

## **ARTH/THE320 Performing (in) Athens: Exploring the City through Theatre and Performance Fall2019**

**Dr. Athena Stourna**

### **Class Meetings:**

DAY M/W

HOURS 11:00-12:35

### **Course Description**

Athens is considered one of the most vibrant theatre scenes in Europe. We will focus on current practices in theatre and performance mainly in Greece, but also in Europe and the United States. We will undertake a critical, historical and creative overview of theatre and performance making in periods of crisis, in Europe and the United States, and examine how contemporary Greek artists address issues such as: theatre and society, the human body/the body politic, and the stage and the city. We will also perform a slight backtrack into the ancient past and the beginnings of theatre in its birthplace. The course will include visits to different theatres and other performance spaces: a theatre in a train, a 19<sup>th</sup> century proscenium theatre, underground performance spaces, together with backstage tours and talks with artists.

This course is for students in the Arts and Humanities and anyone interested in theatre and performance.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Explore, compare and contrast different cultures and artistic movements through the analysis of historical and contemporary practices in theatre and performance;
- 2) Reflect on the multidisciplinary applications of theatre and performance within an international and transhistorical context;
- 3) Analyze theatre and performance practice in a given environment;
- 4) Evaluate key concepts and movements in Theatre and Performance History and Theory.

### **Course Requirements**

- Final exam 20%
- Participation 30%
- Reaction paper/Performance criticism (2 papers, 800 words each) 20%
- Research Paper (1,500 words and video) 30%

## Assignments

- **Reaction paper/Performance criticism (2 papers, 800 words each)**

In addition to our regular classroom activities, you are required to attend three productions (theatre/ballet/opera) and to write a critical response for the two of them.

## RUBRIC

1. **Organization.** Your paper has a clear thesis (focus) and point of view. (15)
2. **Clarity.** Your writing is clear and engages the reader. (10)
3. **Analysis.** You are free to focus on whichever aspect of the production you choose. Try to include the artistic merits/shortcomings of the show itself and to evaluate the whole experience of attending a live performance, both inside and outside of the theatre building. (25)
4. **Examples.** Make sure to use clear examples. (10)
5. **Grammar and syntax.** Proofread your paper and make sure there are no typing, grammar and syntax errors. (15)
6. **Overall.** (25) The paper should be written with a point-of-view and a creative critical thinking that engages the reader.

**Total points.** (100)

- **Research Paper (1,500 words and video) 30%**

Your research paper will be practice-based. You will be asked to produce a short performance that will be captured on video. Your research paper will accompany your artistic project and it will outline your creative process and artistic choices, based on the subjects we tackled in class.

## RUBRIC

1. **Artistic project.** Focus on the originality of the subject you choose and be clear about your point of view. Be bold, be unpredictable, be imaginative, be creative! (40)
2. **Written account.**
  - i. **Analysis.** Be analytical in your written account of your artistic choices and process. Be clear and precise about your choice of subject, your artistic choices, and your creative process. (15)
  - ii. **Critical thinking.** Use key concepts, theoretical readings and artistic methods taught in class and refer to them in your written account. Include a bibliography. (15)
4. **Overall.** Engage your viewer/reader in new, unexpected and original approaches in both your artistic product and in your critical response to it. (30)

**Total points.** (100)

- **Final exam (20%)**

Your final exam will have the form of an essay.

**Class Participation:** Your attendance and in class writing and analysis is vitally important to your success in this course.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to report for classes promptly. CYA regards attendance in class and on-site as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately in the Student Affairs Office

**Policy on Original Work:** Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. (Check Student handbook, pg. 9)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Director of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

## **Books, Course Materials, Moodle**

**Textbooks** Richard Schechner (2013). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London, UK/New York, USA: Routledge

Marvin Carlson (2013). *Performance: a Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, UK; New York, USA: Routledge

## Class Schedule

Class Day	Day/Date	Topic / Readings / Assignments Due
1	09/09	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><i>Description</i> Syllabus and course content presentation. Icebreaker games.</p>
2	09/11	<p><b>Exploring the dynamics of space</b></p> <p><i>Description</i> Outdoor exercises</p>
3	09/16	<p><b>Theatrical Architecture from Greece to Rome-introduction</b></p> <p><i>Description</i> On the occasion of our first theatre outing to the Ancient Roman Odeon of Herodes Atticus, we will study the evolution of theatrical architecture from Greece to Rome and explore the dynamics of performance space.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i> Oscar G. Brockett, Margaret Mitchell, and Linda Hardberger. (2010). "Scenic design in ancient Greek and Roman theatres", in <i>Making the Scene: A History of Stage Design and Technology in Europe and the United States</i>. San Antonio, Tex: Tobin Theatre Arts Fund. pp.</p>
4	09/16	<p><b>Theatre outing (Evening)</b></p> <p><b>Herodian</b> Maurice Béjart Ballets</p> <p><a href="https://www.viva.gr/tickets/dance/odeio-irodou-attikou/bejart-ballet-lausanne/">https://www.viva.gr/tickets/dance/odeio-irodou-attikou/bejart-ballet-lausanne/</a></p>
5	09/23	<p><b>What is Performance? The Fundamentals</b></p> <p><i>Description</i> The emergence of Performance theory and key concepts for understanding performance art. Precursors of performance art in Ancient Greece and the blurring of art and life: Diogenes the cynic's performances.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i> Marvin Carlson (2013). <i>Performance: a Critical Introduction</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, UK; New York, USA: Routledge ("Introduction: What is Performance?", pp. 1-8, "Performance in its Historical Context", pp. 83-101)</p> <p>Richard Schechner (2008). <i>Performance theory</i>, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London, UK: Routledge ("Approaches", pp. 1-25)</p> <p><i>Optional bibliography</i> Jill Dolan (1993). "Geographies of learning: theatre studies, performance, and the 'performative' ". <i>Theatre Journal</i> 45, no. December: 417-41. Mike Huxley and Noel Witts (eds.) (1996). <i>Twentieth Century Performance Reader</i>. New York, USA: Routledge.</p>

Thomas McEvilley (1983). "Diogenes of Sinope (c. 410-320B.C.): Selected Performance Pieces", *Artforum*, 21 (March 1983): 58-59.

Richard Schechner (2013). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London, UK; New York, USA: Routledge

Phillip Zarrilli (1986). "Toward a definition of Performance Studies: part I". *Theatre Journal* 38, no. 3: 372-76.

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09/25

## **Pre-performance art: the historical Avant-garde**

### *Description*

The emergence of the avant-garde movements in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first seeds for the emergence of performance art. *King Ubu* by Alfred Jarry and the quest for shocking the audience. Jarry and his influence on Futurism, Dada and other movements. The legacy of the historical avant-garde. Study of Jarry's *King Ubu*.

### *Required reading*

Christopher Innes (1996). *Avant Garde Theatre 1892-1992*. London, UK: Routledge ("Symbolism and Alfred Jarry", pp.19-28)

Alfred Jarry (1997). *King Ubu*. tr. Kenneth McLeish. London, UK: Nick Hern Books (read the whole play)

### *Optional bibliography*

Robert Hughes (1991). *The Shock of the New*. London, UK: Thames and Hudson (Chapter 1. "The Mechanical Paradise")

Roselee Goldberg (2001). *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*. London, UK: Thames and Hudson ("Futurism", pp. 11-31)

## **Preparation for student performances**

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09/30

## **Italian Futurism and Dada performance in context**

### *Required reading*

Excerpts from Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Futurist Manifesto" in Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (2007). *Critical Writings. New Edition*. Günter Berghaus (ed.), tr. Doug Thompson. New York, USA: Farrar, Straus and Giroux ("Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights: The Pleasures of Being Booed", p. 181-184, "The Variety Theater", pp. 185-192, "A Futurist Theater of Essential Beauty", pp. 200-207.

### *Optional bibliography*

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (2014). *The Futurist Cookbook*. Lesley Chamberlain (ed.), Tr. Suzanne Brill. London, UK: Penguin Classic.

Hans Richter (1965). *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, New York, USA: McGraw-Hill)

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10/02

## **Antonin Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty**

### *Description*

Artaud's quest for a Total Theatre: dreams, archetypes, the irrational and the destruction of language; extreme states of passion, experienced by both actors and the audience. Artaud's influence on experimental theatre and performance in the 1960s.

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*Required reading*

Antonin Artaud (1988). *Selected Writings*. Edited and introduced by Susan Sontag. Tr. Helen Weaver. New York, USA: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux ("The Theatre of Cruelty: First Manifesto", pp. 242-251)

Christopher Innes (1992). "Antonin Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty" in *Avant-Garde Theatre 1892-1992*. London: Routledge (pp. 59-77)

*Optional bibliography*

Susan Sontag (1988). "Introduction" in Antonin Artaud (1988). *Selected Writings*. Edited and introduced by Susan Sontag. Tr. Helen Weaver. New York, USA: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux (pp. xvii-lix)

Stephen Barber (2013). *The Anatomy of Cruelty: Antonin Artaud: Life And Works*. London, UK: Sun Vision Press

Stephen Barber (1993). *Antonin Artaud*. London, UK: Faber and Faber

Jacques Derrida (1978). *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press

Claude Schumacher (2001). *Artaud on Theatre*. London, UK: Methuen Publishing LTD

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**Student performances (*King Ubu* and *Futuristic plays*)**

10/07

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10

**Performance and Ritual**

10/09

Ritual as the basic element of performance. Performative rituals in Ancient Greece: festivals, feasts, religious mysteries, and symposia.

*Required reading*

Richard Schechner (1993). *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance*. New York, USA: Routledge ("Introduction: Jayaganesh and the avant-garde", pp. 1-23).

*Optional bibliography*

Erika Fischer-Lichte (2014). *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*. London, UK and New York, USA: Routledge.

Oliver Pils (2011). "The Performative Aspect of Greek Ritual: The Case of the Athenian Oschophoria", in: M. Haysom – J. Wallensten (eds.), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece. Papers presented at a Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 17–19 April 2008, ActaAth 8°*, 21: 151–167.

Richard Schechner (1985). *Between Theatre and Anthropology*. Philadelphia, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press ("Points of Contact Between Anthropological and Theatrical Thought", pp. 3-34).

Victor Turner (1969). *The Ritual Process*. Chicago, USA: Aldine ("Liminality and Communitas", pp. 94-130)

11 10/11	<b>Performance and Ritual – The Greek <i>Symposion</i> as a Performative Event</b>  <i>Required reading</i> Oswyn Murray (ed.) 1990. <i>Symptotica: A Symposium on the Symposium</i> , Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press. ("Symptotic History", pp. 3-13)
12 10/13	<b>Theatre outing (evening)</b> <b>Skrow Theatre</b>  <a href="https://www.skrowtheater.com/i-arxi-toy-arximidi">https://www.skrowtheater.com/i-arxi-toy-arximidi</a>
13 10/16	<b>The Body in Performance</b>  <i>Description</i> The material, visceral and tactile body in performance. Unfolding and staging the body: social markings, physical parts and the body as site.  <i>Required reading</i> Patrick Campbell (ed.) (2014). <i>The Body in Performance</i> . London, UK and New York, USA: Routledge Falmer, ("Minding the Matter of Representation: Staging the Body (Politic)", pp. 5-22)  <i>Optional bibliography</i> André Lepecki (ed.) (2004). <i>Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory</i> . Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.  André Lepecki (2000). "The body in difference". <i>Fama</i> 1, no. 1: 6-13.  Rebecca Schneider (1997). <i>The Explicit Body in Performance</i> . London, UK; New York, USA: Routledge.
14 10/21	<b>The senses in Performance</b>  <i>Required Reading</i> Sally Banes and André Lepecki (2007). <i>The Senses in Performance</i> . New York, USA: Routledge. ("Introduction", pp. 1-7)  <b>Performance criticism paper due (Skrow theatre)</b>
15 10/23	<b>Performing Processions: encounters between past and present</b>  <i>Description</i> A short history on processions in Greek culture: Ancient Greek religious festivals and mysteries, Christian Orthodox religious processions, history of military and students parades in European and Greek Modern History.  <i>Required Reading</i> David Wiles (2003). <i>A Short History of Western Performance Space</i> . Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press ("Processional space", pp. 62-71).  <i>Optional bibliography</i>

Carl Kerenyi (1991) *Eleusis. Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*. Tr. Ralph Manheim. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.

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## Parade as Performance of National Identity

10/28

Sunday morning: Attending the "OXI" parade

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## Performing the everyday

10/30

### Description

Memory, materiality, objects and works of art as Performance, food and drink as performance.

### Required reading

Erwin Goffman (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York, USA: Doubleday ("Introduction", pp. 1-9, "Performances", pp. 10-46)

### Optional bibliography

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995). *The aesthetics of everyday life. Conversations before the end of time*. Suzi Gablik. New York, USA: Thames and Hudson, pp. 410-433.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1999). « Playing to the Senses: Food as a Performance Medium », *Performance Research*, « On cooking», GOUGH R. (ed.): 4.1: 1-30.

Alan Read (1993). *Theatre and Everyday Life*. London, UK: Routledge ("Introduction", pp. 1-20).

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## Theatre outing (Sunday evening)

11/02

Greek National Opera – The Alternative Stage

*Powder Her Face*

<https://www.nationalopera.gr/en/alternative-stage/2019-20/item/2749-powder-her-face>

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## Out in the street: happenings and street art in Athens

11/04

(Heiner Legewie and Georg Eichinger (eds.) (2017). *Artists in Athens – City of Crisis*. Online Exhibition Catalogue. Athens and Berlin.

[https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls\\_uploads/pdfs/sonst\\_publicationen/artists\\_in\\_athens.pdf](https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/sonst_publicationen/artists_in_athens.pdf)

Julia Tulke, "Visual Encounters with Crisis and Austerity: Reflections on the Cultural Politics of Street Art in Contemporary Athens" in Dimitris Tziouvas (ed.) *Greece in Crisis: The Cultural Politics of Austerity*. London, UK: I.B.Tauris)

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## The meaning of space: Site-specificity in theatre and performance

11/18

### Description

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Site-specific theatre/performance, immersive theatre, environmental theatre and promenade theatre. Levels of site-specificity: site-specific, site-generic, site-responsive.

*Required reading*

Anna Birch and Joanne Tompkins (eds.) (2012). *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan ("The 'Place' and Practice of Site-Specific Theatre and Performance", pp. 1-20)

*Optional bibliography*

Ben Kershaw (2000). *Site Specifics: Performance, Place and Documentation*. London, UK: Routledge.

Mike Pearson (2010). *Site Specific Performance*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001). *Theatre / Archaeology*. London, UK: Routledge.

**Performance criticism paper due (Greek National Opera)**

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11/20

**Performance and Archaeology in Greece: A spatio-temporal journey**

*Description*

The use of archaeological sites for the creation of site-specific performances in Greece.

*Required reading*

Yannis Hamilakis and Efthymis Theou (2013). 'Enacting multiple times, reclaiming archaeology', in *Reclaiming Archaeology: Beyond the Tropes of Modernity*, González-Ruibal, A. (ed.), New York, USA: Routledge: 181-194.

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12/02

**Performing Histories: The Documentary theatre in Europe and Greece**

The emergence of Documentary theatre in Europe and Greece, in the 1960s. Precursors, playwrights and theatre directors.

*Required reading*

Timothy Youker (2017). *Documentary Vanguard in Modern Theatre*. New York, USA: Routledge ("Introduction", pp. 1-22).

*Optional Reading*

Alyson Forsyth and Chris Megson (eds.) (2009). *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

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12/04

**Performing Justice: Litigation mania in Athens now and then**

**Visit to the Athens Court of Justice.**

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24 **Aristophanes' *Wasps***

12/09

Reading in class

*Required reading*

David Konstan (1985). "The Politics of Aristophanes' *Wasps*", in *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-2014)*, Vol. 115: pp. 27-46.

View the trailer of the documentary film *Themis* by Marco Gastine:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTYsqncwFxl>

**Research Paper Due**

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25 **Final Exam**

12/11

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26 **Research Paper Feedback**

12/16

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*\*Course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and in keeping up to date with current research. Theatre outings may also be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances which may arise.*