

# TH309

## CREATING AND THEORIZING CONTEMPORARY PERFORMING ARTS IN BERLIN

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg  
Course Times: Tue 9:00-12:15  
Location: Factory, performance space  
Email: [n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu)  
Office Hours: Tue 1:30-3:30pm

### Course Description

Let's dive into Berlin's performing arts world. This course provides an intensive practical and theoretical engagement with current theater and performance productions, artists and different institutions from municipal theaters ("Stadttheater") such as the Volksbühne, Schaubühne, Deutsches Theater, Berliner Ensemble, Maxim Gorki Theater to independent venues like Hebbel am Ufer, Sophiensaele, Ballhaus Ost, and the English Theatre Berlin. The course involves regular theater visits along with meeting and interviewing theater artists. We will study different working conditions, artistic approaches as well as the techniques used to create "creative responses" on stage and on paper. We will practice different modes of performance analysis and read core texts of performance theory (Richard Schechner, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Peggy Phelan, Erika Fischer-Lichte, Philip Auslander, and Rebecca Schneider) and relate them critically to the works we see. We will see works by famous Berlin-based theater, dance and performance makers such as She She Pop, Frank Castorf, Rimini Protokoll, Thomas Ostermeier, Gob Squad, Sasha Waltz as well as pieces by less well-known artists. The final list of productions we will study will be announced at the beginning of the course when the theaters publish their upcoming programs.

### Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Initiate appointments with Professor or Arts Staff outside of class time.
- 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 the beginning of the semester if photos of student's identity, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.

- Remove all artworks, art materials, and / or any personal belongings before the end of the semester. Failure to remove works or return spaces clean and empty may result in final grade penalization. Donating unrequested artworks and / or art materials is not permitted and will still be considered student property, expected to be removed by your inspection deadline. Please contact Studio Arts Manager Joon Park for more information: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

### Attendance

- Attendance of all classes and performance/theater visits 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.

### Assessment

This course aims to creatively combine performance theory, analysis and practical making. Due to the experimental nature of this course students will be assessed on their ambition and ability to combine critical thinking and creative work as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class including class preparation. Students are also assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with Professor as well amongst themselves, including productive feedback regarding their art work.

### Assignments and Deadlines

Each student is asked

1. to present two (performance-)presentations (in groups of 2-3 students) that engage with arguments from one of the texts or with the works of an artist/artist group discussed.
2. to attend chosen evening performances at various locations throughout the city.
3. to hand in *critical notes* two days after each performance visit (2-3 pages each).
4. to work in groups on performance exercises/creative responses and further develop these into final presentations at the end of the semester.

### Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

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.

### Grade Breakdown

Class participation and attendance: 40%

Two performance presentations on class readings/art works discussed: 20%

Critical notes on performances visited: 20%

Final project (devising and presentation): 20%

### Schedule

Fall 2019 classes start on Monday, September 2 and run until Friday, December 20 with fall break planned from Monday, October 28 – Sunday, November 3. Completion week is from December 16 - 20. Students are required to be on campus during completion week.

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:

<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/>

*Please note: schedule may vary according to upcoming theater programs*

1. **Tuesday, 3 September 2019, 9-12:15**  
Introductions
  
2. **SPECIAL EVENING DATE: Monday, 9 September 8:30pm**  
Performance visit  
**René Pollesch: Cry Baby**  
**DT – Deutsches Theater Berlin** (Schuhmannstr. 13A)
  
3. **Tuesday, 10 September, 9-12:15**  
What is performance I  
Readings and presentations:
  - Richard Schechner: 'What is Performance?', in: *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (2013), p. 28-51.
  - Peggy Phelan: 'The ontology of performance: representation without reproduction', in: *Unmarked* (1996), p. 146-66.

- 4. Tuesday, 17 September, 9-12:15**  
Presentation: René Pollesch  
Performance analysis *René Pollesch: Cry Baby*  
Practical exercise + creative feedback
- 5. Tuesday, 24 September, 9-12:15**  
What is performance II  
Readings and presentations:
  - Erika Fischer-Lichte: 'Central Concepts of Theater and Performance Research', in: *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies* (2013), p. 5-46.
  - Hans-Thies Lehmann: 'Panorama of Postdramatic Theater', in: *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006), p. 68-107.
- 6. SPECIAL EVENING DATE: Friday, 27 September 7pm**  
Performance visit  
***Simone dede Ayivi and Kompliz\*innen: Solidaritätsstück SOPHIENSAELE*** (Sophienstraße 18)
- 7. Tuesday, 1 October, 9-12:15**  
Presentation: Simone dede Ayivi  
Performance analysis *Simone dede Ayivi: Solidaritätstück*  
Practical exercise + creative feedback
- 8. SPECIAL EVENING DATE: 4 October, 8pm**  
Performance visit  
***She She Pop: Oratorium Hebbel am Ufer - HAU1*** (Stresemannstr. 29)
- 9. Tuesday, 8 October, 9-12:15**  
Presentation: She She Pop  
Performance analysis *She She Pop: Oratorium*  
Practical exercise + creative feedback
- 10. Tuesday, 22 October, 9-12:15**  
What is performance III  
Reading and presentation:
  - Rebecca Schneider: 'Performance Remains', in: *Perform, Repeat, Record* (2012), ed. by Jones and Heathfield, p. 137-50.
- 11. Tuesday, 5 November, 9-12:15**  
Ways and conditions of making theatre in Berlin  
Stadttheater versus Freie Szene

Regietheater versus collective devising

Special guest: **Gob Squad / She She Pop / Turbo Pascal** (tbc)

**12. Tuesday, 12 November, 9-12:15**

Postmigrant Theater in Berlin

Reading and presentations:

- Azadeh Sharifi: 'Theater and Migration. Documentation, Influences and Perspectives in European Theatre', in: *Independent Theatre in Contemporary Europe. Structures – Aesthetics – Cultural Policy* (2017), ed. by Brauneck and ITI Germany, p. 321-416.
- Presentation: inside the institution (postmigrant theater at Gorki or Ballhaus Naunynstraße)

**13. SPECIAL EVENING DATE (exact date tbc)**

Performance visit

**Maxim Gorki Theater** or **Ballhaus Naunynstraße**

**14. Tuesday, 19 November, 9-12:15**

Performance analysis

Production of final projects (group devising, mentoring, creative feedback)

**15. Tuesday, 3 December, 9-12:15**

Production of final projects (group devising, mentoring, creative feedback)

**16. Tuesday, 10 December, 9-12:15**

Production of final projects (group devising, mentoring, creative feedback)

**17. Presentation of final projects (date and time tbc)**

Presentation, feedback session, evaluation

## Facility Guidelines:

“The Factory” – Eichenstrasse 43

## The Factory Policy Agreement

- 1) “The Factory” at BCB (Eichenstrasse 43) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Mandatory in-class orientations are required to retain chip access to the Factory. Chip access to The Factory is from 7am to 10pm everyday during the semester. At 10pm students will be asked to leave the building by BCB security personnel.
- 2) Students agree to only use the common spaces that are available for their needs, and must respect private spaces that are off-limits. For requesting to reserve the dance /

- theater space and / or Seminar Room 6, please fill out the online [Factory Reservation Form](#). The Factory Staff will get back to you within two weekdays. (Monday - Friday).
- 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 must be kept clear of any obstructions.
  - 5) Spray painting and handling of any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not allowed inside the building. Contact the Studio Arts Manager concerning working with these materials. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be properly protected with a drop cloth or a packing paper provided by the workshop.
  - 6) No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside the workshop and studio 6.
  - 7) 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.
  - 8) If BCB workshop tools must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, please contact The Studio Arts Manager (by appointment).
  - 9) There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with the Studio Arts Manager.
  - 10) 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. Final grades may be penalized and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
  - 11) Contact Studio Arts Manager directly with any questions: [j.park@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.park@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). 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 directly with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu

## MacLab and Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

\*\* Guidelines to be offered during orientations.