

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Theatre Criticism :From Theory to Practice - 20402

Last update 17-08-2019

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Theatre Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Mr. Isaiah Bar-Yaacov

Coordinator Email: isaiah.bar-yaacov@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00-12:00

Teaching Staff:

Mr. Isaiah Bar-Yaacov

Course/Module description:

The course will examine the practice of theatrical criticism in the media as an instrument of journalism, documentation and as part of the ongoing dialogue between the artistic practice of the theatre world and society, and also as an essential element in the artistic field of the theatre world. We will try to understand the relationship between performance analysis as practiced in academic discourse and the more impressionistic style of critical writing that appears in newspapers, as well as understanding the different styles of reviews that appear in the media. As part of the course we will read and analyze in class different review articles as well as discussing the ongoing work that the students will be asked to write during the course. In addition we will discuss the different approaches of various leading aesthetic philosophers who will raise questions, such as: what is theatre art, and how does it communicate with us as an audience.

Course/Module aims:

This course should give the students an understanding of the cultural role of journalistic writing about the theatre and the various styles of criticism that appear in the media. The students will also gain a practical experience of writing their own reviews in various formats and lengths.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

By the end of the course students will be able to understand the central role of the theatre critic in the theatrical field in society. They will be able to differentiate between different kinds of review articles in the press. They will know how to write a short review as well as a longer, more analytical article, incorporating the basic elements of the theatre review such as description, analysis and judgment. They will be able to understand the philosophical backdrop behind various styles of critical writing about the theatre.

Attendance requirements(%):

80% - attendance is required.

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The course will be taught as a lecture and laboratory course which incorporates frontal teaching and practical experience in the classroom. The students will be expected to read in advance the articles required for each class. They will also be required to write short exercises and essays that they will have to present in class. During the semester the students will be given a chance to write in different journalistic format about shows they will

see. There may be several organized outings to see shows in theatres in Jerusalem during the semester as part of the required course duties.

Course/Module Content:

- 1) Sociological and philosophical approaches to theatrical art and to the role of the theatre critic.
- 2) Basic rules of journalistic writing as against academic writing about the stage.
- 3) The basic elements of the review article: description, analysis and judgment.
- 4) Different styles of reviews and issues relating to writing about the stage.
- 5) The role of the critic in shaping theatrical history through processes of legitimization and acceptance into the canon.
- 6) The theatre critic as a cultural agent in society and as an agent for social change.

Required Reading:

Required reading list (copies of these articles will appear in the electronic reserves of the course):

- אוריין, דן, "השדה", ב-אוריין, ד., תאטרון בחברה, רעננה: האוניברסיטה הפתוחה, 2008, 63-75.
בלס, גילה, "על הביקורת ועל תפקיד המבקר", ב-גמזו, ח., דר' חיים גמזו: ביקורות אמנות, מחקר ועריכה: גילה בלס, תל-אביב: מוזיאון תל-אביב לאמנות, 2006, 21-28.
לורנד, רות, "יצירת האמנות היא פרשנות משלימה", ב-לורנד, ר., על טבעה של האמנות, תל-אביב: דביר, 1991, 172-196.
עברון, בועז, "תפקיד המבקר בעולם של תקשורת המונית", קשת, חוברת ד, קיץ 1966, 110-120.
Beardsley, Monroe C., "What are Critics For?", in Beardsley, M. C., *The Aesthetic Point of View: Selected Essays*, ed. Michael J. Wren and Donald M. Callen, Ithaca: Cornell U., 1982, 147-164.
Dewey, John, "Criticism and Perception", in Dewey, John, *Art as Experience*, New York: Capricorn, 1958, 298-325.
Dolan, Jill, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*, Ann Arbor: Un. Of Michigan, 1998, 1-18.
Fisher, Mark, *How to Write about Theatre: A Manual for Critics, Students and Bloggers*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, 11-54.
Solomon, Alisa, *Re-dressing the Canon: Essays on Theatre and Gender*, London: Routledge, 1997, 21-45 + 144-154.
Sontag, Susan, "Against Interpretation", in Sontag, S., *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, New York: Picador, 2001, 3-14.
Zarhy-Levo, Yael, *The Theatrical Critic as Cultural Agent: Constructing Pinter, Orton and Stoppard as Absurdist Playwrights*, New York: Peter Lang, 2001, 95-106.

In addition various short review articles from the newspapers will be distributed in class as part of the required reading material of the course.

Additional Reading Material:

Secondary bibliography:

- אוריין, דן, תיאטרון בחברה, ת"א: האוניברסיטה הפתוחה, 2008.
- בודלר, שארל, צייר החיים המודרניים, בני ברק: ספריית הפועלים והוצאת הקיבוץ הארצי, 2003.
- בורדייה, פייר, שאלות בסוציולוגיה, תרגום: אבנר להב, ער. ד"ר ז'יזל ספירו, ת"א: רסלינג, 2005.
- גמזו, חיים, ביקורות תיאטרון, עורך: מיכאל הנדלזלץ, ת"א: הוצאת מוזיאון תל אביב לאמנות, 1999.
- הנדלזלץ, מיכאל, חנוך לוין על פי דרכו, ת"א: הוצאת ידיעות אחרונות, 2001.
- לורנד, רות, על טבעה של האמנות, (בסדרת מה?דע!בעריכת מרסלו דסקל), ת"א: דביר הוצאה לאור, 1991.
- Banes, Sally, *Subversive Expectations: Performance Art and Paratheater in New York 1976-85*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1998.
- Beardsley, Monroe C., *The Aesthetic Point of View: Selected Essays*, ed. Michael J. Wreen and Donald M. Callen, Ithaca: Cornell University, 1982.
- Bentley, Eric, *The Dramatic Event*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1954.
- Bentley, Eric, *In Search of Theater*, New York: Vintage books, 1954.
- Booth, John E., *The Critic, Power and the Performing Arts*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Dewey, John, *Art as Experience*, New York: Capricorn, 1958.
- Gotshalk, D.W., *Art and the Social Order*, New York: Dover, 1947.
- Nathan, George Jean, *The Critic and The Drama*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf: 1922.
- Osborne, Harold, *The Art of Appreciation*, (The Appreciation of the Arts 4), London: Oxford Un. Press, 1970.
- Shrum Jr., Wesley Monroe, *Fringe and Fortune: The Role of Critics in High and Popular Art*, Princeton: Princeton Un. Press, 1996.
- Solomon, Alisa, *Re-Dressing the Canon: Essays on Theatre and Gender*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Sontag, Susan, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, New York: Picador, 1961.
- Tynan, Kenneth, *Curtains*, New York: Atheneum, 1961.
- Tynan, Kenneth, *Tynan on Theatre*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964.
- Windman, Matt, *The Critics Say... 57 Theater Reviewers in New York and Beyond Discuss Their Craft and Its Future*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2016.
- Zarhy-Levo, Yael, *The Theatrical Critic as Cultural Agent: Constructing Pinter, Orton and Stoppard as Absurdist Playwrights*, New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 10 %

Project work 50 %

Assignments 40 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

During the semester the students will be asked to hand in 5-6 short writing exercises based on shows they will see in the theatre. 40% of the final grade will be based on these short assignments (with only four out of six assignments taken into account for grading purposes). The class participation is therefore obligatory and attendance will be regularly checked. In addition, the students will write a more theoretical final paper at the end of the course, which will also relate to the articles we will be reading during the semester. This final paper will be worth 50% of the final grade.