

Toward a Sociology of Theatre

THR 702-1000, Spring 2017

Dr. Peter Zazzali

10:00 AM-12:30 PM (Friday) Murphy 240D

Office Hours 9:00 AM-10:00 AM (Fridays) Murphy 214B

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Course Description

Despite the fact that social scientists and theorists have long attempted to analyze different forms of cultural production, few have focused on theatrical practice or the theatre as an institution. This course will examine the methodologies of some of the most influential social theorists and cultural critics in tracing the development of sociological approaches to theatre and performance. We will survey the work of theorists who have addressed questions regarding cultural hierarchies, the class composition of audiences, the economics of performing arts, the politics of production and consumption, the history and valuation of taste, the ideological specificity of different media, political identity relative to theatre/performance, and the ways in which theatre/performance resist, reify, and shape society.

Course Requirements

Critical Writing

Term Paper: You will each write a term paper (15-20 pp.) that explores the intersection between theatre/performance and society. The paper should serve as a future conference presentation or the beginnings of a journal article. In addition to meeting with me to discuss your topic and methodology, you will also work with a partner or small group as part of the research and writing process. Specific guidelines for the paper will be provided. **Due Date: May 5.**

Sociological Analysis of a Professional Production Paper: You will each conduct a sociological analysis of a professional theatre production and draft a (5-6 pp.) report on your findings. Specific guidelines for the paper will be provided. **Due Date: March 17.**

Weekly Reading Assignments

Readings and In-Class Discussion: This is a seminar and therefore the learning outcomes are reliant upon you having read the assignments and being prepared to discuss them. I expect that everyone will fully contribute to our in-class conversations.

In-Class Presentation: To introduce the scholar(s) whose work we will be covering for a given session, each of you will present a 10-minute overview of the subject's work relative to the reading(s) for that day. As such, you will contextualize the reading(s) by reporting upon the life

and career of the scholar while addressing her selected text(s) for that class period. You will complete this assignment twice, the due dates for which depend upon the scholars you choose:

Scholars in Focus

Raymond Williams
The Frankfurt School of Social Research
Theodor W. Adorno
Stuart Hall
Pierre Bourdieu
Edward Said/Gayatri Spivak
Jill Dolan/Sue Ellen Case
Harvey Young
Shannon Jackson

Blackboard Posts: Each week you will respond to a question that I post on Blackboard regarding the forthcoming readings. Your response of approximately 200-300-words should be posted by noon on the Thursday before the corresponding session. This will give everyone time to read each another's response before class the following day.

Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes. If for some unforeseen reason you need to miss, you are responsible for the readings and must contact me about your absence in advance of that particular session. Please note that even a single absence could compromise your learning and grade.

Course Texts

Theodor Adorno. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1991. ISBN-0415253802

Pierre Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993. ISBN0-231-08287-8

Shannon Jackson. *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*. New York: Routledge, 2011. ISBN 978-0415486019

Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988. ISBN 0-674-39077-6

Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture*. Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995. ISBN 0-226-89921-7

Harvey Young, *Theatre and Race*. New York: Palgrave, 2013. ISBN 978-0230390966

****All other readings are available on Blackboard under "course documents".**

Grading

1. Attendance and In-class Participation: 30%
2. Blackboard Responses: 10%
3. In-Class Presentations: 10%
4. Sociological Analysis of a Production Paper: 10%
5. Term Paper: 40%

Ethical Matters

Academic Honesty: As you know, scholarship is largely defined by contributing original research to a given field of study. When you borrow ideas or quote another source, you must reference them. Please cite according to the style guidelines for either MLA or Chicago.

Disability Statement: The KU office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted DR, please do so at 22 Strong Hall; their phone number is 785-864-2620.

Changes to the Syllabus: Though it is doubtful that I would do so, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus based on student needs. In the unlikely event that this happens, I will notify each of you and provide a new copy with all changes clearly marked.

Course Schedule and Assignments

January 20 (Week 1)

Sociology of Theatre Pioneers: Maria Shevtsova, “The Sociology of Theatre,” Part 1 and Part 2; Georges Gurvitch, “The Sociology of Theatre”; and Jean Duvignaud “The Theatre in Society: Society in the Theatre,” in *Sociology of Literature and Drama*.

January 27 (Week 2)

Sociology of Culture: Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture; Marxism and Literature*, Part 1, 13-20, Part 2.

February 3 (Week 3)

Frankfurt School of Social Research: Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations*; Guy Debord, “Separation Perfected,” “Commodity as Spectacle,” in *Society of the Spectacle*; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, “Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*; Martin Jay, “Dialectic of Counter-Enlightenment: The Frankfurt School as Scapegoat of the Lunatic Fringe.”

February 10 (Week 4)

Adorno and the Culture Industry: Adorno, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” “The Schema of Mass Culture,” “Culture Industry Reconsidered,” “Culture and Administration,” in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*; David Jenemann, “Introduction: Dreams in America,” “The Monster Under the Stone: Adorno and the Rise of Administrative Research,” “Adorno in Sponsor-land: Authority on the Radio,” in *Adorno in America*.

February 17 (Week 5)

Popular Culture and Hegemony (Birmingham School): Tony Bennet, “Popular Culture and ‘the Turn to Gramsci’”; “The Politics of the ‘Popular’ and Popular Culture” in *Popular Culture and Social Relations*; Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation,” in *Representation: Cultural Signs and Signifying Practices*,” “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular,” in Raphael Samuel, ed., *People’s History and Socialist Theory*; Antonio Gramsci, “Art and the Struggle for a New Civilization,” in *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*.

February 24 (Week 6)

Field of Cultural Production: Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed,” “The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods,” “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*; David Swartz, “Introducing Pierre Bourdieu,” “Bourdieu’s Political Economy of Symbolic Power,” “Habitus: A Cultural Theory of Action,” in *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*.

March 3 (Week 7)

Culture and Social Stratification: Lawrence Levine, “William Shakespeare in America,” “The Sacralization of Culture,” in *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*; Pierre Bourdieu, “Introduction,” “Conclusion,” in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

March 10 (Week 8)

Political Economy of Theatre: James Heilbrun and Charles M. Gray, “Firms and Markets in the Performing Arts,” “Productivity Lag and the Financial Problem of the Arts,” “Conclusion: Innovation, Arts Education, and the Future of Art and Culture in the United States,” in *The Economics of Art and Culture* (2nd ed.); David Throsby, “Introduction,” “Theories of Value,” “Cultural Capital and Sustainability,” in *Economics and Culture*; Michael M. Kaiser, “To Have and Have Not: The Arts in America in 2035,” in *Curtains?: The Future of the Arts in America*; Jessica Brater et. al., “Let Our Freak Flags Fly: *Shrek* the Musical and the Branding of Diversity.”

March 17 (Week 9): **Culture and Postcolonial Studies:** Edward Said, “Introduction,” and “Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories,” in *Culture and Imperialism*; Neil Lazarus, “The Global Dispensation Since 1945,” in *The Cambridge Guide to Postcolonial Literary Studies*; Gyatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak”; Margaret Werry, “The Greatest Show on Earth: Political Spectacle, Spectacular Politics, and the American Pacific.” **SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION DUE.**

March 31 (Week 10): **Theatre, Gender, and Sexuality:** Jill Dolan, “The Dynamics of Desire: Sexuality and Gender in Pornography and Performance,” in *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*; Sue Ellen Case, “Towards a New Poetics,” in *Feminism and Theatre*; Rebecca Schneider, “Introduction,” and “Seeing the Big Show,” in *The Explicit Body in Performance*; David Savran, “Introduction,” *Taking It Like a Man*; and “Tennessee Williams I,” in *Communists, Cowboys, and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*.

April 7 (Week 11)

Theatre and Race: Harvey Young, *Theatre and Race*; James Wilson, “That’s the Kind of Gal I Am: Drag Balls, Sexual Perversion, and David Belasco’s *Lulu Belle*,” in *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies: Performance, Race, and Sexuality in the Harlem Renaissance*; Jon D. Rossini and Patricia Ybarra, “Neoliberalism, Historiography, Identity Politics: Toward a New Historiography of Latino Theatre.”

April 14 (Week 12)

Theatre and Religion: Jeremy Collier, “Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage”; Jonas Barish, “Immorality and Profaneness,” in *The Anti-theatrical Prejudice*; Jill Stevenson “Poised at the Threatening Edge: Feeling the Future in Medieval Last Judgement Performances”; Henry Bial, “Faith Based Initiatives,” “*Ben Hur*: Biblical Fan Fiction” in *Playing God: The Bible on the Broadway Stage*; John Fletcher, “Performance Activism, Progressive Oversights, and Deep Differences” in *Preaching to Convert: Evangelical Outreach and Performance Activism in a Secular Age*.

April 21 (Week 13)

Theatre’s Future Social Role: Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*.

April 28 (Week 14)

Conferences and Peer Support for Final Papers

May 5 (Week 15)

FINAL PAPERS DUE