

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Discipline: Drama**

**Fall 2008**

**DRAM 492Z: Global Theatre Literature**

**Upper Division**

**Faculty: Cheri Vasek**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How does theatre literature (the play script) relate to performance style and visual presentation? What is the cultural context of the performance? How does the production express cultural values and contemporary societal concerns? How does theatrical style evolve regionally? Are stories and themes culture-specific, or do we see universal aspects which cross cultural barriers?

Working with a core reading list of 6 to 8 plays representing the most respected international theatre literature, we will consider the interrelationship of theme, visual metaphor and performance approaches in the theatrical heritage of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Teams of students will produce staged readings of scenes from the plays we study. These presentations will investigate acting, dance and puppetry styles from many global theatrical traditions. Through this experiential rubric, we will investigate movement and vocal characteristics practiced in various traditional and contemporary theatrical forms from the countries we visit.

Associated with this course are a series of guided theatre experiences in many of our ports of call throughout the semester.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Acquire an awareness of the theatrical expression within a social and cultural matrix
- Acquire an awareness of and practice various performance techniques
- Acquire an awareness of rehearsal process as a journey of discovery in unlocking the theatrical text

### **ANTICIPATED STUDENT OUTCOMES**

- Read several plays representing the theatrical literature of 3 continents
- Discuss theme, story, character, performance style and staging
- Working as part of a team, rehearse and present scenes from those plays
- Practice several acting and dance movement techniques from the performance tradition of 3 continents
- Practice puppet and mask performance technique
- Keep a rehearsal journal

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Class	Topic	Preparation / Reading	Related Lab Activity / Project
1	Reading plays – content reveals culture		
2	Derek Walcott – Dream on Monkey Mountain	Read play prior to class period.	Technique lab
3	Derek Walcott – Dream on Monkey Mountain		
Salvador Brazil – 5 days – September 7 to 11, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
4	Wole Soyinka – Death and the King’s Horseman	Read play prior to class period.	Technique lab
5	Wole Soyinka – Death and the King’s Horseman		<b>DUE: reflection paper (1-3 pages) on Brazilian - Carribbean theatre topic</b>
6	Wole Soyinka – Death and the King’s Horseman		Technique lab
Walvis Bay, Namibia – 5 days – September 19 to 23, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
7	Athol Fugard - Sorrows and Rejoicings	Read play prior to class period.	
Cape Town, South Africa – 7 days – September 26 to October 2, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
8	Present African Theatre scenes		Technique lab
9	Sudraka / Sharma – The Little Clay Cart	Read play prior to class period.	<b>DUE: reflection paper (1-3 pages) on African theatre topic</b>
10	Sudraka / Sharma – The Little Clay Cart		Technique lab
11	Girish Karnad – Naga-Mandala	Read play prior to class period.	
12	Girish Karnad – Naga-Mandala		Technique lab
Chennai, India – 5 days – October 14 to 18, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
13	Brandon - The Reincarnation of Rama	Read play prior to class period.	Present Indian Theatre scenes
14	Brandon - The Reincarnation of Rama		Technique lab

Penang, Malaysia – 5 days – October 22 to 26, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
Wayang kulit, Bangsawan, Makyong or Dondang Sayang			
15	Present Southeast Asian puppetry scenes		<b>DUE: reflection paper (1-3 pages) on Indian or Malaysian theatre topic</b>
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam – 5 days – October 30 to November 3, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
Vietnamese Water Puppets			
16	Liu Jung-En Yuan Plays (select one)	Read play prior to class period.	Technique lab
Hong Kong to Shanghai, China – November 6 to 11, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
Shanghai School of Traditional Operas			
17	Liu Jung-En Yuan Plays (select one)	Read play prior to class period.	<b>DUE: reflection paper (1-3 pages) on Chinese or Vietnamese theatre topic</b>
Kobe to Yokohama, Japan – 4 days – November 14 to 18, 2008			
Port field trip activity			
Noh and Kyogen			
18	Noh scenes	Read play prior to class period.	Technique lab
19	Noh scenes		<b>DUE: reflection paper (1-3 pages) on Japanese theatre topic</b>
20	Noh scenes		Technique lab
Honolulu, Hawaii – one day – November 27, 2008			
21	Noh scenes		
22	Noh scenes		Present Japanese Theatre scenes (evening public presentation?)
23	Noh scenes		Present Japanese Theatre scenes (evening public presentation?)

<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Test</b> – Theme, story, character and style in Global Theatre – short essays		<b>DUE: Rehearsal journal / Noh scenes</b>
			Rehearsal journal returned

NOTE: There are 5 due dates for reflection papers listed on this schedule. **Only 3 papers are required.** You may select which dates / topics you wish to write on. And, extra credit (for an additional paper beyond the required 3) is always an option.

### FIELD COMPONENT

Each student is required to complete THREE practica (either Faculty Directed or Independent). At least TWO of these should be faculty-directed field trips led by me (see list below). You are required to participate in one of the FDPs under my direction in Chennai, Penang, Ho Chi Minh City or Kobe (and are encouraged to choose two from among this set), since they are central to the material covered in this class. The third practica can be an Independent Practicum developed as part of a regularly offered SAS trip, or it may stand alone. If an Independent Practicum is selected, then the student must meet with the instructor prior to arriving in the port-of-call to discuss his or her approach and objectives.

#### Reflection paper

After each practicum experience, the student is required to submit a reflection paper of 2 – 3 pages in length. Reflection papers may address one or more of these questions:

How do the visual components (costumes, scenery, props, makeup, masks) of this theatre/dance form help to convey story, cultural context and religious beliefs?

How is movement used in this theatre/dance form? How is the performer’s physical training reflected in the performance? How does the manner in which the performer inhabits his/her body compare to what you are familiar with in American/European performance traditions? (Discuss posture, stance, dexterity, movement symbols, pacing, etc.)

Consider character within the story being told. Can you identify recognizable character types? Compare/contrast with the American/European performance traditions with which you are familiar. What aspects of character expression are universal (across cultures)?

#### SUGGESTED PRACTICA:

- SOUTH AFRICA: Artscape Theatre Tour (FDP)
- INDIA: Theru Koothu Theater Performance (FDP)
- MALAYSIA: Mak Yong Performance (FDP)
- VIET NAM: Water Puppet Performance (FDP)
- HONG KONG: Heritage Museum & Black Box Theater (IND)
- JAPAN: Bunraku Theater (FDP); Kabuki Theatre (IND)

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

The student's growth relative to the course objectives will be assessed on the following:

One rehearsal journal (process / self-assessment component)

Two sequential exams (factual component)

Three field experience reflection papers (synthesis component)

Four performance scenes (lab component)

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Derek Walcott

Dream on Monkey Mountain

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

ISBN-10: 0374508607

ISBN-13: 978-0374508609

Cost: \$ 17.00; Used: \$ 4.50

Wole Soyinka

Death and the King's Horseman

W.W. Norton and Company

ISBN: 0-393-32299-8

Cost: \$ 12.69

Athol Fugard

Sorrows and Rejoicings

Theatre Communications Group

ISBN-10: 1559362081

ISBN-13: 978-1559362085

Cost: \$ 11.95; Used: \$ 5.98

Sudraka (adapted by A.L. Basham; Edited by Arvind Sharma)

The Little Clay Cart

State University of New York Press

ISBN:0-7914-1726-3

Cost: \$ 21.95; Used: \$ 6.37

Girish Karnad

Naga-Mandala, Play with a Cobra

Oxford University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, paperback

ISBN-10: 0195626222

ISBN-13: 978-0195626223

Cost: \$ 6.95; Used \$ 1.98

James R Brandon  
On Thrones of Gold: Three Javanese Shadow Plays  
(We will read The Reincarnation of Rama and, if time allows,  
Irawan's Wedding)  
University of Hawaii Press  
ISBN: 0-8248-1425-8  
ISBN-13: 978-0824814250  
Cost: \$ 28.00; Used \$ 6.00

Liu Jung-En  
Six Yuan Plays  
Penguin Classics  
ISBN-10: 0140442626  
ISBN-13: 978-0140442625  
Cost: \$ 17.00; Used: \$ 6.00

Karen Brazell  
Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays  
Columbia University Press  
ISBN-10: 0231108737  
ISBN-13: 978-0231108737  
Cost: \$ 29.50; Used \$ 14.99

Arthur Waley  
The No Plays of Japan, An Anthology  
Forgotten Books  
ISBN-10: 1605061344  
ISBN-13: 978-1605061344  
Cost: \$ 10.45