

From Commedia dell'Arte to Modern Theatre (Italian 3352F)

Fall 2016

Instructor: Prof. Cristina Caracchini

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Classes: Monday 9:30-10:30 & Wednesday
9:30-11:30, AHB-1B04

Pre-or Corequisite(s): Italian 3300 or permission
of the Department.

Extra Information: 3 hours, 0.5 course.



Please note that the course will be taught in Italian.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIMS

This course introduces students to the rich and varied history of Italian theatre, from its roots in the Latin comedies of Plautus, to modern and contemporary narration theatre. Along the way, we will consider authors as diverse as Goldoni, Pirandello, De Filippo while privileging present-day playwrights such as Ascanio Celestini, Marco Paolini and Nobel prize-winner Dario Fo. By devoting our attention to both printed texts and filmed theatrical performances we will consider the way in which Italian theatre has influenced and contributed to the development of theatre in Europe. Special consideration will be given to the evolution and transformation of genres and to the distinctive styles and techniques of major dramatic movements. The course aims to achieve the following:

- expose students to a broad variety of plays and genres from Roman theatre to modern and contemporary performance art
- guide students to a firm grasp of the defining techniques and stylistic features of major theatrical movements
- examine the unique contribution that Italian theatrical forms and playwrights have given to the evolution of European theatre
- explore the relationships between theatrical movements and their socio-political and technological environments

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:



- understand the historical evolution of Italian theatrical art and of playwriting genres and conventions from the Renaissance to the present
- grasp the specificity of the language of dramatic art and describe the style and techniques of major playwrights and movements
- discuss the role of Italian playwrights and movements within the wider context of European theatre from the Renaissance to the present
- demonstrate increased awareness of the relationships between theatre and other media/artistic forms, such as the literary novella and opera
- connect theatrical movements with their cultural, political, and technological contexts.

Students will improve their ability to express themselves on these and other related topics, both orally (through in-class presentations) and in writing (in the form of essays).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation & Preparation (10%): students are expected to complete all required readings before coming to class and to maintain regular attendance. Participation is assessed on the basis of day-to-day preparation and contribution to in-class activities and discussions.

B. In-Class Group Presentation (20%): 20 minutes per person, to be followed by class discussion. Each group will be assigned a different topic to cover and present to the rest of the class. Students will be evaluated for their individual performance (i.e., for their capacity to develop and illustrate a particular aspect of the topic assigned to their group) and for their contribution to the performance of the group (i.e., how their individual performance fits in and adds to the group's performance).

C. Close-Analysis Assignment (15%): analysis and interpretation of the key textual features and major thematic aspects of passages/scenes taken from one or more plays studied in class.

D. In class test (25%): 2 hours. It will consist of identification and essay questions.

E. End-of-Term Research Essay (30%): 8 pages, due in class on November 28th. MLA style.

TEXTS (available at the University bookstore)

Required

- Bentley, Eric ed. *The Servant of Two Masters and Other Italian Classics*. Applause Theatre and Cinema Books, 2000. ISBN 978-0936839202
- Celestini, Ascanio, *Radio Clandestina*. Roma: Donzelli, 2005. ISBN: 9788879899208
- De Filippo, Eduardo. *Four Plays*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama. 1992. ISBN 0413666204
- Fo, Dario. *Mistero Buffo: The Collected Plays of Dario Fo (Vol. 2)*. Trans. Ron Jenkins. Theatre Communications Group, 2005. ISBN 978-1559362719
- Paolini, Marco. *Il racconto del Vajont*. Milano: Garzanti, 2013. ISBN: 8811687969
- Pirandello, Luigi. *Three Major Plays*. Trans. Carl R. Mueller. Smith and Kraus, 2001. ISBN 978-1575252315
- A reader for the course will be available at the bookstore.

Recommended

Farrel, Joseph and Puppa, Paolo, Ed. *A History of Italian Theatre*. Cambridge University Press, 2011 (Paperback). ISBN 978-0521294782

Please note: this book will also be available on course reserve at Weldon together with other critical texts, for your reference.

Other Academic Matters: UWO Academic Calendar (Academic Policies/Regulations).

Please note: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites (or have special permission from your Dean to waive the prerequisite) and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. If you are not eligible for the course, you may be removed from it at any time, and it will be deleted from your record. In addition, you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions can not be appealed.

Absenteeism:

University policy regarding missed classes and admission to exams: Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading.

The **Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Modern Languages and Literatures courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures website at <http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.