



DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

COURSE OUTLINE – DR1010 A2 FALL 2013

INTRO TO THEATRE ART – M, W 10:00 AM – 11:20 AM

INSTRUCTOR: Michelle MacArthur **PHONE:** 780-539-2882
OFFICE: L222 **E-MAIL:** mmacarthur@gprc.ab.ca

OFFICE HOURS: M 4:00 PM – 5:50 PM, T&TH 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: none

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS: Theory readings will be posted on Moodle; some plays are available online for free (noted in the syllabus); *Blithe Spirit*, *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*, and *Cast Iron* are available for purchase at the bookstore.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

The origins and development of theatre art; introduction to the theatre aesthetics; group exploration of some of the craft and experience of theatre performances. Attendance at live theatrical performances. Note: The Department will endeavor to arrange class attendance at dress rehearsals at least two local live theatre performances. Students unable to attend these rehearsals will be responsible for the admission cost of the performances.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION:

“Everything in the theatre, the bodies, the materials utilized, the space itself, is now and has always been haunted [...]”

-Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*

In this course we will chase the various ghosts that haunt the theatre. Each of the plays featured on our reading list is haunted, either by a ghost character or by the memory of someone who has departed. The history of Western theatre is full of these types, and the ways in which they have appeared on stage have varied across time and space. Why are playwrights seemingly obsessed with

the supernatural? What do ghost characters tell us about a play's themes? How have changes in technology and approaches to theatre creation and production influenced how we represent the unrepresentable on stage? We will also consider the different ways in which the theatre is haunted in a more figurative sense: performance, as an ephemeral art form, disappears, leaving behind only traces of itself; actors are often haunted by the ghosts of their past roles; theatre buildings bear traces of what has taken place before and are frequent hosts to reported supernatural sightings.

Using the figure of the ghost as a framework, we will look at each play within its wider socio-historical and artistic contexts and move it from page to stage through class readings and scene studies. Through our regular attendance of local performances, we will encounter the challenges of talking and writing about an art form that disappears when the curtain falls. Finally, we will conjure our own supernatural encounter as we create a ghost walk in the community.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3(3-0-0) (45 hours/term)

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture and Class Discussion

OBJECTIVES (OPTIONAL):

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- distinguish between key genres and styles of theatre and discuss examples from different periods of history;
- analyze theatre performance, taking into account social, historical, and artistic contexts;
- create an original performance based on research;
- produce critical writing about live performance.

TRANSFERABILITY:

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A⁺	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A⁻	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B⁺	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B⁻	2.7	70 – 72	
C⁺	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C⁻	1.7	60 – 62	
D⁺	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

EVALUATIONS:

Theatre Reviews	40%
Ghost Walk	20%
In-Class Reading Responses	15%
Reflective Paper	10%
Participation	15%

Detailed assignment guidelines will be distributed in class; brief descriptions are provided below.

Theatre Reviews

One of the main goals of this course, as outlined above, is to produce critical writing about live performance. As such, we will attend a set number of performances through the term and write about them for our course blog, where class members will be expected to read and comment on each other's reviews. (See hand-out on blogging.) These exercises will be brief, and will aim to help you to develop your own critical voice. Class time will also be set aside to discuss the productions we have seen and our reviews.

*One review is based on a play seen during a field trip to Edmonton. Students are required to participate in the field trip.

Ghost Walk

Playing on the course's theme this year, you will create your own ghost walk around Grande Prairie in a small group of 2-3 students. This assignment requires you to research the history of our community—with the allowance for some creative elaboration!—and then to lead a group on a ghost walk around an area of the city during the last week of October. Your grade will be based on your research as well as the walk itself (leadership, performance/storytelling, and creativity).

In-Class Reading Responses

These open book responses aim to test your critical engagement with the material and spark class discussion. You are permitted to consult your materials, and may be asked to share your response afterwards.

Reflective Paper

A short paper submitted at the end of the semester reflecting on the various ghosts we have encountered in the past four months.

Participation

This class balances lecture with seminar-style discussion, and as such your active participation is needed for its success. Active participation entails showing up regularly and on time with required course materials (i.e. readings, plays, copies of your reviews when necessary), demonstrating engagement with the readings, participating in class discussions, contributing to the Moodle glossary (5%), and actively and respectfully listening to your peers. Equally important is your role on the course blog: in order to maximize your participation grade, you should make brief but thoughtful comments on at least two of your peers' reviews for each assignment.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to be fully prepared for class having done the reading assigned. Missing class will seriously impact student ability to succeed in the course. Cell phones must be turned off and stored away during class.

Late assignments will be penalized by 5% per day. In-class reading responses will not be made up unless students have proper medical documentation.

Students are responsible for play admission and field trip expenses.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/**

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

WEEK 1

Sep. 9 Introduction: The Ghosts of the Theatre

Sep. 11 The Ghosts of the Theatre, continued
Carlson, Marvin. "The Haunted Stage: An Overview." *The Haunted Stage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. 1-16.

Theatre Outing: Mad Moose Mayhem 3, Second Street Theatre (\$10 tickets Sep. 12&13)

WEEK 2

Sep. 16&18 Aeschylus, *The Persians* (470 BC)

Read it online: <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~vandersp/Courses/texts/aescpers.html>

Knowles, Ric. "Introduction." *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print. 1-5.

WEEK 3

Sep. 23&25 Aeschylus, *The Persians* (continued)

Pavis, Patrice. "The Tools of Analysis." *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film*. Trans. David Williams. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006. 31-52. Print.

Assignment Deadline: Theatre Review (Mad Moose Mayhem 3)

WEEK 4

Sep. 30& William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (1611)

Oct. 2 *Read it online:* <http://www.bartleby.com/46/4/>

Knowles, Ric. "The Stratford Festival." *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print. 105-28.

In-Class Reading Response

WEEK 5

Oct. 7 *Macbeth* (continued)

Oct. 9 Leopold Lewis, *The Bells: A Drama in Three Acts* (1871)

Read it online: <http://gaslight.mtrojal.ca/thebells.htm>

WEEK 6

Oct. 14 *No Class: Thanksgiving Monday*

Oct. 16 *The Bells:* (continued)

Theatre Outing: Blithe Spirit, Second Street Theatre (\$10 tickets Oct. 17&18)

WEEK 7

Oct. 21&23 Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts* (1881)

Read it online: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8121>

WEEK 8

Oct. 28&30 *Ghosts* (continued)

In-Class Reading Response

Assignment Deadline: Ghost Walk

WEEK 9

Nov. 4&6 Coward, Noel. *Blithe Spirit*. (1941) London: Methuen Drama, 2002. Print.

Assignment Deadline: Theatre Review (Blithe Spirit)

WEEK 10

Nov. 11 *No Class: Remembrance Day*

Nov. 13 *Blithe Spirit (continued)*

WEEK 11

Nov. 18&20 Clements, Marie. *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2005. Print.

WEEK 12

Nov. 25&27 *The Unnatural and Accidental Women (continued)*

In-Class Reading Response

Theatre Outing: Bingo! The Winning Musical, Second Street Theatre (\$10 tickets Nov. 28&29)

WEEK 13

Dec. 2&4 Codrington, Lisa. (2002) *Cast Iron*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2006. Print.

WEEK 14

Dec. 9 Wrap Up

Assignment Deadlines: Theatre Review (Bingo!) and Reflective Paper
