

ITHACA COLLEGE
DRAMA AND THE LONDON THEATRE
Spring Semester 2007 **Dr. Jinnie Schiele**
Wednesday 1.45 pm

CLASS SCHEDULE

- Jan 17** Introduction to the course, its methods and its aims. Questions about the nature of theatre criticism will be raised and a discussion of what makes a good review will follow. There will be an introduction to the work of Frank McGuinness.
- Jan 24** Discussion of *There Came a Gypsy Riding*. Introduction to *Ghosts* and nineteenth century naturalism.
- Jan 31** Discussion of *Ghosts*. Introduction to *Richard III* and *The Man of Mode*.
- Feb 07** Discussion of *Richard III* and *The Man of Mode*. Introduction to *Ramayana*.
- Feb 14** Discussion of *Ramayana*. Introduction to *Coram Boy*.
- Feb 21** Discussion of *Coram Boy*. Introduction to the Tricycle Theatre.
- Feb 28** Discussion of *The War Next Door*. Introduction to the work of Martin Crimp.
- Mar 07** **BREAK**
- Mar 14** Discussion of *Attempts on Her Life*.
- Mar 21** NT backstage tour 5.30 pm.
- Mar 28** **TBC**
- Apr 04** Discussion of the Brecht double bill.
- Apr 11** Workshop at the Globe 2.00 pm
- Apr 18** *Cabaret* **TBC**. Introduction to the Hampstead theatre.
- Apr 25** Discussion of *Kindertransport*.
- May 02** **FINAL CLASS**

PLAY DIARY 1st Half:

Mon 22 Jan	THERE CAME A GYPSY RIDING, by Frank McGuinness, Almeida, 7.30 pm.
Tue 30 Jan	GHOSTS, by Henrik Ibsen, Gate theatre, 7.30 pm.
Fri 02 Feb	RICHARD III, by William Shakespeare, Stratford-upon-Avon, 7.30.
Mon 05 Feb	THE MAN OF MODE, by George Etherege, NT Olivier, 7.30 pm.
Mon 12 Feb	RAMAYANA, by David Farr, Lyric Hammersmith 7.30 pm. TBC
Tue 20 Feb	CORAM BOY, by Jamila Gavin, adapted for the stage by Helen Edmundson, NT Olivier 7.30 pm.
Mon 26 Feb	THE WAR NEXT DOOR, by Tamsin Oglesby, Tricycle Theatre, 8.00 pm.

2nd Half so far:

Tue 13 Mar	ATTEMPTS ON HER LIFE, by Martin Crimp, NT Lyttleton, 7.30
Tue 03 Apr	THE RESPECTABLE WEDDING and THE JEWISH WIFE, by Bertolt Brecht, Young Vic, 7.45 pm.
Mon 16 Apr	TBC CABARET, by Masteroff, Kander and Ebb, Lyric Shaftesbury, 7.45 pm.
Tue 24 Apr	KINDERTRANSPORT, by Diane Samuels, Hampstead Theatre, 7.30

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 Spring Semester 2007 Dr. Jinnie Schiele
 Thursday 1.45 pm

CLASS SCHEDULE

- Jan 18** Introduction to the course, its methods and its aims. Questions about the nature of theatre criticism will be raised and a discussion of what makes a good review will follow. There will be an introduction to the work of Frank McGuinness. Please have *Ghosts* read by next week.
- Jan 25** Workshop with Lynne from the Gate theatre at 2.00 pm. Discussion of *There Came a Gypsy Riding*.
- Feb 01** Discussion of *Ghosts*. Introduction to *Richard III* and *The Man of Mode*.
- Feb 08** Discussion of *Richard III* and *The Man of Mode*. Introduction to *Ramayana*.
- Feb 15** Discussion of *Ramayana*. Introduction to *Coram Boy*.
- Feb 22** Discussion of *Coram Boy*. Introduction to the Tricycle Theatre.
- Mar 01** Discussion of *The War Next Door*. Introduction to the work of Martin Crimp.
- Mar 08** **BREAK**
- Mar 15** Discussion of *Attempts on Her Life*.
- Mar 22** **NT backstage tour 5.30 pm. TBC**
- Mar 29** **TBC**
- Apr 05** Discussion of the Brecht double bill.
- Apr 12** Workshop at the Globe 2.00 pm.
- Apr 19** *Cabaret* **TBC**. Introduction to the Hampstead theatre.
- Apr 26** Discussion of *Kindertransport*.
- May 03** **FINAL CLASS**

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REVIEWS AND THEIR CONTENTS

1. Remember that you are writing for someone who has not seen the play.
 2. Do not spend long on plot – just give enough to explain what you are talking about, unless you have particular points to make about it. In other words, whet appetites only, do not give away dramatic surprises, but do discuss fully the play's theme.
 3. Try to recreate the experience of your theatre visit – make your readers see the production in their mind's eye.
 4. Do not be afraid of giving details of what the play looked/sounded like.
 5. Concentrate on sets, costumes, lighting, sound effects, and character portrayal, and show how they enhance the play's theme.
 6. Talk about individual or group performances if it is appropriate (make sure you know the actors' names and the characters that they represent).
 7. Give historical or social background to the play if appropriate.
 8. Talk about the kind of stage/theatre used and discuss its appropriateness to the play.
 9. Mention audience response.
 10. Try to evaluate the director's role in the production.
 11. Look at the use of stage space.
 12. I want to see your personality come through your writing and remember that although you must try to give an objective account of the play, I want your views.
 13. Take notes either during or directly after seeing the play. Visual details are easily forgotten.
- These are general rules to help you structure your reviews, and you should follow them judiciously.

REQUIRED READING:

Ghosts, by Henrik Ibsen

Coram Boy, by Jamilla Gavin (novel)

The Man of Mode, by George Etherege.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Syllabus Insert for Faculty

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case by case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment will be provided.

H:/Support Services/Director/Office Related Information/Policies/Syllabus Insert for Faculty

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Course Requirements:

1. A folder of five reviews of approximately 700 words each. The papers must be handed in no later than one week after the class discussion. If you wish to write **one** extra paper to help develop your skills, you must see me first and hand it in the week after class discussion on the production you have chosen.
2. 1 or 2 class presentations (depending on numbers), the preparation of which is to be handed in at the end of the seminar.
3. There will be no mid-term or final exam, but at least two reviews must have been handed in by the last class before the mid-term break.

Late work is not acceptable.

Grading Policy:

Folder of work, 70%; oral contribution 30%.

In this kind of course it is appropriate to take into consideration a student's overall performance – his/her development and willingness to participate fully in the classes. **All classes and play performances must be attended. This includes the Stratford trip for which a charge is made.**

Course Outline:

The aim of the course is to teach students the basic vocabulary of critical terms for thinking about plays in performance. By making students aware of the literary and theatrical forms and conventions available to playwrights and directors, the course should increase the students' awareness of the way in which their own responses may be affected by a play and so enhance their critical sophistication.

In discussions, the students are required to analyse productions seen either on video or in the theatre, and to relate them to specific periods of theatre history where appropriate. As the course focuses on plays which are currently running in repertory in the London theatre, the actual content varies from one semester to another.

During the semester students are introduced to the nature of drama, and comparisons will be drawn between drama and the novel, theatre and film, if appropriate. Different kinds of theatrical institutions will be discussed (e.g. subsidised and non-subsidised theatre, fringe etc.).

Students are asked to examine the function of all the explicitly theatrical elements of staging, e.g. scenery, acting, costume, lighting, music and sound effects, in addition to analysing the basic intellectual arguments of the play.

Throughout the semester other concepts of genre and style are specifically discussed. These are dependent upon the repertoire of plays we see.

STAGE SHAPES

The Proscenium Theatre:

This is the traditional type of theatre. The proscenium arch frames the stage in the same way that a painter frames a landscape. The audience members, seated facing the opening, are asked to believe that they are viewing the action of a play through an imaginary fourth wall.

In most proscenium stages there is an apron or forestage that projects out into the audience – some project only a little, others have a more extensive playing space. Some have more forestage than space behind the arch.

The Arena Theatre:

Here the audience surrounds the action. The seats are raked (sloping) down to the acting area – some theatres like the one you will see on our tour of the National, The Olivier, has its seats arranged in a half circle instead of going all the way round. Some of these theatres use the floor and not a raised platform as an acting area. When seats completely surround the stage it is often referred to as theatre-in-the-round even though the shape that is produced is sometimes square or oval.

The Thrust Stage:

Sometimes the playing area is raised above the level of the audience but most often the audience looks down on the action as in an arena theatre. The audience area is three-sided and the actors enter from the back of the stage where there is a wall in the background.

Environmental Theatre:

This is when the whole space (auditorium and acting area) is made part of the stage action, so that it creates the environment for the play.

Black Box Theatre:

This is when flexible staging is used. The theatre has temporary seating which can be arranged in different ways. A conventional end-on stage (as in proscenium theatre) can be used or, for instance, a traverse where the stage stretches right through the middle of the audience.

Most stages follow the patterns of the first three categories or are variations of them.