

TH 180 Rethinking Regie: An Introduction to Directing

Seminar Leader: Julia Hart
Course Times: Thursdays 3:45-7pm
Email: j.hart@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-3:30pm (by appointment)

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the basics of directing theater in the context of contemporary German theater. The course has a two-fold structure: First, students will study different theater aesthetics and styles by looking at the work of directors currently working in Berlin and discuss the various definitions of the controversial term Regietheater or “director’s theater.” What does directing look like in Germany today and what is the role of the director in the rehearsal? Students will be 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? Second, students in this course will work together throughout the semester with students in the "Introduction to Playwriting" seminar, instructed by Cory Tamler. In a workshop setting, students will form teams of directors, playwrights and actors to explore different forms of collaboration in the rehearsal room. Students will work on staged readings and short scenes that will culminate in a theater presentation in the Factory at the end of the semester.

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.

Scene Study Requirements:

- choose one scene that you would like to explore and conceptualise, devise, and rehearse as director.
- Additional three hour rehearsals per scene to be completed outside of class (one rehearsal per week)
- Scenes will be discussed and critiqued on 19.12.2024
- Scenes can be presented at the Performance Factory

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, acting style chosen, role of language in the piece and clear intention of what is being explored in the scene.

Directing Workshops

- Students will direct 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 21.11.2024)

Students will think as directors and take the beginning steps of developing a conceptual approach to directing a production of Dea Loher's play *The Last Fire*. Students will present their ideas together in class on 21.11.2024 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 Dea Loher's play *The Last Fire*. 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 space.

Scene Study Essay (due 23.12.2024)

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 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.*

Schedule

5.9 NO CLASS - this class begins on 12.9 !

12.9 3:45-7pm

What is directing?

Directing Etude 1

Katie Mitchell Adjectives exercise.

*Brief oral presentations on: Jette Steckel, Christopher Rüping, Leonie Böhm, Nicolas Stemann, Susanne Kennedy, Yael Ronan, Pinar Karabulut

19.9 What is theatre? What is performance? Introduction/Review of concepts of theatre and performance .

Reading:

Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies Erika Fischer-Lichte. Chapter One and Chapter Three

Visit to a Small Planet by Elinor Fuchs

Dea Loher: *The Last Fire* (2008)

Workshop- Thinking about narration on Stage, Playing with “Spielweisen” using Dea Loher’s play *The Last Fire*

Staged Reading Exercise from *The Last Fire* and Discussion

*discussion of Visit to a Small Planet

- 26.9 Look at the German Director / What is Regietheater?
Reading:
History of German Theatre: 1-7 (on Google Classroom and in the library on reserve) Ed. Simon Williams and Maïke Hamburger
“Introduction. The dissensus of Regie: rethinking director’s theater”
Peter Boehnisch. 1-11
German Theatre Dictionary: Regietheater 313-314
Directing Scenes and Senses: The thinking of Regie.
Peter Boenisch 97-117,164-189.
- *Collaborative Exercise with Playwriting students! 5:30-7pm
- 3.10 Thinking about directing. Comparing approaches.
Directing Workshop Part One- Moments of Joy, Moments of Sadness
Reading: *A Director Prepares* Anne Bogart (1-155)
-continued work on excerpts from *The Last Fire*
- 10.10 Directing Workshop Part Two: Working with movement, choreography
and gesture - staging specific moments and images
Assignment: Movement Etude preparation and presentation
*Groups formed with playwriting students for scene exercise
- 17.10 Scene Exercise In-Class Rehearsals
Assignments: See Google Classroom
One three hour rehearsal outside of class
- 24.10 FALL BREAK
- 31.10 Scene Exercise Presentation / Discussion and Feedback
- 2.11/3.11 Acting Workshop with Heinrich Horowitz for students interesting in
for getting additional credits for acting. Optional and not mandatory
this course.
- 7.11 Script Analysis / Staging Scenes - First Steps / Developing a
Conceptual Approach
The Last Fire- conceptual approach exercise
Reading:
Backwards and Forwards. A Technical Manual for Reading Plays.

- David Ball. 9-99 Preparing a conceptual approach
Assignment: Designating Lines from the Last Fire
Assignment: Thought Exercise on Google Classroom
- 14.11 Rehearsal Preparation Processes
Reading: *A Director Prepares* by Katie Mitchell 7-74
- 21.11 Production Abstract Presentation
Table Reading / Meeting with Playwriting Students
(Groups formed for Final Projects)
- 28.11 Final Project Group Rehearsals
Assignments: See Google Classroom
One three hour rehearsal outside of class
- 5.12 Final Project Group Rehearsals
Assignments: See Google Classroom
One three hour rehearsal outside of class
- 12.12 Final Project Rehearsals
Assignments: See Google Classroom
One three hour rehearsal outside of class
- 19.12 Final Project Presentations in Class
- 19.12 / 20.12 Performance Factory