

TH322

Expanded Narration: Telling Stories in Contemporary Theater and Performance

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg
Course Time: Tue 14:00-17:15
Location: factory, performance space
Email: n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours: Wed 13:30-15:00 or by appointment

Course Description

Collecting objects, reading traces, mapping memories, tailoring identities, gaming autobiographies: artists in contemporary performance and theater have developed a whole range of new narrative techniques and formats. Considering the large variety of participatory theatre installations, autobiographical performances, immersive role-playing games, game-performances, audio- and video-walks that have emerged in the recent years it seems remarkable that there are hardly any discussions on the topic of narrative in theater, especially in the context of a so-called Postdramatic Theater from which these new theatrical formats arise. It's time to talk about narrative!

This course takes a close look at current, contemporary theater productions and their narrative implications. We will question how those new theatrical formats tell stories. What does it mean to tell stories in contemporary, often non-literary theater? What do these narrative practices tell us about narrative itself and its cultural function in general? What does telling a story really mean anyway? The course aims at stimulating a fruitful dialogue between critical reading, thinking, discussing and practical performance work. Texts will include classic narrative theory as well as performance theory. We will look at works by theater artists and performance groups such as Forced Entertainment, She She Pop, Bobby Baker, SIGNA, Eva Meyer-Keller, plan b, Lone Twin, Janet Cardiff and we will experiment with new narrative formats in creative response to their work. This course will serve both as an unorthodox introduction to narrative theory as well as contemporary performance practice.

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 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

- Attendance of all classes and performance/theater visit 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 ten minutes will be considered an absence.

Assessment

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

Assignments and Deadlines

Each student is asked

- in pairs: to present two lecture-performances/performative presentations that engage with core arguments from specific class readings.
- to attend chosen evening performances at various locations throughout the city.
- to submit a mid-term essay (900-1100 words) by March 17, 2020.
- in collaboration with other students: to further develop/devise class exercises into small performances and to present the results as part of THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY 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

(includes attendance, participation in creative exercises, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for rehearsal, communication with Professor and other students): 35%

Two lecture performances/
performative presentations on class readings: 20%

Midterm essay: 25%

Devising and presentation of final performances
(includes rehearsal and tech-rider submission): 20%

Schedule

Spring 2020 classes start on Monday, January 27 and run until Friday, May 15 with spring break planned from Monday, April 6 – Monday, April 13. Completion week is from May 11 - 15. 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

Week 1

Tuesday, 28 January 2020, 14-17:15

- introductions

***** SPECIAL EVENING DATE *****

Friday, 31 January 2020, 19:00-1:00 (!)

- performance visit:

Gob Squad: *I Love You, Goodbye* (The Brexit and Beyond Edition)

Hebbel am Ufer I (Stresemannstraße 29, 10963 Berlin)

Week 2

Tuesday, 4 February 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

WHAT IS NARRATION I?

STRUCTURALIST NARRATOLOGY AND DRAMA THEORY

- Discussion performance visit: *Gob Squad*

- performative presentation on:

- Gérard Genette: *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*, Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1980, p. 25-32.
- Manfred Pfister: *Theory and Analysis of Drama*, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993, chapter 1.2 "Dramatic speech situation and dialogue", p. 2-6.

- performance examples by Ivana Müller, Uwe Mengel, Dries Verhoeven

*** SPECIAL EVENING DATE ***

Friday, 7 February 2020, 12:00

- performance visit:

Sheena McGrandles: *Flush*

Sophiensaele (Sophienstraße 18, Mitte)

Week 3

Tuesday, 11 February 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

WHAT IS NARRATION II?

NARRATION AS CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

- discussion: performance by Sheene McGrandles

- performative presentation on:

- Hayden White: "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" in: Geoffrey Roberts (ed.): *The History and Narrative Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 221-36.
- Peter Brooks: *Reading for the Plot. Design and Intention in Narrative*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992 [1984], preface: p. xi-xviii.
- Richard Bauman: *Story, Performance, and Event. Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative*, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 1-10.

- performance exercise

Week 4

Tuesday, 18 February 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

NARRATION AS/VERSUS PERFORMANCE

- showing and feedback of last week's exercise

- performative presentation on:

- Peggy Phelan: "Shards of a History of Performance Art: Pollock and Namuth Through a Glass, Darkly", in: James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (ed.): *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 499-512.
- Eric E. Peterson, Kristin M. Langellier: "The Performance Turn in Narrative Studies", in: *Narrative Inquiry* 16:1, 2006, p. 173-180.

Week 5

Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

NARRATION GAMES I

- performance examples by Interrobang, machina eX, SIGNA

- performative presentations on:

- Richard Schechner: *Environmental Theatre*, New York and London: Applause, 1994 [1973], p. 78-86.
- Marie-Laure Ryan: *Avatars of Story*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, chapter "Computer Games as Narrative", p. 181-203.

- performance exercise

Week 6

Tuesday, 3 March 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

NARRATION GAMES II

- continuing performance exercise

- presentation and feedback

Week 7

Tuesday, 10 March 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

NARRATION – MOVEMENT – SPACE I

- performance examples by Gob Squad, plan b, Janet Cardiff, Rimini Protokoll

- performative presentations on:

- Michel De Certeau: *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988 [1984], Chapter "Spatial Stories", p. 115-30.
- Rebecca Schneider: "Performance Remains", in: Adrian Heathfield and Amelia Jones (ed.): *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, New York: Intellect Ltd, 2012, p. 137-50.

Week 8

!!! NO CLASS on Tuesday, 17 March 2020 !!!

- *submission*: mid-term essay (Tuesday, 24 March 2020 midnight)

Week 9

Tuesday, 24 March 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

NARRATION – MOVEMENT – SPACE II

- performance exercise

- showing, feedback

TOPIC:

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE I

- performance examples by She She Pop, Nature Theater of Oklahoma, etc.

***** SPECIAL EVENING DATE *****

Tuesday, 24 March 2020, 19:00

- performance visit:

Joana Tischkau: *Being Pink Ain't Easy*

Sophiensaele (Sophienstr. 18, Mitte)

Week 10

Tuesday, 31 March 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE II

- discussion performance visit: *Joana Tischkau*

- performative presentations on:

- Jerome Bruner: "Self-making and World-making", in: Jens Brockmeier, Donal Carbaugh (ed.): *Narrative and Identity. Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001, S. 25-37.

- performance exercise

- showing, feedback

SPRING BREAK: 6-13 April 2020

Week 11

Tuesday, 14 April 2020, 14-17:15

TOPIC:

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE III

- special guest (14:00-15:30)

Gob Squad

discussion on autobiography and narration in performance

- choosing performances for further development and final presentation, defining working groups, in groups: making a rehearsal schedule (2 rehearsals per week)

Week 12

Tuesday, 21 April 2020, 14-17:15

- showing, creative feedback, defining the next steps

- *submission*: technical rider

Week 13

Tuesday, 28 April 2020, 14-17:15

- showing of final version, feedback, preparing *THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY*

Week 14

Tuesday, 5 May 2020, 14-17:15

- dress rehearsal in class

- wrap-up

*** *SPECIAL EVENING DATE* *** (date tbc)

- tech-run with other theater/performance courses

*** *THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY* *** (evening date, exact date tbc)

- final presentation

Week 15

completion week

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

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.