



THST*6150 Theatre Historiography

Fall 2020

Section(s): 01

School of English and Theatre Studies

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - September 08, 2020

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This variable content course introduces students to the theory and practice of theatre historical analysis. The course is required of all students in the Theatre Studies MA Program.

1.2 Course Description

This graduate seminar explores how theatre and performance contribute to different constructions and understandings of human history. Through discussions of playwrights, historical source material, revisionist practices, as well as performance aesthetics, students will encounter historical events, beliefs, characters/figures, audiences, and perceptions of the past. Examples from diverse global cultures, communities, and time periods will be used to engage with the mutability of supposedly stable historical events as compelling performance material. We will ask questions about who writes and/or performs different histories while learning to identify key features of the political/social conditions of performances as well as culturally accepted/challenged narratives.

1.3 Timetable

This course will take place on Fridays from 10am - 1pm throughout the Fall Term. Our synchronous class meetings will be held on Zoom with mandatory breaks from technology during our time block. Further info on using Zoom safely and effectively will be distributed when classes start. Seminar presentations will be able to be completed in both synchronous and asynchronous (or hybrid) formats.

* Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

There is no final exam for this seminar. A final research paper will be due at the end of the December exam period.

Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor:	Peter Kuling
Email:	pkuling@uoguelph.ca
Telephone:	+1-519-824-4120 x52933
Office:	MASS 104C

2.2 Office Hours

I will not be holding regular office hours this semester but will be available to discuss class matters by email and virtual appointments. When emailing me, please use the course code and section as part of your title. If you are requesting an appointment please indicate it in the title. I will respond to email within 48 hours (weekends excluded).

2.3 Covid-19 Course Policy - No F2F Meetings

Due to Covid-19, there will be no face to face interaction of any kind in this course. All content will be delivered in a remote format using virtual platforms, including but not limited to Zoom, Slack, and/or Teams.

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Zoom (Software)

All synchronous seminar experiences in this course will take place via Zoom. Students will be expected to download this software and invites to our class seminars will be sent out via email.

Theatre Historiography: Critical Interventions (Textbook)

https://www.press.umich.edu/1546640/theater_historiography

Bial, Henry and Scott Magelssen, Eds. *Theatre Historiography: Critical Interventions*. The University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography (Textbook)

<https://www.uiopress.uiowa.edu/books/9781587299056/representing-the-past>

Canning, Charlotte M. and Thomas Postlewait, Eds. *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*. University of Iowa Press, 2010.

3.2 Recommended Resources

The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography (Textbook)

<https://www.cambridge.org/academic/subjects/arts-theatre-culture/drama-and-theatre-general-interest/cambridge-introduction-theatre-historiography?format=PB&isbn=9780521499170>

Postlewait, Thomas. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*. Cambridge University Press, 2009

Theatre / Performance / Historiography: Time, Space, Matter (Textbook)

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137397294>

Bank, Rosemarie K. and Michal Kobialka, Eds. *Theatre / Performance / Historiography: Time, Space, Matter*. Palgrave MacMillian, 2015.

Canadian Performance Histories and Historiographies (Textbook)

<https://www.playwrightscanada.com/Books/C/Canadian-Performance-Histories-and-Historiographies>

Davis-Fisch, Heather, Ed. *Canadian Performance Histories and Historiographies: New Essays on Canadian Theatre*. Volume Seven. Playwrights Canada Press, 2017.

Performance (Textbook)

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/performance>

Taylor, Diana. *Performance*. Duke University Press, 2016.

4 Learning Outcomes

Theatre Studies Learning Outcomes:

1. To develop artists who thrive on intellectual curiosity, openness to ideas and take measured risk through creative experiences.
2. To develop informed and creative citizens, empowered to contribute to the world through writing and performance.
3. To apply critical sensibilities through a familiarity and understanding of a range of significant performance and media work past and present.
4. To develop well-rounded performance artists, who possess the research tools and disciplinary skills to model their own productive performance practices.
5. To develop meaningful ways to integrate theory, technology and practice where critical thinking and creativity are equally embraced.
6. To learn techniques for communication and collaboration, build relationships and to listen and respect different thought processes.

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Develop skills reading, responding, unpacking, and analyze performances in different historical and theoretical contexts.
 2. Breakdown theatrical performances through a wide variety of media, communications, anthropological, financial, ideological, and socio-cultural contexts.
 3. Draw informed connections between theatre history and other fields of inquiry.
 4. Reflect on Canadian theatre historiography emerging or in-process through discussions current performance events, issues, festivals, and experiences.
 5. Recognize shared relationships between theatrical practices and social contexts from classical to contemporary periods.
 6. Improve their abilities as an autonomous critical thinkers, researchers, and writers across intersecting disciplines of theatre history and performance studies.
 7. Develop and apply research skills for writing about dramatic texts and theatrical productions in consideration of a wide variety of social, artistic, and intellectual contexts.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

This seminar will combine synchronous and asynchronous experiences. Students will meet weekly for synchronous discussions and presentations, but also prepare asynchronous presentations and relaxed forms of on-going virtual chat (text and/or voice) to thoroughly discuss course subject matter.

5.1 Seminar

Fri, Sep 11

Topics:

Seminar One - Theatre and Performance Historiography

References:

Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Henry Bial and Scott Magelssen, "Introduction." 1 - 10
- *Representing the Past*, Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, "An Introduction on Five Themes." 1 - 36

Fri, Sep 18

Topics: **Seminar Two - Theatre History**

References: **Required Readings:**

- *Critical Interventions*, Robert Shimko, "The Spark of Strangeness." 32 - 44
- *Critical Interventions*, Heather S. Nathans, "Is There Too Much 'History' in my Theater History?" 45 - 57
- *Representing the Past*, Susan Bennett, "The Making of Theatre History." 63 - 83

Fri, Sep 25

Topics: **Seminar Three - Theatre Archives**

References: **Required Readings:**

- *Critical Interventions*, Odai Johnson, "Unspeakable Histories." 11 - 21
- *Critical Interventions*, Ellen Mackay, "Against Plausability." 22 - 31
- *Critical Interventions*, Suk-Young Kim, "Finding History from the Living Archives." 197 - 207

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Fri, Oct 2

Topics: **Seminar Four - Theatrical Materiality**

References: **Required Readings:**

- *Critical Interventions*, Margaret Werry, "Interdisciplinary Objects, Oceanic Insights." 221 - 234
- *Representing the Past*, Christopher Balme, "Playbills and the Theatrical Public Sphere." 37 - 62
- *Representing the Past*, Claire Sponsler, "Writing the Unwritten." 84 - 113

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Fri, Oct 9

Topics: Seminar Five - Theatrical Time

References: Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Patricia Ybarra, "History Takes Time." 249 - 261
- *Representing the Past*, William Sauter, "Cyclical Perseverance and Linear Mobility of Theatrical Events." 117 - 141
- *Representing the Past*, Tracy Davis, "Performative Time." 142 - 167

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Fri, Oct 16

Topics: Seminar Six - Theatrical Memory

References: Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Branislav Jakovljevic, "The Theater of the Absurd and the Historization of the Present." 61 - 73
- *Critical Interventions*, John Fletcher, "Sympathy for the Devil." 110 - 122

Synchronous Research Presentation (2 Spots Available)

Final Research Paper Proposal Due via Courselink (Oct 15th)

Fri, Oct 23

Topics: Seminar Seven - Performance History

References: Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Wendy Arons, "Beyond the Nature/Culture Divide." 148 - 161
- *Critical Interventions*, Scott Magelssen, "Performance

- as Learner Driven Historiography." 208 - 219
- *Representing the Past*, Shannon Jackson, "When 'Everything Counts': Experimental Performance and Performance Historiography." 240 - 260

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Asynchronous Research Presentation Due Date (2 Spots Available)

Fri, Oct 30

Topics: **Seminar Eight - Performance Spaces**

References: **Required Readings:**

- *Critical Interventions*, Nicholas Ridout, "The Ice: A Collective History of the History of Our Collectivity in the Theater." 186 - 196
- *Representing the Past*, Marvin Carlson, "Space and Theatre History." 195 - 213
- *Representing the Past*, David Wiles, "Seeing is Believing: The Historian's Use of Images." 215 - 239

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Asynchronous Research Presentation Due Date (2 Spots Available)

Fri, Nov 6

Topics: **Seminar Nine - Performing Identity**

References: **Required Readings:**

- *Critical Interventions*, Mechele Leon, "Corpsing Molière: History as Fiasco." 177 - 185
- *Representing the Past*, Catherine Cole, "Histories Thresholds: Stories from Africa." 263 - 281
- *Representing the Past*, Harry J. Elam, Jr., "The High Stakes of Identity." *Time*." 282 - 302

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Asynchronous Research Presentation Due Date (2 Spots Available)

Fri, Nov 13

Topics: Seminar Ten - Performance Narratives

References: Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Judith Sebesta and Jessica Sternfeld, "An Interdisciplinary Duet on *Rent* and Collaborative Musical Theatre Historiography." 262 - 275
- *Representing the Past*, Susan Leigh Foster, "Textual Evidences." 333 - 350
- *Representing the Past*, Brian Singleton, "Narratives of Nostalgia: Oriental Evasions on the London Stage." 351 - 377

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Asynchronous Research Presentation Due Date (2 Spots Available)

Fri, Nov 20

Topics: Seminar Eleven - Performing via Technology

References: Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Sarah Bay-Cheng, "Theater History and Digital Historiography." 125 - 136
- *Representing the Past*, Bruce McConachie, "Reenacting Events to Narrate Theatre History." 378 - 403

Synchronous Research Presentation (1 Spot Available)

Asynchronous Research Presentation Due Date (2 Spots Available)

Fri, Nov 27

Topics: **Seminar Twelve - Theatre and Performance Futures**

References:

Required Readings:

- *Critical Interventions*, Jonathan Chambers, "Or I'll Die: Death and Dying on Page and Stage." 162 - 175
- *Critical Interventions*, Henry Bial, "PS: Can we talk about Something Else?" 276 - 285

Synchronous Research Presentation (Excused Absence - Alternate Spot)

Asynchronous Research Presentation (Excused Absence - Alternate Spot)

6 Assessments

Participation in Seminar Discussions (Online Zoom Classes and Courselink): 20%

Historiography Research Presentations x 2 (15% Each): 30%

Final Research Paper Proposal: 10%

Final Research Paper: 40%

6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions

6.2 Assessment Details

Seminar and Presentation Participation (20%)

Date: Throughout the Fall Term

As this is a graduate level seminar, all students will be expected to arrive in our virtual seminar space with readings complete, prepared thoughts and questions about the articles and ideas of the week, as well as demonstrate active engagement with each other after individual research presentations. Some participation in this course will also be asynchronous on Courselink with feedback and comment threads, where students can discuss course materials and research in progress at their leisure between seminar

meetings.

Final Research Project Proposal (10%)

Date: Thu, Oct 15, 11:55 PM

Students will submit a short research paper proposal with a main research idea or topic, potential primary and secondary sources, as well as potential outcomes from their work. This will be due over Reading Week via Courselink.

Historiography Research Presentation (Synchronous) (15%)

Date: To Be Determined (See Seminar Calendar for Available Spots)

The first seminar research presentation will be a live 15 - 20 minute synchronous presentation of research questions and inquiries during our virtual seminar. Students can share their screen and other digital materials -- much like a conference paper -- as they have control of the entire seminar to present their evolving ideas from their readings, research, and disciplinary questions to date. There will be a 10 minute Q & A session from seminar colleagues and the professor following each synchronous presentation.

* Weeks for students to present synchronously will be selected and assigned during our first seminar meeting.

Historiography Research Presentation (Asynchronous) (15%)

Date: To Be Determined (See Seminar Calendar for Available Spots)

The second seminar research presentation will be a 15 to 20 minute asynchronous research presentation posted to Courselink before our class seminar meets on Friday. Students can record a video or create audio walk-through of particular webpages or collections. They could even edit a hybrid YouTube version of all their materials. This will be very much like a conference paper, but it can include other media such as performance recordings and databases for all students and the professor to interact with as they experience this remote presentation. This is NOT a LIVE presentation. Students will be encouraged to present ideas currently in development from readings, research, and disciplinary questions arising throughout our course. Comment and feedback threads for all asynchronous presentations will be hosted on Courselink.

* Weeks for students to present synchronously will be selected and assigned during our first seminar meeting.

Final Historiography Research Paper (40%)

Date: Fri, Dec 18, 11:55 PM

Final Research Papers are due via Courselink by 11:55pm on December 18, 2020.

Length: 3500 - 4000 Words

MLA 8 Citation Style

7 Course Statements

7.1 Late / Missed Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day and will not be accepted after 10 days past the original due date. Exceptions can be offered for illness with supporting documentation or other urgent compassionate grounds. Regulations regarding Academic Consideration are available in the Graduate Calendar.

7.2 Contact with Instructor

The best way to communicate with your instructor is via email. I will always check email and respond during the week, but may not check emails in the evening or over the weekend. Any email sent on a Friday may remain unanswered until Monday.

7.3 Discussion of Assessment and Grades

Your grades for all assignments and presentations will not be discussed over email. To discuss your individual marks and/or assessment in the course you will have to see the instructor by requesting a virtual office hour meeting. No breakdown of your final marks and overall grade will be provided once the term ends. There are also no options to complete more work for extra credit or marks in this course. Please do not ask to improve grades on past assignments by submitting more work. You can easily improve future marks by completing your readings, attending synchronous lectures, participating in group discussions, and working hard to prepare for all assessments, presentations, and research paper submissions.

8 University Statements

8.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

8.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

8.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website

<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

8.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as

possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

8.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

8.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

8.10 Illness

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.
