to structure the reflections. 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 the assignments and their feedback has been returned. The final course reflection is due in the week of our last class.

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

This will be your final critical review and operates as a cumulative assignment that will demonstrate your ability to analyze all the staging elements of a production and produce a nuanced criticism of the performance.

Note: 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.

Participation 10%

Students are expected to attend class having read the assigned materials and viewed the performances in order to fully participate in discussion. Discussion will be divided into a focus on the readings as well as the elements connected to the productions.

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

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.

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.” According to the Department examples of plagiarism include the following:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- 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;
- 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 form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct 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 failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

VIII. Special Information Regarding Fall 2021 Pandemic Measures

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) and [mandatory self-screening](#) prior to coming to campus daily.

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory [symptom reporting tool](#). For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be recorded in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

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

Pregnancy obligation: write to me 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the [Pregnancy Accommodation Form](#).

Religious obligation: write to me 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 [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

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 where 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: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

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 will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me 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>

Class Schedule*

September 8	Introduction: what's on the syllabus?; what are the course expectations?; what counts as performance?
September 13/15	cuPortfolio: tutorial what is performance criticism? Comparing reviews
September 20/22	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 2; the job of the theatre critic/reviewer
September 27/29	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 12 <i>Negative Space</i> (Digital Theatre Plus)
October 4/6	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 16
October 11/13	NOTE: there is no class October 11 (Thanksgiving) <i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 18 Lighting and Sound Design <i>A Disappearing Number</i> (Digital Theatre Plus) <i>11:11</i> (online performance from PTE Oct 13 – 17)
October 18/20	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 3 The Play <i>The Tempest</i> (Digital Theatre Plus) You must see <i>Trace</i> at the NAC (Oct 19 – 23, live rush tickets available) https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/25710
October 25/27	Fall reading week – no class
November 1/3	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 14 Directing and Producing <i>Iphigenia & Other Daughters</i>
November 8/10	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 15 Acting *you MUST view the free livestream production of <i>Copenhagen</i> on November 6 https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/29290
November 15/17	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 17 Costume Design and Makeup <i>The Woodsman</i> (Digital Theatre Plus)
November 22/24	<i>The Essential Theatre</i> Chapter 13 Playwrighting and Dramaturgy <i>Things I Know to be True</i> (Digital Theatre Plus)
November 29/December 1	Discussion: applying what you've learned

December 6/8

Wrap up!

***Subject to change. Check Brightspace frequently for notification of new materials or changes to the schedule.**