

## THEATER 228 / SPRING 2009

### Theatrical Self-Production

Monday & Thursday 1.10-3.50pm

Course Syllabus

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by appointment

#### **Course Objective:**

In today's theater world, self-production can be a vital, engaging, and necessary method of creating and producing theatrical works. This course examines theatrical self-production and the ways in which artists exploit this model in pursuit of their individual and collective ambitions. Through a careful examination of successes and failures in contemporary theatrical collectives, this class will form its own unique structure for developing and producing a range of new, innovative, and thematically linked artistic work. Operating within carefully chosen constraints, students will share equally the administrative, artistic, and production roles in the public presentation of their works. Thus, a major emphasis of the course will be on experiential education, which provides an invaluable opportunity to encounter firsthand the highly complex relationship between artistry and production. An important component of the class will be ongoing symposium with practitioners from the profession, as well as the Department of Theater, that will focus on a range of specifically targeted skill sets necessary for students to realize their goals. Systematic group presentations of the creative development process will provide opportunities for guidance, critique, and sustained mentorship.

#### **Evaluation:**

Grading will be based on committed class participation, contribution to the collective work of the class, group and individual presentations, and self-evaluation. This class is structured so that your contributions to the overall quality of discourse are vital to the success of the class for you and for your classmates. Because of the collaborative nature of this work, you will learn as much by fully listening to and exploring new ideas with your classmates as you will through the individual completion of assignments. Students from a broad range of curricular disciplines are welcome.

#### **Grading Procedures:**

There are no formal grades given to projects or assignments throughout the semester. Individual mid-term evaluations will be scheduled to help you evaluate your progress in the class. There will also be a final evaluation of all the work you have completed over the semester during finals week. If you are concerned about your academic standing you may meet with us privately during our office hours.

#### **Honor Code:**

You are expected to adhere to the Williams College Academic Honesty and Honor Code as outlined on <http://www.williams.edu/resources/honor/honesty.php>. If you have any questions regarding the Honor Code and its relation to this course, please speak with us as soon as possible.

**Attendance:**

You are allowed only one excused absence for the entire semester. You must, however, inform us in advance of the time and reason for such an absence, except in cases of illness or emergency. It is also your responsibility to find out what was covered in any class that you miss, and to bring yourself up to speed with all assignments given.

**Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related classroom accommodations for this course are encouraged to set up an appointment to meet with the instructor as soon as

possible and to contact the Dean's Office at x4262 to insure that accommodations are provided in a timely manner.

**Important dates:**

This schedule is being kept intentionally flexible to allow Project 228 to develop in shape and form over the course of the semester; however, there are some hard and fast dates to keep in mind:

March 16	Begin additional evening rehearsals?
Mar 21 – Apr 5	---SPRING BREAK---
April 13	Project 228 moves permanently into the CenterStage
May 2–3	TECH (10/12s)
May 4–5	Dress rehearsals (evenings)
May 6–9	PERFORMANCES
May 10	Strike

**Field trips:**

There will be several field trips during the semester to see interesting theater performances and meet with the artists involved. All travel and tickets costs will be paid by the department; you will only be responsible for food and local travel (subway etc). These trips are encouraged but not mandatory.

We will need to know how many people are interested in going on each trip by Thursday February 12 so that final travel arrangements may be made and tickets purchased. You should view these as firm commitments.

The planned field trips are (in chronological order):

Saturday Feb 28	Bard College to see THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST (Leave 4p, 8p perf, return 12a)
Sunday Mar 15	New York City to see CHAUTAQUA! National Theater of the United States of America at P.S.122 Talkback with artists to follow (Leave 12n, 5pm perf, return 12a)
Sunday April 5	New York City to see RAMBO SOLO Nature Theatre of Oklahoma at Soho Rep Talkback with artists to follow (Leave 1p, 7:30p perf, return 1:30a)

**Costs:**

There are material costs associated with this class. They are hard to determine exactly, which is why there is no set lab fee.

Class readings in the form of xeroxes will be provided for you, and charged directly to your term bill. There is no need to purchase texts from Water Street Books at this time. Xeroxing expenses (B&W and color) incurred while working on assignments related to THEA 228 will be covered by the department. Please note that this **ONLY** covers xeroxes made on xerox machine located in the Theatre Department offices, and this machine may **ONLY** be used for xeroxing that is directly related to work for THEA 228! If, at the end of the semester, the xeroxing charges for 228 are excessively high, there may be an additional charge on your term bill, divided equally between everyone enrolled in the class.

The department machine is often in high demand, and all other uses of the machine will take priority over student use; additionally, the department machine should not be used after Paula Wells has left (typically 4pm) unless prior arrangements have been made, so please plan accordingly.

**Xerox Machine:**

To use the department xerox machine, utilize the following codes:

Volume #: 23  
Access #: 19177777

*DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES give out these codes to anyone not enrolled in THEA 228.*

**Costume stock:**

Over the course of THEA 228 you will access to our stock of costumes and costume elements for use in the development of Project 228, with the following rules:

- 1) Costume storage is only open and available on Mondays 9:30-12:30, Tuesdays 3:00-6:00 and Fridays 10:00-6:00.
- 2) Any and all costume borrowing must be scheduled at least one day in advance with the costume shop manager. Should an emergency arise the costume shop will do its best to try and accommodate your needs.
- 3) Students will check out needed costume articles and will be responsible for scheduling their return to the costume shop. If a student loses a costume, they will be charged the replacement cost of the article.

There are three separate areas for costume storage, two of which are not in the '62 CTD but in Greylock. Therefore, it is often not possible to just run into storage except when there is a scheduled time for the pulling and return of costumes. Thank you for understanding the needs of the costume shop and costume shop storage.

**Props storage:**

You will also have access to our stock of props and furniture for use in the development of Project 228. A basic stock of items is kept in the props cage in the basement of the '62 CTD, while there is more extensive storage located in two barns on Water Street.

Please coordinate with Professor Morris or Professor Brothers about getting access to any of these storage areas. We will try to consolidate trips to the barns, which require a car and thus more pre-planning.

Also be aware that you will be responsible for arranging to return any props or furniture items borrowed from any of the three locations.

**Schedule:**

Please note that this is subject to change as the course develops.

Reasonable advance notification will be given for any major changes to the class schedule

Day	Date	In-class	Homework assignment
Tue	Feb 3	<u>Organizational meeting</u> General class introduction + syllabus overview	Read Morris, "Narrative of the Constitution"
Mon	Feb 9	Begin 1 <sup>st</sup> Project: performance based on a short article	Read Bogart, "Violence". Start research on article + bring in 1 image, 1 piece of music, 1 physical gesture and 1 line of spoken text
Thur	Feb 12	Show + discuss research, put image, music, gesture and text together then show + tell	Read play (handed out in class) and prepare a short discussion about style, structure, and approach to presenting subject matter
Mon	Feb 16	Discussion of plays. Guest: David Eppel to talk about how to organize and run a rehearsal	Create 2 minute performance in the style of the play you read, incorporating image, music, gesture and text
Thur	Feb 19	Show + discuss 2 minute performances Guest: Rob Baker-White to talk about organizing and running a rehearsal	
Mon	Feb 23	Experiment with different ways of integrating individual performances into a unified whole	Bring topic for performance based on something studied in another class this semester
Thur	Feb 26	Begin 2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: performance based on subject matter from another class	TBD
Sat	Feb 28	Fieldtrip to Bard College to see THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST	
Mon	Mar 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Research phase Guest: Amy Holzapfel to talk about dramaturgical process	TBD
Thur	Mar 5	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Research phase	TBD

Day	Date	In-class	Homework assignment
Mon	Mar 9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: First Pass Guest: Tina Shepard	TBD
		Evening: Workshop led by Tina Shepard	
Thur	Mar 12	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: First Pass	TBD
Sun	Mar 15	Fieldtrip to NYC to see CHAUTAUQUA! (National Theater of the United States of America) Talkback with the artists to follow	
Mon	Mar 16	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: First Pass Guest: Cosmo Catalano, Maia Robbins-Zust, + Barbara Bell to talk about shop expectations from designers	TBD
Thur	Mar 19	First Pass show + tell with critical feedback. Start thinking about interconnections between pieces	TBD
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			Arrange individual mid-term evaluation meetings
Sun	Apr 5	Fieldtrip to NYC to see RAMBO SOLO (Nature Theatre of Oklahoma) Talkback with the artists to follow	
Mon	Apr 6	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Second Pass Guest: Julie Seitel to talk about lighting	TBD
Thur	Apr 9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Second Pass	TBD
Mon	Apr 13	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Second Pass. Guest: John Feltch	TBD
Tue	Apr 14	Evening: Workshop led by John Feltch	
Wed	Apr 15	Evening: Workshop led by John Feltch	
Thur	Apr 16	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Second Pass	TBD

Day	Date	In-class	Homework assignment
Mon	Apr 20	2 <sup>nd</sup> Project: Work In Progress showing Critical feedback of both individual pieces and performance as a whole	TBD
Thur	Apr 23	Final Project: Spit + Polish	TBD
Mon	Apr 27	Final Project: Spit + Polish	TBD
Thur	Apr 30	Final Project: Spit + Polish Prepping for tech	TBD
Mon	May 4	Final Project: Tech notes	TBD
Thur	May 7	Final Project: Notes as needed	TBD
Mon	May 4	228 postmortem with external critics	TBD
Thur	May 7	228 postmortem (internal only)	TBD