

TH207 Intensifying Reality: A Survey and Staging of 21st Century German Drama

Seminar Leader: Julia Hart
Course Times: Wednesdays 3:45-7:00pm
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm

Course Description

German dramatists in the 21st Century have been developing new methods of ordering and processing verbal material for the stage. Some writers, like Fritz Kater, are said to create a special kind of compression, an intensification of reality. Other dramatists, like Elfriede Jelinek, do not break down their texts into individual speakers. It is up to the director and actors to distribute the text and position them in a living space. This course will examine a selection of German plays from 2000- present. We will be discussing the dramaturgy of these sometimes shocking plays as well as exploring methods of staging these works in translation. We will be reading and rehearsing plays by writers in translation including: Dea Loher, Falk Richter, Roland Schimmelpfennig, Anja Hilling, Darja Stocker, Elfriede Jelinek, and Sascha Marianna Salzmann. Students will work as dramaturges, directors, and actors throughout the semester. Questions we will be wrestling with include: What are the issues that German dramatists are addressing? How are they experimenting with different forms of storytelling and characterisation? And how can these plays, that experiment radically with theatrical form and language, be staged?

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during the entire class time, including off-campus trips. They will be allowed to be used only during breaks.
- Be prepared to present artworks / assignments / presentations without reminder.
- Engage in critiques and discussions.
- Initiate appointments with Professor or arts staff outside of class time when assistance is necessary.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails from Professor in a timely manner. Inform Professor at beginning of semester if photos of student, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and any personal belongings before the final inspection of the arts spaces during completion week. Failure to remove works and / or clean spaces used

will result in final grade penalization. Donating artworks or art materials (unrequested) at anytime is not permitted and will still be considered student's property that will be expected to be removed.

Attendance

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence.

Scene Study Requirements:

- choose one scene from one of the plays discussed that you would like to explore and conceptualize, devise, and rehearse as an actor or director.
- one additional 2-3 hour rehearsal per week to be completed outside of class
- Scene Study One will be discussed and critiqued on 6.11.2019
- Scene Study Two will be discussed and critiqued on 18.12.2019

Scene Study Assessment

- Students will be graded on their preparation, completion of rehearsal reports (sent via email, 1-2 paragraphs in length), and the ability to discuss their ideas about the situation and characters in the scene. Actors will be assessed on their physicality, use of movement/gesture, delivery of lines, and a clear approach to their characters. Directors will be assessed on their use of space, movement/gesture, and clear intention of what is being explored in the scene.

Monologue Assignment

- Students will choose a short monologue or dialogue with a partner from one of the plays recently discussed to memorize and present in class. This assignment will be part of the class participation grade.

Written requirements:

Scene Study Essays (2000 words due on 13.11 and 20.12)

Scene Study Essay should contain the following:

- Rehearsal process: how the scene was chosen, a brief analysis of the scene (the situation, the characters, the central conflict), descriptions from rehearsal, including what rehearsal (as actors or directors) methods and exercises were implemented, how they were implemented, and any relevant challenges and observations from rehearsals
- Evaluation of the scene presentation and a critical evaluation of the rehearsal process.

Grade Breakdown: Scene Study 40%
Written Assignments 30%
Class Participation 30%.

Policy on Late Submission

Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

*Course readings and plays will be posted on the Google Classroom website as PDFs.

Schedule

- 4.9 Introduction to Contemporary German Theater
Overview of authors, directors, plays, and key concepts
- 11.9 Setting the Scene: A deeper look into the historical context of German playwriting, production methods and directing trends in the 2000s
- Reading: Johannes Birringer: *A New Europe* 26-40
Peter Boenisch: *Introduction: The dissensus of Regie: rethinking director's theatre* (1-9)
David Barnett: "I've been told... that play is far too German" (153-156)
Elisabeth Hermann: "How Does Transnationalism Redefine Contemporary Literature?" In *Transnationalism in Contemporary German-Language Literature* (19-25)
Stuart Taberner: *Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism: Literary World Building in the Twenty First Century* (43-47)
- 18.9 Fritz Kater: *Vineta (Riverwaterwont)* 2001
WE ARE CAMERA (Jasonmaterial) 2003

*Monologues/Dialogues selected for assignment.

- 25.9 Falk Richter *Electronic City* (2003)
Lukas Barfüss *THE BUS* (2005)
Reading: *Belief and Unbelief in the Twenty First Century: Lukas Barfüss's DER BUS* (131-141)
- * *Theater visit: AUSSER SICH* Sascha Marianna Salzmann at 7:30pm at the Gorki Theater
- 28.9 12-3pm in the Factory. Practical Workshop on rehearsal techniques and exercises
- 2.10 Anja Hilling: *Sense* (2007)
Darja Stocker: *Nightblind* (2005)
*Scene Study scenes chosen and groups formed
*Monologue/Dialogue Presentation in class
- 9.10 No Class: Rehearsal for Scene Study One
- 19.10 Rehearsals for Scene Study One
- 23.10 Rehearsal for Scene Study One
*Rehearsal report due
- 30.10 Fall Break
- 6.11 Presentations and Critique for Scene Study One
*Rehearsal report due
- 13.11 Dea Loher: *Thieves* (2010)
Roland Schimmelpfennig: *The Golden Dragon* (2010)
*Scene Study Essay Due
- 20.11 Sascha Marianna Salzmann: *Birthmarks Window Blue* (2012)
Mameloschn Mother Tongue (2012)
*Monologues selected for monologue assignment
- 27.11 Elfriede Jelinek: *On Royal Road* (2017)
Reading: "The Terror of the Cute" Elfriede Jelinek in Conversation with Gita Honegger (37-45)
*Groups formed for Scene Study Two
- 4.12 Rehearsals for Scene Study Two
- 11.12 Rehearsals for Scene Study Two

18.12 Scene Study Two Presentations
 *Evening Show in the Factory

20.12 Scene Study Essay Due

Facility Policies:

“The Factory” – Eichenstrasse 43

- 1) The BCB “Factory” (main arts building) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Any space in the building, private or shared, cannot be used unless permission has been granted. Any questions relating to this must be addressed to the Director of Studios Arts.
- 2) Chip access to the building will only be granted to those students currently registered for classes using the factory (after add-drop), and that have been offered orientation.
- 3) No smoking is allowed anywhere inside the building. There are to be no projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) inside any part of the building.
- 4) Fire exits and lanes (black-taped areas) must be kept clear of any obstructions.
- 5) No spray-painting inside of the building. This also includes any strong, odorous materials (with or without spray). All production involving odorous material is to be done outside the building.
- 6) All work surfaces (table and floor) must always be protected with thick plastic or cardboard. If production is to happen outside, ground / concrete is also to be protected.
- 7) Food must be always cleaned up and removed immediately. Any food used for an art project requiring refrigeration must be labeled with one’s name, and disposed of after presentation. All food must be disposed of in lidded trash cans.
- 8) All students are to always be respectful of other student artworks and personal property.
- 9) No art projects may function as weapons, or potentially cause bodily harm.
- 10) No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside or around the workshop areas, which includes walking through the workshop. This includes dance and theater students as well.
- 11) Students should always wear adequate protection (goggles, gloves, dust masks, etc.) when needed. BCB will always try to provide these items.
- 12) If you are uncertain how to use a tool or piece of equipment or require assistance, please ask for assistance (by appointment, if necessary).
- 13) Students must be aware of who else is working in the building after dark. Any curfews established by Bard College Berlin must be respected. Finishing production and cleaning up must happen before the curfew time.
- 14) Students must make sure all lights are turned off and doors are closed when leaving the building. No windows or doors are to be left opened or cracked. All electrical items must be unplugged when not in use.
- 15) Any unidentified property left in any common space is subject to either be taken or thrown out, without restitution. All private property **MUST** be labeled and stored in its proper location.
- 16) All workshop items must be returned to the workshop when not in use.
- 17) Any items leaving the building without permission will be considered stolen, and access to the factory may be suspended for the rest of the semester. If an item must be borrowed for a

purpose outside of the building, contact the arts staff, and be prepared to leave your Student ID as a deposit. Fines may be charged for late return.

- 18) All students must respect signage posted in the factory that may involve rules that are not mentioned in this document. This includes signage indicating reserved spaces where communal use is restricted.
 - 19) There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with your Professor, Studio Arts Manager, or Director of Studio Arts. When repainting any walls that need restoration, please consult with arts staff beforehand.
 - 20) During completion week, any space used by a student must be returned empty with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be bagged (or boxed) and properly disposed of. All students must accept the penalty of grades being affected and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
1. Contact Director of Studio Arts (John von Bergen) with any questions: j.vonbergen@berlin.bard.edu

AV Facilities – Eichenstrasse 43 (upstairs)

- 1) BCB's AV (Audio / Visual) facilities provide a limited quantity of AV equipment to support Admin, Faculty as well as those students enrolled in arts classes that require specific items. AV facilities do not include any black and white or color printing services for students.
- 2) The opening times may change every semester to adapt to specific course times. Once these times are established they will stay consistent throughout the semester, with possible exceptions. AV facilities are ONLY available during days when classes are held (closed during official BCB holidays).
- 3) All items checked out are due back during AV hours the following day, unless other arrangements have been made in advance directly with AV staff.
- 4) Items to be reserved on a specific date should be requested at least one week in advance. Without reservation, availability is limited to a first-come, first-serve basis.
- 5) The AV staff may exclude students from borrowing items at any time, if the student:
 - failed to return items in time
 - failed to return items in person (pick up and/ or return by friends is not allowed)
 - returned items with missing pieces
 - returned items damaged or in poor shape
- 6) AV equipment will be given out only to those students responsible in organizing, picking up as well as returning their items IN PERSON. No exceptions.
- 7) All items returned late, regardless of patron's position at BCB, will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day.
- 8) Any item returned without accessories (such as cables, SD card, batteries, tripod head, lens cap, etc) will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day (the same as late returns).
- 9) Any items missing will be subject to patron reimbursement for its value (or under special circumstances, replacement, at the discretion of AV staff).
- 10) Any items damaged or malfunctioning are expected to be reported to staff upon check-in.
- 10) Please use the AV email to inquire about equipment or policy, as well as to reserve (av@berlin.bard.edu). Do not contact AV staff through their personal emails.

- 11) We strongly suggest personally visiting the facilities to inquire and reserve before borrowing equipment!
- 12) AV equipment is limited at BCB. Whenever possible students are encouraged to use their own devices (computers, cameras) for production purposes.
- 13) Contact AV staff with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu
- 14) MacLab and Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)