THTR 481: History of Theatre I:  
Ancient Drama to Restoration Comedy  
Tuesday and Thursday 1-2:15

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Office hours: Thursday 1-4, or by appointment

Designed as the first of a two-part theatre history sequence that spans from Ancient Greece to Contemporary Performance, this course examines theatre from Antiquity to the Restoration, roughly the 500 BCE to the 17th Century. In this course, we will trace multiple theatre “histories” across the world as they intersect and influence each other. In the process, we will challenge organizing concepts and theories (including the dramatic cannon and periodization) to understand that “theatre” and “history” are constructed concepts, dependent on their cultural contexts. Throughout the semester, we will consider our present-situated circumstances as we think about how we remember past theatre movements, maintain traditional theatre in the present, and construct theatre history narratives.

To organize our inquiry, we will focus on the emergence and development of traditional theatre forms. We will first study traditional theatre forms within their historical contexts; then, we will examine how these forms continue to be performed today.

**Course Prerequisites:**
Junior or senior standing and completion of all General Education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8

**This course satisfies Core Objective 11 in the Silver Core Curriculum:**

**CO 11: Global Contexts:** Students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

**Student Learning Objectives:**
- Students will be able to explain major trends in global theatre history from antiquity to the seventeenth century
- Students will be able to situate theatre movements within their social, political, and cultural contexts
- Students will be able to pose and assess questions about the making of theatre history, identifying cultural constructs that factor into that production
- Students will be able to explain the relationship between the development of traditional theatre forms and their performance today
• Students will be able to compare theatre history movements from different areas of the world.

Texts:
All other readings will be available through e-reserves.

Requirements:
Attendance:
The class features a mixture of lecture and discussion. To be successful in this course, it is essential that you attend class on a regular basis and come prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Attendance will be taken. You are allowed up to three unexcused absences; **more than three will result in your overall grade reduction of half a grade for each unexcused absence** (i.e. A to A-). Please arrive on time to class; three arrivals of more than ten minutes late will result in an unexcused absence. I will allow laptops and tablets in class to access reading and take notes only. Cell phones are not allowed in class; use of a cell phone will result in an unexcused absence.

Reading responses
Another part of your participation grade is to write a paragraph-length response for each play. Writing is a way in which to think through your ideas about a work of art, and in this course, we will practice formal (papers) and informal (reading responses) approaches to writing. Each response will be given full credit if you turn it in on time and you adhere to the following parameters. To write a response, select a brief passage from the assigned play that you think is important to its overall significance; discuss the meaning of the passage and its relationship to one of the play’s themes. A reading response should be three sentences minimum and seven sentences maximum. Upload your response to webcampus by noon the day the play is assigned.

Quizzes:
To assess your understanding of class materials and preparation for class, there will be 5 announced and 5 unannounced quizzes over the course of the semester. Announced quizzes will be open note and require you to briefly summarize an aspect of a theatre movement covered in class. To prepare, review your notes on that particular theatre movement. Unannounced quizzes are closed book and will check-in on your preparation for class; they will consist of two to three simple questions about the reading. If you do the reading and attend class, you will do well on unannounced quizzes.

Assignments:
In the weeks that we don’t have quizzes or formal papers, students will complete short writing assignments, designed to develop thinking about aspects of theatre history. For assignment guidelines and grading rubrics, please refer to webcampus.

Adaptation Paper:
Select a play from the first five weeks of class. Complete research on one aspect of the play’s historical context, and then adapt a brief scene to a contemporary time period by altering that
aspect. Based on this adaptation, write a 3-5 page paper in which you analyze the adaptation. Assignment guidelines will be distributed closer to the paper due date.

**Comparison Paper:**
In a 5-7 page paper, analyze two theatre forms discussed in class to compare different functions of theatre. The paper will be evaluated on organization, development of argument, and quality of prose. Detailed assignment guidelines and grading rubric will be distributed closer to the paper due date.

**Final Exam:**
This exam will be comprehensive exam on the plays and major theatre movements covered in class.

**Late work policy**
In order to encourage timely completion of assignments, the late work policy is a deduction of half a grade (i.e. A to A-) for each 24-hour period late. If extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergency, etc.) prevent you from turning in a paper draft on its assigned date, please contact Prof. Nakamura before the due date to arrange an alternative timeline.

**Grading Distribution**
Reading Responses 10%
Quizzes 10%
Assignments 15%
Adaptation Paper 20%
Comparison Paper 25%
Final Exam 20%
**This class will give +/- grades.

**Grading Scale**
A 100-93%
A- 92-90%
B+ 89-87%
B 86-83%
B- 82-80%
C+ 79-77%
C 76-73%
C- 72-70%
D+ 69-67%
D 66-63%
D- 62-60%
F 59% and lower

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty:**
Cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated
and penalties can include an F for the assignment or for the course. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog.

**Statement on Disability Services**
Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**Statement on Academic Success Service**
Your student fees cover usage of the University Writing Center (http://www.unr.edu/writing-center) (775) 784-6030. It is your responsibility to take advantage of this service. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Statement on Audio and Video Recording**
Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

### Schedule of readings and assignments

**Week 1: Introduction**
Course introduction and readings on ritual

**Week 2: Greek Tragedy**
Sophocles’ *Oedipus* and Aristotle’s *The Poetics*

**Week 3: Greek and Roman Comedies**
Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*
Plautus’ *The Menaechmi*

**Week 4: Indian Sanskrit Theatre**
*Natyasastra*
Kalisada’s *Shakuntala*

**Week 5: Medieval Theatre**
Religious festivals
*Everyman*

**Week 6: Indonesian Wayang Kulit**
Play TBA
**Adaptation Paper Due**

**Week 7: Japanese Noh and Kyogen**
Zeami’s *Dojoji* and *Izutsu*
Busu and The Snail

Week 8: Commedia Dell Arte
Play TBA

Week 9: Moliere and French Neo-Classicism
Moliere’s Tartuffe
Racine’s Phaedra

Week 10: Shakespeare
Shakespeare’s The Tempest

Week 11: Chinese Kunqu
Excerpts from The Peony Pavilion

Week 12: Spanish Golden Drama
Vega’s Fuente Ovejuna
**Comparative Paper due**

Week 13: English Restoration Comedy
Behn’s The Rover

Week 14: Japanese Kabuki and Bunraku
Chikamatsu’s Love Suicide at Amijima

Week 15: Indian Kathakali
The Progeny of Krishna

Week 16: Wrap up and looking forward

**Finals week: Final exam**