

# TH305 SENSE: Staging a Theater Production

Thursdays 15:45-19:00

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Office hours: Thursdays 2:30-3:30pm

In this advanced theater course, students will work as actors, directors, dramaturges, and set and costume designers to stage a piece of contemporary German drama: *SENSE* by Anja Hilling. *SENSE* weaves together five stories about teenagers who are led by their senses on a journey of intoxicating romantic relationships and complex friendships. What steps do contemporary theater artists take to stage a play from start to finish? What preparation is required of an artistic team and of the actors? Directors will learn how to implement their aesthetic ideas and work with different forms of narration on stage, while actors will explore methods to develop dramatic characters. Students will create conceptual approaches to their work as directors, actors and designers, and test their ideas together in the rehearsal room. Students will form a theater company, rehearsing this play during the course of the semester and presenting the final theater production in May of 2024.

## 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, performance work, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all costumes, props, set pieces, and / or any personal belongings before the end of the semester. Failure to remove materials and technical equipment or return spaces clean and empty may result in final grade penalization. Donating unrequested 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](mailto:j.park@berlin.bard.edu)

## Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. 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 at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Please email the Professor in case of absence and submit a doctor's note if necessary.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

## **SENSE Scenework:**

### **Scene Requirements:**

- choose one act from *Sense* that you would like to explore and conceptualise, devise, and rehearse as an actor or director.
- One additional three hour rehearsal per week to be completed outside of class each week during the rehearsal process over the entire course of the semester.. The first half of your act will be presented and discussed on **21.3.2024**. The entirety of your act will be presented and discussed on **2.5.2024**.
- Additional assignments and rehearsal reports will be posted on Google Classroom on a regular basis.

### **Scenework Assessment**

- Students will be graded on their preparation, completion of rehearsal reports (to be uploaded on Google Classroom, 1-2 paragraphs in length), and the ability to discuss their ideas about the situation on stage, the characters or performer's roles in the scene, and what ideas about staging or interpretation of character are being tested in rehearsal. Actors will be assessed on their physicality, use of movement/gesture, delivery of lines, and a clear methodical approach to their performance. Directors will be assessed on their use of space, movement/gesture, and clear intention of what is being explored in the scene and how rehearsals are structured.

The participation grade will be based on students' participation in class discussions and the consistent feedback given to other students' work. The following exercises will also be part of the participation grade for this course:

### **Theatre Technique Book Presentation:**

- Depending on their interest, students will choose a book about contemporary acting or directing techniques. Students will present the main ideas from this book and the acting or directing techniques laid out in the book. Suggested directing books include: *A Director Prepares* Anne Bogart, *The Director's Craft* Katie Mitchell, *Backwards and Forwards*. *A Technical Manual for Reading Plays* David Ball, *A Sense of Direction* by William Ball. Suggested acting books include: *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, *True and False* by David Mamet, *An Actor Prepares* Stanislavsky or *Creating a Role* Stanislavsky,

### **Set Design and Costume Design Exercise:**

- Students will develop ideas for possible set and costume design for one act of *Sense* in class. This set and costume exercise will first be worked on in class with set designer Iris Holstein and developed further by students outside of class. Students will then present their set and costume ideas for *Sense* during the following week in class.

**Prop / Lights/ Set/ Costume / Sound/ Dramaturgy Report:**

- Students will join a *Sense* team as prop designers, set designers, costume designers, light designers, sound design, musicians or dramaturgs throughout the semester. Students will submit a brief report on their process on **25.4.2024**.

**Written requirements:**

Scene Study Essay (2000 words due 15.5.2024)

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, including what theatrical devices or aspects of characterization were explored. What changes, additions, cuts, and did you and your team try out with Anja Hilling's play? Include 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

**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+). The Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where a Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

\*Course readings can mostly be found on Google Classroom. Otherwise texts will be on reserve in the BCB library.

**Schedule**

- 1.2 Introduction, discussion on contemporary German theatre aesthetics, introduction to Anja Hilling and *Sense*
- 8.2 *Sense*- first table reading. Discussion of impressions, associations, main dramatic conflicts, as well as beginning with play analysis, character analysis  
*Sense* by Anja Hilling (2007)  
*Visit to a Small Planet* by Elinor Fuchs

- 15.2 Contemporary Theatre Aesthetics (continued)  
Workshop Stage Narration Part 1  
Spielweisen - modes of acting and performances, considering different possibilities of working with text and movement, different modes of storytelling  
Reading: choose one of the suggested directing or acting books  
Brief book presentations in class  
*\*Directors choose which act of SENSE they will focus on for the rest of the semester*
- 22.2 Conceptual Approaches to SENSE  
Workshop Stage Narration Part 2  
Character Portrayal  
Assignment: Actors will present a one minute monologue in class  
Directors will present first conceptual ideas concerning one act from *Sense*  
*\*Semester Sense groups formed*
- 29.2 Rehearsal Process Possibilities  
Rehearsal Structure  
Working with Improvisation  
Assignment: one table rehearsal outside of class, also each group must submit their rehearsal schedule for the rest of the semester on Google Classroom
- 7.3 Introduction Set Design and Costume Design. Lecture and Workshop with set and costume designer Iris Holstein.  
Assignment: rehearsal outside of class (improvisation, characterization, world of the play, staging experiments)
- 14.3 *\*Set and Costume Design Exercise Presentations*  
Scene Study Rehearsals  
Assignment: one rehearsal outside of class, actors work on memorising lines
- 21.3 First half of act presentations and feedback
- 28.3 SPRING BREAK — NO CLASS
- 4.4 Acting Workshop  
Scene Study Rehearsals  
Assignments: See Google Classroom  
One three hour rehearsal outside of class

*\*Actors should have most of their lines memorised and submit character portrait by 4.4.24*

*\*Directors will submit a rehearsal plan, rehearsal goals, budget requests by 4.4.24*

\*Designers, Dramaturgs will submit list of working goals and initial ideas on **4.4.24**

11.4 Directing Workshop  
Scene Study Rehearsals  
Assignments: See Google Classroom  
One three hour rehearsal outside of class

18.4 Scene Study Rehearsals  
Assignments: See Google Classroom  
One three hour rehearsal outside of class

25.4 Scene Study Rehearsals  
Assignments: See Google Classroom  
One three hour rehearsal outside of class

\*Prop / Lights/ Set/ Costume / Sound/ Dramaturgy one page report due

2.5 Sense in class presentations  
Assignments: See Google Classroom  
One three hour rehearsal outside of class

7.5 / 8.5 Performance Factory - exact date TBA.

Performance Factory - Scene Study Performances (date of Performance Factory is subject to change and will be determined later in the semester)

15.5 Scene Study Essays Due

## 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 – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

- 1) BCB's AV (Audio / Visual) facilities provide a limited quantity of AV equipment to support 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. Borrowing equipment is currently implemented by scheduling an advance appointment through this link: <https://avroom.youcanbook.me/>  
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](mailto: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](mailto:av@berlin.bard.edu)

## Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

Computer Pool and Media Lab – Kuckhoffstrasse 24 (upstairs)

\*\* Guidelines to be offered during orientations.