

TH220

Making Theater in Berlin: A Collaboration with the Theater *Ballhaus Ost*

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course offers an intensive study and practical exploration of how performing arts are produced in Berlin. Our semester-long case study will be Ballhaus Ost, a theater venue located in Penzlauer Berg. As one of most vibrant places for bold and innovative independent performing arts in the city, Ballhaus Ost offers a rich program that includes emerging performing artists as well as established, award-winning theater makers such as Monster Truck, Christoph Winkler, or Bard alumna Marie Schleeef. In this course, Ballhaus Ost serves as an exemplary theater institution that we will study and explore practically: How do people work in a theater? What departments are needed to make a theater piece? How does one curate a meaningful program? What is the relationship between artists and the institution? Between the institution and cultural policy? Together with the Ballhaus Ost team, we will delve into the work of various departments such as curation and programming, lighting design, communications and fundraising, and, above all, artistic creation: In workshops and discussions with artists commissioned by Ballhaus Ost, we will explore their artistic approaches, concerns and working methods. In the second half of the course, the students will have the opportunity to apply what they have learned and develop their own short performances, which will be presented on the stage of Ballhaus Ost. The aim of this course is to gain hands-on experience in creating performing arts within a professional setting and working inside a theater institution, while situating the practices and artworks developed at Ballhaus Ost within the broader context of Berlin's vibrant theater culture and the globalized theater industry. Classes will be taught alternately at BCB and in the rehearsal spaces and on the stage of Ballhaus Ost.

Note: This advanced course is also open to foundational level students.

Assessment

Collaboration

This course encourages artistic and intellectual collaboration amongst students. Working independently, communicating respectfully, and taking responsibility for one another are an essential part of this course. This also includes logistical issues such as organizing rehearsal times, labor division, and technical equipment.

Artistic practice and theory

This course aims to productively interweave performance practice, institutional practice and theory. Students will be assessed on their ability and willingness to fruitfully combine creative art work and critical thinking.

Participation and preparation

Please complete the required homework (performance practice/rehearsals, readings, viewings, writing) and contribute creatively and meaningfully to the exercises and discussions. You will receive a

participation grade which is based on your in-class engagement and completion of homework. Please reserve 4 hours on average for weekly class preparation and asynchronous class work. Readings will be made available through Google Classroom. For further readings please consult the books on our reserve shelf in the library.

Assignments and Deadlines

- Artistic responses in groups and individual written memos on performance visits (see schedule)
- Regular rehearsal journaling on artistic process for final performance project (see schedule)
- Presentation of final performance project on the stage of Ballhaus Ost in week 14

Purchases

- Students will have to pay ca. 50 Euros for theater tickets.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Initiate appointments with the 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 their professors in a timely manner.
- Inform their professors 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 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.

Accommodations

- Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.
- Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.
- If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.
- Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to

supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

- Attendance of **all classes and excursions** is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, one absence (that is, absence from **one three-hour session**) will not affect the participation grade or require documentation. **Please note: two theater visits of an average length are regarded as one three-hour session.**
- Students are expected to attend all off- and on-campus classes and performance visits from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, the instructor must be informed in advance.
- You may encounter circumstances that prevent you from attending classes for which you may be excused, meaning that the absence will not impact your grade. These circumstances include illness, religious observance, military obligation, attendance at a conference, a Bard Network event, a civic engagement initiative, a research trip or another compelling circumstance outside of your control (i.e. court appearance, visa appointment, death of a family member). Optional non-academic travel, hosting visiting family and friends, or work schedules **are not ground for excused absences.**
- You will **be allowed to self-report your absence one time**, meaning that a notification informing your instructor about the reason for your absence before or within 24 hours of the class is sufficient. If you miss class more than once you will need to provide your instructor with appropriate documentation in order to be excused (i.e. a doctor's note).
- Tardiness after fifteen minutes will be considered an absence.
- All unexcused absences will lower the final grade by one step (i.e. if your final grade is a B, you will be downgraded to a B-).
- Please note that 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, whether excused or unexcused. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

- Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, 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.

Grade Breakdown

Class participation

40%

Grading criteria:

The participation grade includes attendance; homework; contributions to discussions and exercises; active collaboration with partners; communication with instructors and other students.

Written memos on performance visits**10 %**Grading criteria

Completion of memos after each performance visit (writing prompt will be provided).

Rehearsal Journal on final performance project**20%**Grading criteria

Starting in week 10: Rehearsals for your final project should be reflected individually in written form and submitted on Tuesdays before the next class. Each journal entry should include a summary of the rehearsal, a reflection of new insights and artistic decisions in relation to the overall artistic concept, notes on developments/challenges/ accomplishments in your artistic collaboration. Please be precise with your language, wording, style, terminology, and argumentation.

Final project**30 %**Grading criteria:

Overall artistic concept; relation to topics and/or artistic approaches experienced and discussed in class; devising process; artistic complexity; final presentation; ability to self-reflect on the project during class showings.

Schedule**PLEASE NOTE:**

Class times vary due to workshop sessions and performance visits! Please read this schedule carefully and mark the class location, length of each class, and any extra dates in your calendar!

This schedule is subject to change due to various collaborations with artists and staff from Ballhaus Ost. We will keep you updated on any changes that might occur, so please check your emails regularly!

Week 1: Introductions - Ballhaus Ost**Wed, Jan 28, 2:00-5:15pm**

Class at Ballhaus Ost (BHO), Pappelallee 15, 10437 Berlin (M1 Milastraße)

Week 2: German and Berlin Theater Landscape + Performance Visit**Wed, Feb 4, 2:00-4:00pm (** SHORT CLASS **, BCB factory)**Homework due:

- Reading: Mieke Matzke: "Other Spaces for Production: On the Spaces of Independent Theater".

In class

Warm-up

Class reading; short lecture; exercise: What is theater in your culture?

AV introduction

Sat, Feb 7, Performance visit, meeting 7:30pm BHO

[Jeanne Eschert: we prepared ourselves not to be found](#)

Week 3: Working as Independent Performing Artists + Set Design Exhibition**Wed, Feb 11, 2:00-3:30 pm (** SHORT CLASS **, BCB factory)**Homework due:

- memo on performance visit

- Reading: Lisa Lucassen: "Working Independently in a Collective – An Invitation".

In class
Warm-up
Discussion on reading and performance visit
Meet the artist: workshop-discussion with Jeanne Eschert

Fri, Feb 13, Exhibition visit, 6:00-ca.8:30pm (BHO)

[Final presentations by Set Design Class from Berlin University of the Arts](#)

Week 4: Artistic Response 1 + Performance Visit

Wed, Feb 18, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Homework due:

- memo on exhibition visit
- performance assignment in groups: create an artistic response to Jeanne Eschert's *we prepared ourselves not to be found*

In class

Warm-up
Discussing exhibition as performance
Artistic response showing, feedback

Thu, Feb 19, Performance visit, meeting 7:30pm BHO

[Núria Frías Corrius: *Mummy, Daddy & Other Issues*](#)

Week 5: Workshop with Marlene Helling + Performance Visit

Wed, Feb 25, 2:00-5:15pm (BCB factory)

Homework due:

- memo on performance visit

In class

Discussing performance visit
Workshop with Marlene Helling

Sat, Feb 28, Performance Visit (two lecture performances), meeting 5:30 BHO

[Hannah Helbig: *Structures and Humans - Diary of an Intern 2.0*](#)

[Marlene Helling: *POOLS*](#)

Week 6: Working inside BHO – program, curation, administration, cultural policy

Wed, Mar 3, 2:00-4:00 (SHORT CLASS **, BHO tbc)**

Homework due:

- memo on one of the performance visits
- reading: Interview with Florian Malzacher: "How can one employ strategies from theater as curatorial strategies?"

In class

Warm-up
Talk with BHO artistic program and admin team

Week 7: Artistic Response 2 + Intro to Artistic Collaboration and Devising

Wed, Mar 11, 2:00-5:15 (BCB factory)

Homework due:

- performance assignment in groups: create an artistic response to either Núria Frías Corrius, Hannah Helbig, or Marlene Helling

In class

Warm-up

Artistic response showing, feedback

Intro to artistic collaboration and devising

Week 8: Working inside BHO – Tech: Lighting, Video, Sound

Wed, Mar 18, 2:00-5:15 (BHO tbc)

In class

Hands-on workshop with BHO Tech Team

Week 9: Final Project

Wed, Mar 25, 2:00-5:15 (BHO tbc)

Homework due:

Bring an idea for a final project

In class

Warm-up

Final project: finding groups

Interim evaluation

*** SPRING BREAK ***

Week 10: Final Project

Wed, Apr 8, 2:00-5:15 (BHO tbc)

Homework due:

Final project journal entry

In class

Warm-up + Final project

Week 11: Final Project

Wed, Apr 15, 2:00-5:15 (BHO tbc)

Homework due:

2 rehearsals in groups

Final project journal entries

Submission Tech Rider

In class

Warm-up + Final project

Meeting with tech department

Week 12: Final Project

Wed, Apr 22, 2:00-5:15 (BHO tbc)

Homework due:

2 rehearsals in groups

Final project journal entries

In class

Warm-up + Final project

Week 13: Final Project

Wed, Apr 29, 2:00-5:15 (BCB factory or Monopol Casino, tbc)

Homework due:

2 rehearsals in groups

Final project journal entries

In class

Warm-up + Internal dress rehearsals (without tech)

Voluntary: weekend voluntary performance visit

Ayat Najafi & Arta Atelier Kollektiv: *Frauen der Revolutionsstraße* (Women of the Revolution Street)

Week 14: Technical Get-in, final rehearsals, performance at BHO

Note: please keep Mon-Wed free!!!

We will try to arrange rehearsal times around people's class times.

Homework due:

2 rehearsals in groups

Final project journal entries

Mon, May 4

10am-6pm: With BHO team - technical get-in: stage, video, lighting, sound (afternoon)

In shifts, only tech students involved

6-10pm: rehearsals without tech

All groups involved

Tue, May 5

10am-12pm: rehearsal without tech (*group 1*)

12-6pm: programming lights (*two hours for each group, only tech students involved*)

6-9pm: rehearsal without tech (*group 2+3*)

Wed, May 6

10am-1pm: rehearsal without tech possible

2pm: dress rehearsals (*group 1, 2, 3*)

8pm (tbc): house open SHOWTIME ☺

10pm: get-out (*everyone involved*)

Policy on the use of BCB arts facilities:

1. The Factory (Eichenstrasse 43) and Monopol (Provinzstr 40-44) at BCB offer space and facilities to BCB art students. Chip access is from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, including the weekends during the semester. The buildings cannot be used outside these hours. Fire exits and lanes must be kept clear of any obstructions.
2. Students agree only to use the designated class spaces or communal workshops. Respecting the building and its facilities is crucial, as they are shared resources that need to be preserved for the benefit of all.
3. For your safety and the safety of others, smoking and drinking alcohol are strictly prohibited anywhere inside the building.
4. Unauthorized events and/or parties are not permitted. Projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) are not permitted inside the building.
5. Spray painting and handling any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not permitted inside the building.
6. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be adequately protected with the workshop's drop cloth before spray painting or working with plaster.
7. During completion week, any space used by a student must be emptied, with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be adequately disposed of. Final grades may be affected or withheld if any item remains by the inspection deadline.
8. When leaving the building, students must ensure all lights are turned off, all electrical items must be unplugged, and doors must be closed.

9. Contact the Studio art manager directly with any questions: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

Emergency phone numbers:

Police (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 110

Fire (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 112

Ambulance and Paramedics (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 112

Out-of-Hours Medical Care (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 116 117