

## ENG 3913G 550:

Late Twentieth-Century & Contemporary Performance: The Avant-Garde Revisited  
Winter 2018

Tuesdays 6-9pm

Room: W103

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Di Ponio

Office: A306

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30pm and by appointment

E-mail: [adiponi@uwo.ca](mailto:adiponi@uwo.ca)

Feel free to e-mail me with brief questions. Students can expect to receive responses to e-mails within 24-48 hours. Please contact me via e-mail to make an appointment to see me or speak with me outside of regular office hours. If possible, please make an appointment to see me during office hours so that students who wish to see me are able to. During peak times (i.e. before essays submissions and the final exam), additional appointment times outside of regular office hours will be made available to students.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**Antonin Artaud, *La Projection du véritable corps* (1946)

Theater practitioners who have sought to develop a theatrical theory and aesthetic beyond the understanding of their age have often been likened to revolutionaries and even madmen. Antonin Artaud – and his concept of a Theatre of Cruelty – was one such man. He was part of the avant-garde movement, which produced particular aesthetic and philosophical responses to the collapse of a coherent vision of the world post-War and to revolutionary changes in the perception of “otherness”. This course will explore the connections/ similarities between avant-garde works (Dadaist, Surrealist, and Expressionist), and their relevance in late twentieth-century and contemporary performance today, as a means of combating the mechanisms of containment/ repression which transform rationality into monstrous action, resulting in exploitative practices.

With our interpretation of Artaud’s vision in stride – the goal of any production is to actively stimulate the audience via the senses, resulting in not necessarily a pleasurable, but momentous feeling – we will study the theatre of the avant-gardes Alfred Jarry, Antonin Artaud, Djuna Barnes, Maurice Maeterlinck, Samuel Beckett whose work resonates in that of Sarah Kane, Suzan-Lori Parks, Tatsumi Hijikata, The Vienna Action Group, Tony Kushner, dreamthinkspeak, to name but a few. Ultimately, students will be encouraged to examine all manner of performance using anti-structure to communicate with the audience, including plays, dance, music, opera, musical theatre, spoken word, performance art, recitation, mime, puppetry, and happenings.

**PREREQUISITE(S):** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or English 1901E, or permission of the Department.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Read/ Analyze/ View/ Performance avant-garde drama from a socio-cultural perspective, with an emphasis on performance practices
- Analyze critical reception theory informing both performance (motivations, techniques) and audience reception
- Participate in “poor” theatre productions, assuming the various roles therein, to creatively engage with the texts in performance
- Participate in readings and classroom discussion in order to critically examine dramatic texts in a collegial environment
- Attend a professional theatrical performance, an exercise in community-based learning
- Research and engage with scholarly/critical texts
- Incorporate evidence, from both primary and/or theoretical, and secondary texts, in essay writing in support of arguments that logically and persuasively present complex and debatable arguments
- Apply principles of quotation integration using MLA documentation

## DESCRIPTION OF CLASS METHODS

Lecture 40%

Group Discussions 20%

Individual Assignments 20%

In-class tasks 10%

Community-Based Learning 10%

## THE GRAND THEATRE – *A Thousand Splendid Suns* March 27, 2018

Students enrolled in English 3913G are invited to attend a performance of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, a new adaptation by Ursula Rani Sarma of Khaled Hosseini’s 2007 book. As the Performance Analysis assignment (10% – see below) is attached to this performance, it is strongly encouraged that students do their best to attend. Tickets are available at 20% at \$44 and include a special Artist Talk after the show.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Knopf, Robert. *Theatre of the Avant-Garde, 1890-1950: A Critical Anthology*. Yale UP, 2015.

ISBN 9780300206739

Additional plays and critical materials are available online through the library website (i.e. Twentieth Century North American Drama database). Any materials not available via the database will be distributed to students throughout the term electronically through OWL.

## METHOD OF EVALUATION

Performance Analysis: blogpost (500-750 words) 10%

Reflections (3 @ 5%; 500 words each) 15% Passage or performance analyses

Creative Assignment (500 words) or Monologue 5%

Essay (2,000-2,500 words) 25%

Final Class Performance 10%

Final Exam Project 20%

In-class participation 15%

NOTE: In accordance with Department of English standards, students must pass BOTH the term work and the final examination in order to pass the course. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of term mark) automatically fail the course. Assignments must be submitted to our course website for plagiarism checking.

## DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

### **Performance Analysis: blogpost**

We will be attending a performance of The Grand Theatre's production of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* on Tuesday, March 27 at 7:30pm. The purpose of this assignment is to strengthen your critical analysis of drama in performance. Students will compose a short blogpost, due no later than 10 days after the performance. If you're unable to attend the performance, please contact me.

While you will more than likely share whether or not you like the production, I am more interested in your analysis of it. Focus on a few production choices – such as costumes, set design, lighting and sound effects, gestures, staging – you consider important in how the director interpreted the play. In your post, describe the production choices concisely, and then analyze how they shaped a certain interpretation of the action, perhaps in a way you haven't considered, in terms of the tone, characterisations, dramaturgical vision, etc. I would recommend taking notes during the performance. You should also keep the theatre programme that you'll be given when you enter as it will tell you who played which parts, who directed the show, and perhaps also provide some insight into what the company was trying to achieve.

**Reflections:** Students will submit 3 short reflections of no more than 500 words in response to either a theoretical reading, a play text, or a performance. Details to follow.

**Creative Assignment or Monologue:** Students have the option of 1) writing an entirely original short play/scene that shows awareness of some of the critical/theoretical/interpretive concepts discussed in class, or 2) performing a memorized monologue of no longer than 5 minutes in duration.

**Essay:** A formal, extended discussion of at least two of the plays/playwrights we studied throughout the year. The essay should go beyond mere comparison and provide an in-depth discussion of the dramatic forms employed in the genres discussed. One theoretical text studied should inform your comparison of the two play texts or texts in performance. You should focus on articulating a position and its relative meaning. Secondary research is required (at least 3 materials – essays/articles from books/academic journals). MLA citation style is required. Students should send me a short description of their topics for approval. Assignments should be addressed and handed in directly to me. Be sure you keep/make/have a copy for yourself.

Assignment due dates are specified in the lecture and reading schedule below. **Late assignments will incur a late penalty of 2 marks per day**, up to a maximum of one week. After seven days, the assignment will not be accepted and receive a mark of zero. Assignments handed in late should be submitted as an electronic copy only and submitted to the assignments tab on our course website on OWL; these assignments will not be appended with comments. Extensions are never granted the day an assignment is due. Extenuating circumstances will be considered provided students seek academic accommodation if/when necessary; see the Appendix (below).

**Final Class Performance:** In our final class together, students will have the opportunity to perform a selection of scenes from some of the plays studied throughout the term. It will be your job to stage scenes, and take up roles such as actors, director, dramaturge, and designers. Your primary task will be to work together to select a specific approach, and then defend and explore those choices in class and in an artist talk back afterwards. This preliminary thought work is the most important component of the performance. Everyone must contribute behind the scenes in some way: by helping to imagine potential visions, by imagining a design (be prepared to explain and discuss it), or by applying dramaturgical – critical, close-reading – skills to the scenes.

**Final Exam Project:** A take-home project due Thursday, April 19, 2018. Details to follow.

**NOTE.** If students miss class, they are not entitled to Academic Accommodation regarding the Attendance and Participation grade. This particular grade registers only students' presence in class and their participation. If you are absent from class, for whatever reason, your attendance and participation grade will decline. Extenuating circumstances will be considered. Please consult with me.

**Participation:** The participation grade is comprised of two components: students' attendance and their participation in classroom activities, including readings, in-class discussions. Details will be provided in the first week of classes.

#### PLAGIARISM

There is zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course.

Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage, from another author in this case including from course notes, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing in the form of citations. This includes Internet sources. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

#### TECHNOLOGY

While the use of technology is permitted in class, students should use their devices – laptops, tablets, whiteboards, etc. – for classroom-related activities. If the use of technology becomes distracting or disrupts classroom proceedings, the use of devices will be revoked. Kindly be responsible for your use of technology.

#### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

<b>Week 1</b>	Tuesday, January 9 Course Introduction	Readings, objectives, assignments, participation, course text and database The Avant-Garde: Main Aesthetic Movements; Historical Contexts
<b>Week 2</b>	Tuesday, January 16 Pataphysical Theatre	Alfred Jarry, <i>King Ubu</i> (1896); "Theatre Questions" (1897)
<b>Week 3</b>	Tuesday, January 2 Symbolism	Maurice Maeterlinck, <i>Interior</i> (1894); "The Modern Drama" (1904) Optional: Rachilde (Marguerite Eymery), <i>The Crystal Spider</i> (1892) <b>Reflection 1 (5%)</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	Tuesday, January 30 Expressionism	Reinhard Sorge, <i>The Beggar</i> (1912) Djuna Barnes, <i>The Dove</i> (1925) handout
<b>Week 5</b>	Tuesday, February 6 Surrealism	André Breton, "The First Surrealist Manifesto" (1924) Antonin Artaud, <i>The Spurt of Blood</i> (1925); "No More Masterpieces" (1938) Optional: Guillaume Apollinaire, <i>Tiresias's Breasts</i> (1903) <b>Reflection 2 (5%)</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	Tuesday, February 13 Dadaism	Tristan Tzara, <i>The Gas Heart</i> (1920); "Dada Manifesto" (1918)

**No class February 19-23: Reading Week**

<b>Week 7</b>	Tuesday, February 27 Existentialist Theatre	Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>No Exit</i> (1944) Samuel Beckett's Theatre of the Absurd: Relation to Existentialism and the Avant-Gardes <b>Reflection 3 (5%)</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	Tuesday, March 6 Theatre of the Absurd	Martin Esslin, "The Theatre of the Absurd" (1961) Samuel Beckett, <i>Endgame</i> (1957) Optional: Eugène Ionesco, <i>Rhinoceros</i> (1959)
<b>Week 9</b>	Tuesday, March 13 Against Heteronormativity	Jean Genet, <i>The Maids</i> (1947) Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America I: The Millennium Approaches</i> (1991) <b>Essay (25%)</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	Tuesday, March 20 Race/ Postcolonial Theatre	Wole Soyinka, <i>Death and the King's Horseman</i> (1976) Suzan-Lori Parks, <i>The America Play</i> (1994)
<b>Week 11</b>	Tuesday, March 27	The Grand Theatre, <i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> (7:30pm)
<b>Week 12</b>	Tuesday, April 3 Feminist Revision	Sarah Kane, <i>Blasted</i> (1995) and <i>Skin</i> (1995) Filippo Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli, Bruno Corra, "The Futurist Synthetic Theatre, 1915" (1915) <b>Performance Analysis: blogpost (10%)</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	Tuesday, April 10	Course wrap up <b>Final Course Performance (10%)</b> <b>Final Exam Project due Thursday, April 19 (20%)</b>



## Appendix to Course Outlines

### Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Provost and Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal

needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the *Code of Student Rights and*

*Responsibilities* at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/StudentLifeandSupportServices/StudentDiscipline>

### **Technology**

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

### **Academic Accommodation for Medical/Non-Medical Grounds**

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at:

[http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting\\_acc](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc)

a. **Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising**

University Senate policy, which can be found

at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf),

requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform\\_15JUN.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform_15JUN.pdf).

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Provost and Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Provost and Dean.

b. **Accommodation on Medical Grounds for assignments worth less than 10% of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly**

When seeking accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth less than 10% of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Provost and Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Provost and Dean.

c. **Non-medical Grounds: Consult Instructor Directly**

Where the grounds for seeking accommodation are not medical, the student should contact the instructor directly. Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor. Apart from the exception noted below, academic advisors will not be involved in the process of accommodation for non-medical reasons.

Where a student seeks accommodation on non-medical grounds where confidentiality is a concern, the student should approach an academic advisor with any documentation available. The advisors will contact the instructor after the student's request is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the challenge without breaching confidence. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified that significant circumstances are affecting or have affected the student's ability to complete work, and the student will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. Before denying a request for accommodation where documentation has been submitted to an academic advisor, the instructor will consult with the Provost and Dean. The instructor's decision is appealable to the Provost and Dean.

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as "a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action." (CAI Fundamental Values Project, 1999).

A lack of academic integrity is indicated by such behaviours as the following:

- Cheating on tests;
- Fraudulent submissions online;
- Plagiarism in papers submitted (including failure to cite and piecing together unattributed sources);
- Unauthorized resubmission of course work to a different course;
- Helping someone else cheat;
- Unauthorized collaboration;
- Fabrication of results or sources;
- Purchasing work and representing it as one's own.

### **Academic Integrity: Importance and Impact**

Being at university means engaging with a variety of communities in the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and understanding in ways that are clear, respectful, efficient, and productive. University communities have established norms of academic integrity to ensure responsible, honest, and ethical behavior in the academic work of the university, which is best done when sources of ideas are properly and fully acknowledged and when responsibility for ideas is fully and accurately represented.

In the academic sphere, unacknowledged use of another's work or ideas is not only an offence against the community of scholars and an obstacle to academic productivity. It may also be understood as fraud and may constitute an infringement of legal copyright.

A university is a place for fulfilling one's potential and challenging oneself, and this means rising to challenges rather than finding ways around them. The achievements in an individual's university studies can only be fairly evaluated quantitatively through true and honest representation of the actual learning done by the student. Equity in assessment for all students is ensured through fair representation of the efforts by each.

Acting with integrity at university constitutes a good set of practices for maintaining integrity in later life. Offences against academic integrity are therefore taken very seriously as part of the university's work in preparing students to serve, lead, and innovate in the world at large.

A university degree is a significant investment of an individual's, and the public's, time, energies, and resources in the

future, and habits of academic integrity protect that investment by preserving the university's reputation and ensuring public confidence in higher education.

**Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Provost and Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Provost and Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

### **Policy on Special Needs**

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at:

[http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting\\_acc](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc)

### **Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Provost and Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Provost and Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty of registration.

### **Class Cancellations**

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website, <http://www.huronuc.ca/AccessibilityInfo> ("Class Cancellations").

### **Mental Health @ Western**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Academic Advising**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation [see above], students should contact an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services ([huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca)). An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices>



Department Chairs and Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about their individual programs. Their contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/Academics/FacultyofArtsandSocialScience>