

Stockholm University

Department of Culture and Aesthetics

Theatre Studies

Cultural Theory and Transnational Performance 1 (Fall 2018, MA-level, 7.5 ECTS)

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Emails will normally be answered within 48 hours, except on weekends and holidays. Office hours by appointment .

Course description

The course provides students with skills to understand, analyze and evaluate contemporary and historical theatre practices in a more and more globally and transnationally operating cultural field. The course content comprises cultural theory, postcolonial and intercultural theory, and transnational critical theory of arts and theatre. After having completed the course the students will have acquired the skills:

- to oversee and critically discuss theories and methods in the field of intercultural theory and transnational theatre,
- to reflect and adapt their own research position,
- to critically analyse and relate the discipline's contribution to field of intercultural theory and transnational theatre,
- to argue for their own alternative approach

Course requirements

- active and qualitative participation at the seminars, including student presentations;
- a written essay (8 pages + references and works cited) that critically engages with key arguments and perspectives presented in the course literature and applies some of the main theoretical and methodological concepts onto an independently chosen case study (a transcultural performance, ensemble, theatre artist etc.).

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Each student may miss one seminar, but an additional absence needs to be compensated with a 4-page written essay that critically discusses the literature assigned for that session. This assignment needs to be handed in no later than the day the final paper is due. If a student has missed three or more classes, a final grade cannot be assigned. Surfing the Internet at leisure or texting during class time as well as excessive lateness or leaving early repeatedly will affect your participation grade. In case of religious observations, students are kindly asked to advice their professor a week before the absence in order to make arrangements for potential make up assignments.

Grading criteria

Assessment is based on a criterion-referenced scale, ranging from A (Excellent) to F (Fail). A, B, C, D and E are approved grades. Fx and F are failed grades. In order to obtain final approval, the course requires a minimum grade of E for the written as well as the oral assignments and that all course requirements are met. If a student has received a passing grade (A-E) they are not allowed to repeat the examination in order to receive a higher grade.

A (Excellent): The participant, in written (70%) and oral work (30%)

- identifies, defines and evaluates different concepts of cultural theory, postcolonial and intercultural theory in theatre and performance studies as well as explains the relationship between theoretical concepts and contemporary and historical theatre and performance practices from a *comprehensive and critically reflective perspective*;
- *independently* formulates a *relevant* and *original* research question departing from a *broad selection* of theoretical concepts and an object of study;
- shows the capacity to structure and communicate knowledge in theatre and performance studies in a comprehensible form. The analysis and argument are perfectly coherent, flawless and of high precision.

B (Very Good): The participant, in written (70%) and oral work (30%)

- identifies, defines and evaluates different concepts of cultural theory, postcolonial and intercultural theory in theatre and performance studies as well as explains the relationship between theoretical concepts and contemporary and historical theatre and performance practices from a *comprehensive and partly critically reflective perspective*;
- *independently* formulates a *relevant* research question departing from a *relatively broad selection* of theoretical concepts and an object of study;
- shows the capacity to structure and communicate knowledge in theatre and performance studies in a comprehensible form. The analysis and argument are coherent, of high quality and of high precision.

C (Good): The participant, in written (70%) and oral work (30%)

- identifies and defines different concepts of cultural theory, postcolonial and intercultural theory in theatre and performance studies as well as explains the relationship between theoretical concepts and contemporary and historical theatre and performance practices from several, often well developed, but mainly independent perspectives;
- with a *certain degree of independence* formulates a *relevant* research question departing from a *satisfactory selection* of theoretical and an object of study;
- shows the capacity to structure and communicate knowledge in theatre and performance studies in a comprehensible form. The analysis and argument are of high quality and of high precision.

D (Satisfactory): The participant, in written (70%) and oral work (30%)

- identifies and defines different concepts of cultural theory, postcolonial and intercultural theory in theatre and performance studies as well as explains the relationship between theoretical concepts and contemporary and historical theatre and performance practices in a way that, albeit in-depth and elaborate, is decidedly *one-dimensional*;
- with a *certain degree of independence* formulates an *appropriate* research question departing from a *satisfactory selection* of theoretical concepts and an object of study;
- shows the capacity to structure and communicate knowledge in theatre and performance studies in a comprehensible form. The analysis and argument are satisfactory.

E (Adequate): The participant, in written (70%) and oral work (30%)

- identifies and defines different concepts of cultural theory, postcolonial and intercultural theory in theatre and performance studies as well as explains the relationship between theoretical concepts and contemporary and historical theatre and performance practices from in a way that is decidedly *one-dimensional*;
- formulates an *appropriate* research question departing from a *satisfactory selection* of theoretical concepts and an object of study;
- shows the capacity to structure and communicate knowledge in theatre and performance studies in a pre-given form. The analysis and argument are adequate.

Fx (Insufficient): The participant's knowledge, skills and abilities display minor flaws, overall or in significant parts, but is given the opportunity to, within one week after instructions from examiner, issue a supplement to a maximum grade E.

F (Fail): The participant's knowledge, skills and abilities display minor flaws, overall or in significant parts.

Students with grade F are entitled to take two further examinations to achieve at least grade E. A participant who receives grade Fx or F twice by the same examiner, has the right to request to its text evaluated by another examiner. The request hereof should be made to the Director of Studies (*studierektor*). Students may request the test to be offered up to three semesters after it was last offered.

Grades A and B are only awarded if all of the assignments, including potential make up assignments, have been completed by the assigned deadline.

Required readings

Some articles are made available as reference copies outside of room 258. Some articles can be accessed on the Mondo course site (www.mondo.su.se). The majority of the readings are essays or book chapters which students can access and retrieve electronically via the Stockholm University Library.

E-journals

- Go to the website of the university library ([www. http://su.se/english/library/](http://su.se/english/library/))
- Click on 'E-journals A-Z';
- In the search engine, enter the title of the publication that you are looking for (for example *Theatre Journal*) and press 'enter';
- The displayed list of results offers you a number of options or databases to choose from (e.g. JSTOR, Project Muse Standard Collection, EBSCO, Literature Resource Centre, Cambridge Journals Online etc.). Check which timeframes the different databases cover to pick the most relevant for your search and click on it;
- The next page will ask you to sign in with your username and password. Once you have signed in, you will be able to access back issues by year, volume and number to locate and retrieve the article you are looking for.

E-books

- Go to the website of the university library ([www. http://su.se/english/library/](http://su.se/english/library/))
- In the search engine, enter (parts of) the title of the book and/or author that you are looking for (for example Taylor Archive Repertoire) and press 'enter';
- The displayed list of results from the national library server Libris tells you whether the book is available as an electronic resource. Click on the link, scroll down on the next page and click on the hyperlink that says 'läs hela' (transl.: read entire book).
- The next page will ask you to sign in with your username and password. Once you have signed in, you will be able to access the e-book and retrieve selected pages or chapters as .pdf files.

Literature & schedule

Session 1: Introduction to postcolonial theory and intercultural performance

(Wednesday, 5 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

Gilbert, Helen & Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, London:

Routledge, 1996 (excerpts: “Introduction: Reacting to Empire”, pp. 1-14) (on Mondo)

Loomba, Ania, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London & New York: Routledge, 2005 (“Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies”, pp. 7-22) (e-book)

Please observe: Registered students are expected to have prepared the readings for the first seminar.

Session 2: The Couple in the Cage

(Thursday, 6 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

Fusco, Coco, “The Other History of Intercultural Performance”, *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 38, no. 1 (1994): 143-167 (e-journal)

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara, “The Ethnographic Burlesque”, *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1998): 175-180 (e-journal)

Taylor, Diana, “A Savage Performance: Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco’s ‘Couple in the Cage’”, *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1998): 160-175 (e-journal)

Fusco, Coco, “Still in the cage: Thoughts on ‘Two undiscovered Amerindians’, 20 years later”, *BlouinArtInfo*, 22 February 2012, <http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/760842/still-in-the-cage-thoughts-on-two-undiscovered-amerindians-20-years-later>

Student group presentations on the compulsory readings.

Session 3: Postcolonial feminist theory

(Monday, 10 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”, *boundary 2*, vol. 12/13, nos 12.3-13.1 (1984): 333-358 (e-journal)

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles”, *Signs*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2003): 499-535 (e-journal)

Session 4: Case study: *Venus*

(Wednesday, 12 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

Parks, Suzan-Lori, *Venus*, New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1997.

Students research additional literature on Parks’ play, including reviews and visual material on selected productions, which they present in class.

Session 5: Circum-Atlantic performance

(Monday, 17 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

Roach, Joseph, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, New York: Columbia University Press (excerpts: "Introduction: History, Memory, and Performance", pp. 1-32) (ref. copy available)

Roach, Joseph, "Mardi Gras Indians and Others: Genealogies of American Performance", *Theatre Journal*, vol. 44, no. 4 (1992): 461-483 (e-journal)

Roach, Joseph, "Slave Spectacles and Tragic Octoroons: A Cultural Genealogy of Antebellum Performance", *Theatre Survey*, vol. 33 (1992): 176-187 (e-journal)

Roach, Joseph, "Carnival and the Law in New Orleans", *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 37, no. 3 (1993): 42-75 (e-journal)

Each student reads the introduction to Roach's book in addition to at least one of the journal articles to present in class.

Session 6: Case study: d'bi.young anitafrika

(Wednesday, 19 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

d'bi.young anitafrika, "r/evolution begins within", *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 150 (2012): 26-29 (e-journal)

d'bi.young anitafrika, "Black Plays Matter: Watah Theatre, Creating Safe Space for Black Artists in These Dangerous Times", *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 165 (2016) 26-31 (e-journal)

Knowles, Ric, "To Be Dub, Female and Black: Towards a Womban-Centred Afro-Caribbean Diasporic Performance Aesthetic in Toronto", *Theatre Research in Canada*, vol. 33, no. 1 (2012): 78-105 (e-journal)

Session 7: Student presentations

(Wednesday, 26 September, 13:00-16:00; room 101)

Students present their ongoing research for the final paper

Wednesday, 3 October: deadline for final essay, to be submitted in paper or via email no later than 5PM. Please observe that only the following file formats will be accepted: .doc; .docx; .pdf.