

TH 180 Rethinking Regie: An Introduction to Directing

Seminar Leader: Julia Hart
Course Times: Thursdays 3:45-7pm
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm (by appointment)

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the basics of directing theatre in the context of the contemporary German theatre. In this exploration of theatre directing, students will first study the history of the role of the theatre director in Germany and discuss the various definitions of the controversial term *Regietheater* or “director’s theatre.” How has the role of the director in Germany changed over time and what does directing look like in Germany today? Students will be also introduced to basic directing techniques in class and learn exercises for staging text-based material. What are the steps a director in Germany typically goes through when directing a play? What are different ways of developing a conceptual approach to a piece and how can this affect your work with actors? In addition to rehearsing scenes in class, students will attend several theatre performances and analyse the staging of German directors currently working in Berlin.

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.
- Please contact Studio Arts Manager Joon Park for more information: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

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 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.

*Please note: students who are unable to attend some in-person classes due to travel restrictions, quarantine measures, or illness will be able to participate in this course remotely as necessary.

Scene Study Requirements:

- choose one scene that you would like to explore and conceptualise, devise, and rehearse as director.
- Two additional three hour rehearsals per scene to be completed outside of class (one rehearsal per week)
- Scenes will be discussed and critiqued on 10.12.2020

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 on stage, the given circumstances of the scene as laid out by the playwright, the action, the setting, and the characters in the scene. Students will be also be assessed on their use of space, lighting, movement/gesture, and clear intention of what is being explored in the scene.

Directing Etudes

- Students will direct a non-verbal scenes, short monologues, and short two person scenes that we will rehearse and discuss in class during the first half of the semester. These assignments will be part of the class participation grade.

Written requirements:

Writing Assignments

Please note: All written assignments should be submitted by 11:59pm on the deadline on Google Classroom

Production Abstract (due 4.11.2020)

Students will think as directors and take the beginning steps of developing a conceptual approach to a production at a state theatre. Students will present their ideas together in class on 5.11.2020 and each student will write their thoughts in a brief summary (see below).

Production Abstract (1000 words) should contain the following:

- A discussion of your conceptual ideas concerning a dramatic work. Describe your conceptual approach to your theatre production. State which ideas, questions, and styles your team

would explore and include initial ideas about changes to the script (if applicable), music (live or recorded), sound (live or recorded), video (live camera, pre-recorded videos), casting choices (i.e. cross-casting, casting multiples) and the role or position of the audience in the theatre.

Scene Study Essay (due 21.12.20)

Scene Study Essay should contain the following:

- Rehearsal process: how the scene was chosen, a brief analysis of the scene (the situation, the language, the characters, the central conflict if there is one), 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. Critical reflection of your work as a director.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Syllabi for core and elective classes should note or refer to the following policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: *essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, 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

Participation 30%
Written Assignments 30%
Directing Assignments 40%

Temporary Remote Participation:

Students unable to attend live sessions for a period of time may participate remotely during scheduled class times. The instructor will arrange to teleconference class sessions as needed.

Schedule

- 5.9 **12-3pm in the Factory (rescheduled from 3.9)
What is directing? A look at 15 contemporary German theatre directors and their productions.
Directing Etude 1
Katie Mitchell Adjectives exercise.
- 10.9 What is theatre? What is performance? Introduction/Review of concepts of theatre and performance .
Reading:

Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies Erika Fischer-Lichte. 1-20

The Bedford Introduction to Drama 1-24 (on Google Classroom)
The Semiotics of Theatre. Erika Fischer-Lichte. 1-55

Directing Etude 2

17.9 Directing Workshop

-Workshop preparation to be announce

Reading: *A Director Prepares* Anne Bogart (1-155)

24.9 Historical Look at the Director in Germany 1880-1950

Reading:

History of German Theatre: 1-7 (on Google Classroom and in the library on reserve) Ed. Simon Williams and Maïke Hamburger

History of German Theatre: Chapter 7: "The rise of the director"
171-197

Fifty Key Theatre Directors Ed. Shomit Mitte and Maria Shevtsova.

Chapters: Max Reinhardt 21-26 Erwin Piscator 41-46, Bertolt Brecht
52-56,

Actors on Acting. Toby Cole. 254-261, 294-299, 301-311

"Introduction. The dissensus of Regie: rethinking director's theater"

Peter Boenisch. 1-11

Directing Etude 3

1.10 German Theatre Directing 1945-2000s

Reading:

Chapter 13 "Directors and actors in modern and contemporary German theater 1945-2006" 332-359

Fifty Key Theatre Directors Ed. Shomit Mitte and Maria Shevtsova. Peter Stein 148-154 Pina Bausch 173-185, Robert Wilson 185-190

German Theatre Dictionary: Regietheater 313-314

Directing Etude 4

8.10 Script Analysis I

Reading:

Backwards and Forwards. A Technical Manual for Reading Plays.

David Ball. 9-99

Hamlet. William Shakespeare

Scene Analysis Exercise

15.10 On Regie: an in-depth look at several directors ways of working:

Reading:

Directing Scenes and Senses: The thinking of Regie.

Peter Boenisch 97-117, 129-139, 164-189.

Theater is more beautiful than war. Carlson 95-115, 142-180

Preparing your ideas / Exercises in developing a conceptual approach

-Production Abstract Assigned (on Hamlet)

-Select a scene from Hamlet to direct in November-December

22.10 Fall Break No Class

5.11 Script Analysis II

Reading:

The Director's Craft. Katie Mitchell. 7-74

(Optional Reading: *Directing Actors*. Judith Weston. 163-233)

Production Abstract Discussion and Critique
Hamlet Script Analysis Exercise (in class)

12.11 Directing Workshop Two / First Rehearsals

19.11 Rehearsal Methods/ Working with Actors

Reading:

The Director's Craft. Katie Mitchell. 113-191

Directing Actors. Judith Weston. Rehearsal IX: 245-278

A Sense of Direction. William Ball 13-23, 44-69

Rehearsals

26.11 Directing Workshop / Rehearsals

3.12 Scene Rehearsals

10.12 Scene Presentations

21.12 Final Essay Due