

## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *Chekhov and theatre revolutions in the 20th century - 20569*

*Last update 16-10-2018*

*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: Dr. Olga Levitan*

*Coordinator Email: [levitanolga6@gmail.com](mailto:levitanolga6@gmail.com)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday 14.00-15.00*

---

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Olga Levitan

Course/Module description:

*Chekhov is one of the most important playwrights of 20th century theatre, though his writings initially posed a challenge for theatre artists in different countries, including Russia. The course is dedicated to the main characteristics of Chekhov's drama poetics and their influence on avant-garde theatre practice in the 20th century. Class discussions will focus on the characteristics of Chekhov's dramatic technique, such as a polyphonic structure, epic thinking, tragicomic phenomena, absurd communication, and others. The discussion will trace the various approaches to directing Chekhov's plays, from Stanislavsky to postmodern theatre practices.*

Course/Module aims:

*The aim of the course is to present the specific features of Chekhov's art language and Chekhov's world, and to reveal the meaningful subjects of his plays and his influence on modernist ideas in the 20th century.*

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

*Students will be able to understand the essential interactions between Chekhov's dramatic technique and the meaningful content of his plays as well as to discuss his main philosophical ideas and their influence on 20th century culture.*

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Instruction will consist of a combination of frontal lessons, group discussions. Watching current Chekhov performances and recorded segments, and discussing them. Students will be offered the option of staging performative segments as a practical-research exercise.*

Course/Module Content:

- 1.The Chekhov story as an introduction to his plays.*
- 2.Universal codes and the characteristics of Chekhov's poetics*
- 3.Stanislavsky directs Chekhov: Success or failure?*

- 
4. Chekhov's appearance on European stages: Adventures of acceptance.
  5. Chekhov and the stage grotesque: From Meyerhold to the Wooster Group.
  6. The Chekhovian renaissance in Western theatre after WWII.
  7. Chekhov and the Cruel theatre: Between utopia and dystopia.
  8. Chekhov in the era of deconstruction

Required Reading:

Plays: *The Bear, A Marriage Proposal, The Seagull, Uncle Vania, Three Sisters, The Cherry Orchard*

Stories: *The Duel, Ward Number 6, The Lady With the Dog, The Man in a Shell*

Research:

A. Poetics

גולומב, ח'. "אחרית דבר". צ'כוב, א'. גן הדובדבנים: קומדיה בארבע מערכות. תרגום: נילי מירסקי. תל אביב: הקיבוץ המאוחד, 1988.

שקד, מ'. הדיאלוג הלא-דיאלוגי לאופי הדרמתי במחזה צ'כובי על פי 'בת-שחר'. במה 93, 1982: 57-41.

שקולניקוב, ח'. "מדוע  
מאשה לובשת תמיד  
שחורים?". במה 129,  
1992: 11-5.

Bitsilli, P. *Chekhov's Art: A stylistic Analysis*. Ardis: Ann Arbor, 1983.

Chudakov, A. *Chekhov's Poetics*. Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1983.

Jackson, R.L.

is. "Chekhov's *Seagull*: The Empty Well, The Dry Lake and the Cold Cave". Chekhov. *A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. by R.L. Jackson. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice - Hall, 1967: 99-112.

Rayfield D. *Understanding Chekhov, A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama*. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Tulloch, J. *Chekhov. A Structuralist Study*. NY: Barnes & Noble, 1980.

---

## *B. Chekhov and Theatre*

*Allen, D. Performing Chekhov. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.*

*Clayton J. Douglas, Chekhov Then and Now, Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York, 1997.*

*Golomb, H. A New Poetics of Chekhov's Plays: Presence Through Absence. Eastbourne, Chicago: Sussex Academic Press, 2014.*

*Gotlieb, V. Chekhov in Performance in Russia and Soviet Russia. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1984.*

*Jones, D. Great Directors at Work. Berkley: University of California Press, 1986.*

*Homberg, A. Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov, Jean-Claude van Itallie, Andrei Serban. Performing Arts Journal. Vol. 7, No. 1 (1983), pp. 71-73*

*Miles, P. (ed.). Chekhov on The British Stage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.*

*Senelick, L. The Chekhov Theatre: A Century of the Plays in Performance. United Kingdom: Cambridge University press, 1997.*

*Stanislavsky, K. My life in Art. University Press of the Pacific, 2004.*

### *Additional Reading Material:*

אחי-נחמן, י'. "הבעיה צ'כוב". במה 8, 1961: 78-66.

בר-אריה, כ'. "הרי 'המלט' במחזותיו של צ'כוב". במה 50, 1971: 86-80.

גולדברג, ל'. "רשימות על תאטרון צ'כוב". במה 17, 1963: 18-8.

נמירובסקי, א'. חיי צ'כוב- רומן ביוגרפי. תרגום: א' פינטו. ירושלים: כתר, 2011.

*Anton Chekhov through the eyes of Russian thinkers: Vasilii Rozanov, Dmitrii*

---

Merezhkovskii and Lev Shestov. Ed. Tabachnikova, O., Ure, A. London ; New York : Anthem Press, 2010

Borny, J. *Interpreting Chekhov*. ANU Press <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jbjpn>

Chekhov, A. *Letters on the short story, the drama, and other literary topics*. Selected and edited by Louis S. Friedland. New York: Dover Publication, 1966.

Karlinsky, E. (ed.). *Anton Chekhov Life and Thought*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1973.

Peace, R. *Chekhov : a study of the four major plays*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Schneider, R. *Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov*. *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Oct., 1997), pp. 365-367

Simmons, E. *Chekhov. A Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 20 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 80 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

Recommended to see two performances of Chekhov's plays.