

**World Theatre**  
**1890–Present**  
THEA 1343/2207  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
10:00–10:50am  
Cathedral of Learning 144

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“When one writes a play, one is no longer alone.”  
— Sholem Asch, *Indecent* by Paula Vogel

### **Course Description**

World Theatre 1890-present is the third in a world theatre history sequence designed to explore the development of dramatic forms, theatre practices, and performance from the fifth century B.C.E. to today. We will investigate a range of performance and theatre: butoh in Japan, absurdism in Europe, political theatre in Africa, contemporary multi-media performance in the Americas, and so on. The course takes as its argument that, like Sholem Asch, no theatre artist is alone in their work. We will look at theatre and performance history, not from the point of view of the “singular genius,” (Brecht, Beckett, Wilson, Fugard, Suzuki, etc.) but from the point of view of the company, community, and genealogy of artistic movements.

In this course, we will discuss histories of theatre and performance (scripts, design, audiences, conventions, cultural functions, etc.) within contexts of social, artistic, economic, and political events, both local and global. I have not designed the course to be exhaustive. Rather, we will examine representative scripts, performances, and case studies in conjunction with broader themes of enquiry from around the world.

We will investigate our material historically as well as historiographically. This means that we will examine our material not only for content, but also for *how* it conveys that content. In our exploration of how theatre history is crafted, we will develop critical historical skills and tools, including how to ask historical questions, assess primary sources, critique narratives, and clearly communicate our historiographical ideas and arguments.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

- Students will learn and apply the compendium of skills required of historical analysis including: archival and ethnographic research methods; the particular challenges of the archive, its blind spots and inaccuracies; the construction of arguments based on evidentiary records, and the ways in which such records may result in plausible, possible, and probable narratives. Students will carry out critiques as well as original historical research.

- Students learn about and reflect upon representative theatre and performance practices, aesthetics, cultural contexts and histories in (but not limited to) the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and Indigenous Communities in the Americas, in order to develop understandings of cultures outside of North America and Western Europe. Students develop understandings of cultures separate from their own through reading, research, discussion, and media.
- Students will identify and discuss the challenges of theatre and performance history in the post-1890 period, including but not limited to the textual bias of western history and historiography; the tensions between anthropology, performance studies, and theatre history; the possible recuperative projects of bodies “lost,” occluded, and absented from the archive.
- Students will use performance and theatre historiographical methods to analyze, apprehend and discuss structural inequities across one or more areas of difference. Areas may include race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, ability, and economics.

## Required Materials

### Textbook

*Theatre Histories*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, ed. Bruce McConachie et. al. Routledge, 2016.

ISBN: 9780415837965

\*\*\*NOTE: You must have the third edition of this textbook.\*\*\*

### Plays

*A Tempest*, Aime Cesaire

*Sweat*, Lynn Nottage

*Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett

*Woza Albert!*, Mbogeni Ngema and Percy Mtwa

[M. Butterfly by David Henry Hwang, audio recording](#) (available through Audible)

## Assignments and Grading

### Assignment Breakdown

Participation	100 points
Scheduled Quizzes	150 points total (30 points/ea.)
This Decade in Theatre History	200 points
Forgotten Histories	175 points
Theatre Company Formation	200 points
Manifesto	175 points
1000 points total	

### Grade Scale

A+ = 980–1000	B+ = 870–899	C+ = 760–799	D+ = 670–699
A = 930–979	B = 830–869	C = 730–759	D = 630–669
A– = 900–929	B– = 800–829	C– = 700–729	D– = 600–629
			F = 599 and below

## Descriptions of Major Assignments

### Participation, 100 points (10%)

Students will attend class, complete all readings on the day assigned, and participate regularly in discussions and in-class projects. By “participate,” I mean that students will offer comments and questions about the readings, respectfully engage in class discussion with colleagues, while actively listening to instructors and peers. I will assess participation through attendance and class discussion, but in-class assignments may also contribute to the grade. Texting in class and using a laptop or mobile device for non-class related work will affect your participation grade negatively. See also: attendance policy.

\*\*\**Please note:* if it becomes apparent that students are not completing the reading in order to thoughtfully engage in class discussion, I reserve the right to assign pop quizzes. Pop quiz grades will factor in to students’ participation grade. There are no opportunities to make up pop quizzes outside of class.\*\*\*

### Scheduled Quizzes, 150 points total/30 points each, lowest grade dropped (15%)

Closed book and closed note, in-class quizzes will cover reading and/or lecture material. I highly recommended that you take notes in class and on the readings to prepare for each quiz. Format may vary between multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, etc.

\*\*\**Please note:* there are no opportunities to make up quizzes. Please plan accordingly.\*\*\*

## Theatre History Research Project Parts One, Two, Three, and Four

### Part One: This Decade in Theatre History, 200 points (20%)

I will assign to you a decade of theatre history from 1890–2010 (if needed, one group will have 2010–present). In groups you will research the “life and times” of this decade, including major theatrical figures, thinkers and events, as well as key social, cultural, scientific, economic, and political contexts. Your group will present orally a key aspect of your findings. In addition, your work will also be compiled into a wiki on CourseWeb and made accessible to your peers.

*More information to come. Grading rubrics will be provided.*

### Part Two: Forgotten Histories, 175 points (17.5%)

Individually, you will write a proposed case study of 1500–2000 words for the fourth edition of your textbook. Imagine that you are vying for a position as a new writer for *Theatre Histories*. You have been asked to pitch a case study for the new edition. In your attempt to impress the editors and convince them to hire you, you will develop an alternate history that adds a significant, yet omitted, narrative and perspective to the textbook. **The case study must come from the same decade you had in Part One.**

*More information to come. Grading rubrics will be provided.*

### Part Three: Theatre Company Formation, Presentation, and Pitch, 200 points (20%)

Your task is to form amongst yourselves a fictional—yet historically informed—theatre company that could viably exist in one of the decades we have researched. A decade will be assigned to you and it may or may not be the same as Part One. During the final week of

class, you will present yourselves to the class to pitch your company's first season to a group of prospective funders/board members. In addition to your presentation, each company should be prepared to answer questions about themselves, their plans, and their life and times. Please consider using visuals, multimedia (if appropriate), visual aids, etc.

*More information to come. Grading rubrics will be provided.*

**Part Four: What is Theatre?: A Manifesto, 175 points (17.5%)**

Your final task is to write a manifesto based on the company you helped found for the company formation project. You must root your manifesto in the research completed over the course of the semester. You should write from the perspective of a member of *your* specific company.

*More information to come. Grading rubrics will be provided.*

**A NOTE ABOUT SUBMITTING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will submit all written assignments as hard copies in class or in Professor/TA mailboxes (as directed), *and* digitally through CourseWeb. If assignments are not submitted through CourseWeb *and* as a hard copy, they will not be graded. If students are submitting a group project, all group member names must appear on the first page of the written assignment.

**All hard copies must be stapled and will not be accepted otherwise.**

**All sources in your papers and bibliography must be cited according to MLA or Chicago guidelines (choose one and be consistent).**

For information on MLA, see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

For information on Chicago, see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

**COURSE CALENDAR**

Subject to change (with notice) based on course developments

TH= *Theatre Histories*

CW=CourseWeb Reading Folders

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>COURSE TOPICS &amp; ACTIVITIES</u></b>	<b><u>DUe</u></b>
<u>Week One</u> January 8	Syllabus and Course Overview	
January 10	What is Historiography?	Postlewait readings (CW) What are primary sources? (CW)
January 12	History and Historiography: The Case of <i>Ubu Roi</i>	<i>Ubu Roi</i> Scene Selections (CW)
<u>Week Two</u> January 15	<b>MLK — No Class</b>  <b><u>UNIT 1</u></b> <b><u>Avant-Garde(s): Theatres of Manifesto</u></b>	
January 17	What is Avant-Garde? Futurism and Dada	TH, 403–417 Futurism readings (CW) Dadaist readings (CW) <b>Recommended for students who have not taken WT2:</b> TH 342–362
January 19	Symbolism and Expressionism	TH: 374–387 Robert Edmond Jones reading (CW)
<u>Week Three</u> January 22	Provincetown Players	TH 387–391 Provincetown Players Readings (CW)
January 24	Biomechanics and Constructivism <b>QUIZ 1</b>	TH 417–424 Meyerhold readings (CW)
	 <b><u>UNIT 2</u></b> <b><u>Modernisms</u></b>	
January 26	What is Modernism? Psychological Realism	TH 437–444; 457–464

<u>Week Four</u>		
January 29	Existentialism and The Theatre of the Absurd	TH 445-457 “The Myth of Sisyphus” (CW) Theatre of the Absurd selections (CW)
January 31	Absurdism, contd.	<i>Waiting for Godot</i> , Beckett
February 2	The Theatre of Cruelty and Balinese Dance	TH: 426; 490–1 Theatre of Cruelty readings (CW)
<u>Week Five</u>		
February 5	Modernist Theatre in Japan	TH 345–347; 455–57 Butoh materials (CW) Takarazuka materials (CW)
	<b><u>UNIT 3</u></b> <b><u>Political Performance:</u></b> <b><u>Theatre and Social Reform</u></b>	
February 7	The WPA & Federal Theatre Project <b>QUIZ 2</b>	Federal Theatre Project readings (CW)
February 9	Epic Theatre	TH 424-425; 428–437; Brecht selections (CW)
<u>Week Six</u>		
February 12	This Decade in Theatre History Presentations	<b>DUE: Complete wiki on CW</b>
February 14	This Decade in Theatre History Presentations	
February 16	This Decade in Theatre History Presentations	
<u>Week Seven</u>		
February 19	Theatre of the Oppressed and Anti-Colonial Performance: Theatre for Social Change	TH 465–471; 487–490; 542–547 Boal readings (CW)
February 21	South African Theatre of the Apartheid <b>QUIZ 3</b>	TH 480–486 <i>Wozza Albert!</i> , Mtwa and Ngema

<u>Week Seven, contd.</u>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>UNIT 4</u></b>  <b><u>U.S. Regional Theatres and Movements</u></b></p>	
February 23	Black Theatre Movement	Free Southern Theatre reading (CW) <i>The Dutchman</i> , Baraka (CW, online via PittCat) <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i> , Adrienne Kennedy (CW, online via PittCat)
<u>Week Eight</u> February 26	Black Theatre Movement, contd.	TH 472–475; 508–510 <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> , Wilson (CW, online via PittCat)
February 28	El Teatro Campesino and Latinx Theatre	El Teatro reading (CW) Noe Montez, “Visions and Voices” (CW) <b>DUE: Forgotten Histories Case Study</b>
March 2	East-West Players	EWP and Asian American Theatre readings (CW)
<u>Week Nine</u> <b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	Be careful Have fun
<u>Week Ten</u> March 12	Split Britches	Split Britches reading (CW)
March 14	Indigenous Theatre in the U.S.	Londré reading (CW) <i>Body Indian</i> , Geiogamah
March 16	Indigenous Theatre in the U.S., contd.	<i>Sun, Moon, Feather</i> , Spiderwoman Theatre, (CW) <i>Indian Radio Days</i> (CW)
<u>Week Eleven</u> March 19	<b>QUIZ 4</b>	

<u><b>UNIT 5</b></u> <u><b>Adaptation and Appropriation in the Age of Globalization</b></u>		
March 21	Global and Post-Colonial Shakespeare	Madeline Sayet on Theatre History podcast (CW); <i>A Tempest</i> , Cesaire
March 23	Contemporary Performance in South Korea	South Korean Performance Materials (CW)
<u>Week Twelve</u>		
March 26	<i>Madame Butterfly</i> and <i>M. Butterfly</i>	TH 337–41; Said and Orientalism (CW); <i>M. Butterfly</i> audio recording (CW)
<u><b>UNIT 6</b></u> <u><b>Contemporary/Popular American Theatre</b></u>		
March 28	Queer Theatre in Late 20 <sup>th</sup> Century: Addressing the AIDS Crisis <b>QUIZ 5</b>	<i>Angels in America</i> and <i>The Normal Heart</i> readings (CW) Fisher reading (CW)
March 30	Musical Theatre: The Golden Age and Today/Trends in Contemporary Musical Theatre	Bush readings (CW) <i>Oklahoma!</i> Clips (CW)
<u>Week Thirteen</u>		
April 2	The Great White Way and the Disneyfication of Broadway	TH: 519–522 Broadway readings (CW)
April 4	The Great White Way in Color	TH 573–582 Broadway readings (CW) Stacy Wolf Interview on Howround's Theatre History Podcast (CW)
April 6	Immersive Theatre	TH 566–73 Worthen reading (CW)

<u>Week Fourteen</u>		
April 9	The Critic in the Contemporary American Theatre: <i>Sweat</i>	<i>Sweat</i> , Nottage <i>Sweat</i> readings (CW)
April 11	The Critic in the Contemporary American Theatre: <i>Indecent</i>	<i>Pass Over</i> by Antoinette Nwando at Steppenwolf videos
April 13	<b>QUIZ 6</b> Group Work Day	Paula Vogel interview, On TAP podcast (CW)  <b>Practice presentations with your groups</b>
<u>Week Fifteen</u>		
April 16	<b>Company Presentations</b>	
April 18	<b>Company Presentations</b>	
April 20	<b>Company Presentations</b>	<b>Graduate Students' final research paper DUE at 5pm</b>
<u>Week Sixteen</u>		
April 25		<b>Manifestos DUE to CW and in hard copy by noon on 4/25/18</b>

### Course Policies and University Resources

#### Attendance and Late Arrival Policy

This class meets three times a week. As a result, each student will receive three “gimme” absences—whether you’re sick, need to leave town, or need a mental health day, that’s fine. Everyone is entitled to three unexcused absences, which is the equivalent to missing an entire week of class. However, after your third absence, each additional absence will come at the penalty of a 1/3 reduction of the final letter grade. For example, if at the end of the semester, you have an A– but also have 6 absences, your final letter grade will be a B–. Use your absences wisely.

**Students who miss 15 sessions (the equivalent of 5 weeks of class) will automatically fail the course.** Even if you have an A+ in the course, excessive absences will cause you to receive a failing grade.

This is a short class—only 50 minutes per meeting. As a result, three late arrivals or early departures will equal one absence. Please be on time and ready to begin class promptly at the beginning of the scheduled class time, and plan to be here for the entire class period. If you have questions or concerns about this, do not hesitate to contact me.

#### Academic Integrity

“Students and faculty are expected to familiarize themselves with the published rules and regulations governing academic integrity, a term meaning the ethical standards of integrity by which each student and faculty member is expected to operate. As members of a community of learners, all students and instructors are expected to adhere to these behavioral, academic, and ethical standards of the University community and of their field of study. The Academic Integrity Code sets the standards for protocol regarding issues such as how to handle cheating or plagiarizing.”  
(<http://www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate/expectations/handbook/academic-standards.html#ac>. August 9, 2010).

Please see <http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html> for further information. If you are at all in doubt as to what is or is not an infraction of academic integrity, please do not hesitate to request a meeting with me for clarification.

#### Academic integrity and plagiarism

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the assignment will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to: [www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html](http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html).

Violation of the Academic Integrity Code requires the instructor to submit an Academic Integrity Violation Report to the Dean’s Office.

#### Disability Resources and 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 Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>.

#### Students with Disabilities

Please let me know as soon as possible if you require particular accommodations so that I may prepare to meet them to the best of my ability, in co-ordination with DRS.

<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>

#### Non-discrimination policy

As an educational institution and as an employer, Pitt values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit <http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy07-01-03web.pdf>

#### Inclusivity and Diversity

An important aim of this course is to promote an inclusive learning community that encourages the dynamic, open exchange of ideas and affirms the diversity and dignity of participants and

perspectives within a mutually respectful environment. We will engage with topics and theories that may challenge your assumptions about the world, but will do so in a way that values diverse perspectives and experiences and encourages productive reflection and interaction. I expect that students will voice their opinions and arguments in a respectful manner. If there are aspects of this class that produce barriers to your inclusion from course content or discussion, please contact me. I'm happy to talk.

#### Gender Inclusivity

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to use a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. If you feel comfortable, please feel free to privately discuss your preferred pronouns, and correct me if I misgender you. I will not take any offense if you correct me; rather, I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to help you feel comfortable in class. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

#### Classroom recording policy

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

#### Course Communication

I will regularly share course updates, changes and materials with you via your Pitt email. Email is the best way to reach me. I will respond as soon as I am able.

#### E-mail policy

Each student is issued a University e-mail address ([username@pitt.edu](mailto:username@pitt.edu)) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

#### Cell phone and laptop policy

All cell phones and other electronic communication devices are to be turned to the off setting during class. Laptops are to be used for note-taking and accessing course materials only. If you have an emergency for which you need to have immediate access to your phone, please let me know.

#### Content warning and class climate

Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional

responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

#### Sexual misconduct, required reporting, and Title IX

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware: A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

\* Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

\* SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0>

Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) is an off-campus resource: [paar.net](http://paar.net).

24 hour free confidential helpline: 1-866- END-RAPE (1-866-363-7273)

#### Additional University Resources

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact Student Affairs for support.

Please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess. Please note there is a student pantry: The Pitt Pantry

<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/pittserves/sustain/pantry/> located at Bellefield Presbyterian Church, 4001 Fifth Avenue.

College places many demands on students. The university offers resources and support. I offer a few here, but please contact me, if you are comfortable, so that I may provide additional information that I may have.

*Stress Free Zone*

<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/shs/stressfree/>  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the WPU

*Office of Disability Services and Resources*

<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>

140 WPU

*Office of International Services*

<https://ois.pitt.edu>

708 WPU

*Student Health Services*

<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/shs/>

Nordenberg Hall - Wellness Center

119 University Place