

THEATER 4001 - 002
EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

Spring 2004
MW 12-1:50
Rowe 111

Instructor: James Vesce
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Office Hours (Rowe 127): MW 11:00 – 12:00 and by appointment

A. Course Description

Experimental Theater is a 4000 level advanced and intensive study and performance of 20th century theatrical forms: Dadaism, Surrealism, Absurdism, Happenings, and Performance Art. The class will research and perform random acts of theater and dance throughout the semester culminating in a final project. Students will be required to master an extensive reading list as well as participate in group projects.

Students should already possess a background and coursework in theater/dance history and performance. Prerequisites: must be a theater major or minor and have coursework in acting and/or directing, modern technique and choreography, or the equivalent.

B. Textbooks (available at Gray's College Bookstore)

Aronson, Arnold, *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History*
Artaud, Antonin, *The Theater And Its Double*
Sandford, Mariellen R., ed., *Happenings And Other Acts*

Other handouts and materials will be used as needed.

C. Requirements and Grading Procedure

The following activities constitute the work for the semester:

Class Participation - 25%

Full and consistent oral and written participation in exercises, discussions, and activities. Specifically, you will be asked to respond in class on a regular basis to reading assignments. This requirement may also include attendance at off-campus events.

Notebook – 25%

Evaluation of in-class lecture notes and notes taken from reading assignments.

Group Performance Projects - 25%

Completion of informal group and individual performance projects throughout the semester.

Term Paper or Final Project – 25%

Completion of a 15-20 pp. term paper on a figure or topic in experimental theater. Guidelines for the paper will be provided during the semester. This requirement *may* be substituted by a final class project at the end of the semester

Department of Dance and Theatre
Studio Class and Performance Protocol

The following are uniform guidelines for participation in studio and seminar performance classes. In a studio class or seminar most of the work is “in-class” and “hands-on.” Attendance and full participation are therefore essential. Preparation and focus should guide your work as well; your demeanor in class should reflect this at all times. It is important for everyone to work cooperatively and collaboratively, and to create an environment of openness and trust.

Attendance

Two absences are permitted. After two absences, the instructor reserves the right to lower your grade one full letter for each additional absence. Only under special circumstances will a student be allowed to miss additional classes, and then only with advanced notice and appropriate documentation, subject to the rules and regulations of the University and the discretion of the instructor. Exceptions may include but are not limited to the following: religious holidays, medical emergencies, University athletic events, family emergencies, professional opportunities.

Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as arriving late once class has begun. 3 tardy arrivals constitute 1 absence. After the first 15 minutes of class, however, the instructor reserves the right to close or lock the door and/or deny you admission to the class. This will result in 1 absence. If you are tardy by more than 15 minutes and choose to come to class (provided the door is unlocked), it will still result in 1 absence. Students who are more than 5 minutes late for exams will not be admitted.

Coursework

You may not use one of your 2 absences as an excuse for missing a class presentation. If you are absent from class on a day of a presentation or written assignment, the assignment, when presented or turned in, will be graded without prejudice and then lowered by one full letter grade. In the case of performance presentations - you are not guaranteed the chance to present your assignment late (if going back causes a schedule problem). If an assignment is one week late it will not be accepted.

All scheduled monologues, scenes, and class presentations must fulfill the requirements set forth by the instructor in class (e.g., one must read required material, be prepared for discussion, be off-book, etc.). Failure to perform the scene as required will result in a lower grade for that portion of the assignment.

You are expected to spend a considerable amount of time outside of class in rehearsal. Failure to honor rehearsal schedules and time commitments is unprofessional and is likewise unacceptable, and will result in a lower grade for the assignment.

Other specific requirements in the syllabus may apply to each course as necessary.

Course Materials

It is expected that you will use the textbooks and materials recommended for this course. Otherwise, you run the risk of inconsistency among translations and adaptations, dissimilar pagination, and all of the other inconveniences to classmates that follow from different versions of the same play or text. You might also jeopardize your preparation for exams.

Use of Facilities

Food and drink are expressly forbidden in the studio classroom and theater. Only bottled water is acceptable.

All furniture, set pieces, and props should be returned to their proper places at the end of class.

Dress and Behavior

Appropriate dress should be worn at all times. Do not wear short skirts, platform shoes, flip-flops, or any cumbersome clothing. Be prepared for floorwork at all times.

Guests

Visitors to class are allowed with permission of the instructor only.

Additional Information

- Course information, progress, and correspondence will generally be provided in class and on the university's WebCT server. Students are responsible for checking in regularly on the system. There will be no excuses accepted for missing or incomplete assignments.
- The best way to contact me is by email generally during the day. Phone messages are helpful but I can't always guarantee a response. Be sure your email address is accurate and active.

Department of Dance and Theatre Mission and Purpose Statement

Majors and minors in the Department are encouraged to explore the theoretical foundations and aesthetics of both dance and theatre through a required series of cross-disciplinary courses as well as discipline-specific courses. While receiving a foundation in dance and theatre, all students in both our lecture and studio courses gain knowledge and skills that allow them to achieve career goals, commit to life-long learning, and enrich their quality of life. In addition, all students may gain practical experience through performance and technical assignments in the Department's production season.

Faculty members are committed to the teaching and practice of dance and theatre, as they foster academic progress and artistic expression in an environment that respects cultural and artistic diversity (note that "cultural diversity" refers to issues of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability). In addition, they contribute to the University, the community, and their professions through scholarly and creative endeavors and through service activities.

To conclude: in all its endeavors the Department strives to emphasize 1., interdisciplinary interaction between dance and theatre, and 2., interactions that promote cultural diversity.

Code of Academic Integrity

Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity (see 1999-2001 University Catalog, p. 375). This code forbids cheating, fabrication, falsification of information, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Any special requirements or permissions regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor and are binding on the students. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that the student's work is free of academic dishonesty of any type, so grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte. The normal penalty for a first offense is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases the course grade is reduced to "F." Copies of the code are available in the Dean of Students' Office or in the Catalog as cited above. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.

Disability Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Services, Fretwell 230, 704/687-4355, as early as possible in the term. It is your responsibility to make your special needs known so that we may be of assistance.

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EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
Schedule

January	12	Introduction/Syllabus
	14	Overview of Experimental Theater in the 20 th Century
	19	Martin Luther King Holiday (No Class)
	21	Modernism and Postmodernism
	26	Antonin Artaud: <i>The Theatre and Its Double</i>
	28	Antonin Artaud: <i>The Theatre and Its Double</i>
February	2	No Class
	4	Dadaism and Surrealism: <i>Ubu Roi</i>
	9	Dadaism and Surrealism: <i>The Gas Heart</i>
	11	Workshop: <i>Jet Of Blood</i>
	15	Theatre of the Absurd: Pinter, Ionesco, Genet and others
	18	Theatre of the Absurd: Samuel Beckett
	23	Workshop: <i>Act Without Words I</i>
	25	Workshop: <i>Act Without Words I</i>
March	1	American Avant Garde Theater
	3	The Living Theatre and The Open Theatre
	8, 10, 12	Spring Break (No Class)
	16	Environmental Theater, La Mama, and Others

	17	The Directors: Grotowski, Brook, Wilson, Foreman, Smith, Serban
	22	Experimental Music and Dance
	24	Happenings
	29	Happenings
	31	Happenings
April	5	Happenings
	7	Happenings Workshop
	12	Happenings Workshop
	19	Performance Art: Spalding Gray
	21	Performance Art: Women and the Body
	26	The End of the Avant Garde
	28	New Forms and the Fringe Movements
May	3	Postmortem