

TH116-30 Performance Analysis

20/21

Department

SCAPVC - Theatre and Performance Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Milija Gluhovic

Credit value

30

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

n/a.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module will introduce you to the practical craft of and the theoretical background to performance analysis and criticism. In the autumn term, the activity of the module is divided between seeing productions and writing reviews of them; workshopping these reviews in class; editing the reviews towards assessed submission; reading and discussing relevant academic and journalistic articles about criticism and particular critical principles/ methods/ approaches to analysing performance; and learning about alternative, digital, performative, and visual forms of criticism. In the spring term, the module will continue to provide you with a dynamic understanding of "performance" as a critical concept for the study of culture while at the time providing you with the opportunity to develop the basic strategies, methodologies and tools of analysis that you need to write scholarly essays from a performance and theatre studies perspective.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be

covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Schedule (subject to revision):

Autumn term:

Performance Analysis & Theatre Criticism

Week 1

Performance analysis & theatre criticism: differences and similarities

Introduction: What is theatre performance? Introduce basic elements of performance analysis – plot (what it is about), character/acting, theme, language, space and time, décor, directing, music and sound, audience reception. Pavis' model for performance analysis.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance. A new aesthetics*. London, New York: Routledge 2008. ("The Transformative Power of Performance": 11-24)

Pavis, Patrice. "The State of Current Research". In: *Analyzing Performance. Theatre, Dance, and Film*. Vert. David Williams. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003. 7-30.

Week 2

Performance analysis & theatre criticism: differences and similarities cont'd

What is a theatre review? Working with published reviews; ask each student to choose newspaper and critic to follow, to bring one review in class, to discuss its content, structure, major elements, title, major phrases. / Library skills workshop with Richard Perkins (TBC)/ See a theatre show at the WAC

Croggan, Alison. "How to Think Like a Theatre Critic." *Theatre Criticism. Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 309-311.

Week 3

Reviewing and its alternatives

Discussion of review basics, embedded criticism, and criticism in media forms other than writing / Bring a solid draft of your review of a play recently seen to the class

Fisher, Mark. *How to Write about Criticism. A Manual for Critics, Students, and Bloggers*. Bloomsbury Methuen, 2015. (p. 95-114;

Fricker, Karen. "Going inside: The New-Old Practice of Embedded Criticism. *Canadian Theatre Review*, Vol. 168, 2016, pp. 45-53.

Vaughan, Megan. "The Internet is a Serious Business." *Theatre Criticism. Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 325-327.

Week 4

Finding your voice

Review workshop / Skype with a theatre critic / see a theatre show 2 at the WAC

Fisher, Mark. *How to Write about Criticism. A Manual for Critics, Students, and Bloggers*. Bloomsbury Methuen, 2015. (p.29-51; 75-93)

Week 5

Criticism as a team sport?

Time in class to work on your projects

Macarthur, Michelle. "Crowdsourcing the Review and the Record: A Collaborative Approach to Theatre Criticism and Archiving in the Digital Age." *Theatre Criticism. Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 255-272.

Week 6 – READING WEEK

II- Basic Methodologies for Performance Analysis

Week 7

Semiotics

Multiplicity of signs in theatre/performance/Pavis' questionnaire/Critique of semiotics/ See a theatre show at the WAC / Review workshop

Readings:

Patrice Pavis, "Theatre Analysis: Some Questions and a Questionnaire," *New Theatre Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1985): 208–12.

Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre. An Introduction*. London, New York: Routledge, 1997. (Theatre, life and language: semiotics, phenomenology and deconstruction, 17-37)

Additional readings:

Marvin Carlson, "Semiotics and Its Heritage," in *Critical Theory and Performance*, ed. Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 13–25;

Week 8

Phenomenology

Time in class to work on projects/ See a theatre show at the WAC

Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre. An Introduction*. London, New York: Routledge, 1997. (Theatre, life and language: semiotics, phenomenology and deconstruction, 37-58)

Additional readings:

Bleeker, Maaïke, Jon Foley Sherman en Eirini Nedelkopoulou. "Introduction." In *Performance and Phenomenology. Traditions and Transformations*. Ed. Maaïke Bleeker, Jon Foley Sherman en Eirini Nedelkopoulou. New York, London: Routledge, 2015. 1-19.

Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993).

Bert O. States, "The Phenomenological Attitude," in *Critical Theory and Performance*, ed. Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 26–36.

Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York/Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The World of Perception* (Routledge, 2008). (Introduction)

Week 9

Cultural (Performance) Analysis

Review workshop/ Time in class to work on your projects

Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 223–90.

Additional readings:

Richard Schechner, 'Performance Processes' in *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 221–62.

Francine A'ness, "Resisting Amnesia: Yuyachkani, Performance, and the Postwar Reconstruction of Peru," *Theatre Journal* 56 (2004): 395–414.

Anuradha Kapur, *Actors, Pilgrims, Kings, and Gods: The Ramlila at Ramnagar* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1990).

Week 10

Project show-and-tell

Spring Term:

III - Theoretical Frameworks for Performance Analysis

Week 1

Historiography -- Performance Analysis as a Memory Machine / MLA and essay writing workshop (a visit to the RSC this week)

Postlewait, Thomas, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*. (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2009), Ch. 3 "The historical event", p. 89-116.

Additional readings:

Diana Taylor, "Performance And/as History," *TDR/The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 67–86.

Hayden White: *Metahistory. The historical imagination in nineteenth century Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1973, p. 1-42.

Phillip B Zarrilli et al., eds., *Theatre Histories: An Introduction*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1–39.

Week 2

Postcolonial /Intercultural Theories and Performance Analysis (The Tempest)/ MLA and essay writing workshop

Anna M. Aganangelou and Heather M. Turcotte, "Postcolonial Theories and Challenges to 'First World-ism'", *Gender Matters in Global Politics*, ed. Laura J. Shepherd (Routledge, 2010), 44-58.

Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Familiar and Foreign Theatres: The Intercultural Trend in Contemporary Theatre," and "Changing Theatrical Codes: Toward A semiotics of Intercultural Performance," *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: a European Perspective*, by E. Fischer-Lichte (U of Iowa P, 1997), 133-146; 147-157.

Additional readings:

Takashi Sasayama, J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, eds, *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.1-11 and 110-123

Neil Lazarus, "What Postcolonial Theory Doesn't Say," *Race and Class* 53.1 (2011): 3-27.

*** Yukio Ninagawa's production of *The Tempest* as a potential case study

Week 3

Queer /Feminist Performance and Analysis / Workshop

David Roman, "Performing All Our Lives: AIDS, Performance, Community," in *Critical Theory and Performance*, ed. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1992), 208-221.

Sue-Ellen Case, "The Screens of Time: Feminist Memories and Hopes," in *Feminist Futures? Theatre, Performance, Theory*, ed. Geraldine Harris, and Elaine Aston (London: Palgrave, 2006), 105-17.

Additional readings:

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015 [1995]), 1-30.

Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002).

David Dean, Yana Meerzon, Kathryn Prince, eds. *History, Memory, Performance*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Week 4

Theatre Sociology / Workshop

Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–58.

Additional readings:

Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett, "Rethinking the Social Impacts of the Arts," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 13, no. 2 (2007): 135–51.

Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett, *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Maria Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2009).

IV - Advanced Methodologies: Alternative Strategies

Audience Research / Workshop

Kirsty Sedgman, "Audience Experience in an Anti-Expert Age: A Survey of Theatre Audience Research," *Theatre Research International* 42, no. 3 (2017): 307–22.

Additional readings:

Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990).

Helen Freshwater, *Theatre & Audience* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009).

Caroline Heim, *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

Matthew Reason, "Asking the Audience: Audience Research and the Experience of Theatre," *About Performance*, no. 10 (2010): 15–34.

Week 6: READING WEEK

Week 7

Ethnography / Time in class to work on your final projects

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 142–62.

Additional readings:

Dwight Conquergood, "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics," in *Sage Handbook of Performance Studies*, ed. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006), 351–65.

D Soyini Madison, *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005).

Week 8

Practice as Research (PaR) / Time in class to work on your final projects

Robin Nelson (2006) "Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge," *Performance Research*, 11:4, 105-116.

Additional readings:

Baz Kershaw et al., "Practice as Research: Transdisciplinary Innovation in Action," in *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 63–85.

Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London, New York: Penguin, 2009).

Week 9

Collaborative Scholarship / Time in class to work on your final projects

Readings: Tbc

Week 10

Module summary

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- analyse various kinds of performance and introduce terminology suitable to the analysis of theatre and performance
- better understand, appreciate, and discern the different elements of theatre production (writing, directing, acting, design, the role of the audience)
- produce critical response to (live) performance via various forms of writing as well as visual and digital forms of communication, and have improved skills in written critical expression

- distinguish between various forms of performance criticism and critical theory and examine how they are shaped by social, political, and historical contexts
- analyse the role of theory and criticism in the processes of theatrical production and reception
- have a more nuanced understanding of contentious concepts such as taste, quality, and beauty

Indicative reading list

- Bial, Henry (Ed.). *The Performance Studies Reader*. (2nd ed.) London: Routledge, 2007
- Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: a Critical Introduction*. (2nd ed.). London: Routledge, 2004.
- Coté, David. "A Second Act for Theatre Criticism?" *American Theatre*, December 2017.
- Croggan, Alison. "How to Think Like a Theatre Critic." *Theatre Criticism. Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 309-311.
- Dolan, Jill. "Code-Switching and Constellations: On Feminist Theatre Criticism." *Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 187-200.
- Drexel, Kitty. "On Harassment Policies for Critics in the Age of #MeToo." *Howlround Theatre Commons*, 26 August 2018, <https://howlround.com/harassment-policies-critics-age-metoo>.
- Fisher, Mark. *How to Write about Criticism. A Manual for Critics, Students, and Bloggers*. Bloomsbury Methuen, 2015.
- Fricker, Karen. "Going inside: The New-Old Practice of Embedded Criticism." *Canadian Theatre Review*, Vol. 168, 2016, pp. 45-53.
- Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre*, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 1-23.
- Macarthur, Michelle. "Crowdsourcing the Review and the Record: A Collaborative Approach to Theatre Criticism and Archiving in the Digital Age." *Theatre Criticism. Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 255-272.
- Morris, Wesley. "Should Art be a Battleground for Social Justice?" *The New York Times*, 3 October 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/03/magazine/morality-social-justice-art-entertainment.html>
- Postlewait, Thomas. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*. Cambridge: CUP, 2009.
- Shaffeeullah, Nikki. "Reimagining Theatre Criticism." *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 168, 2016, pp. 34-38.
- Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.) London: Routledge, 2006.
- Vaughan, Megan. "Teh Internet is a Serious Business." *Theatre Criticism. Changing Landscapes*, edited by Duška Radosavljević, Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016, pp. 325-327.
- Zarrilli, Phillip et al. *Theatre Histories: An Introduction* (Routledge)

Subject specific skills

Upon completion of this module, students should demonstrate an ability to:

- analyse various kinds of performance and introduce terminology suitable to the analysis of theatre and performance
- better understand, appreciate, and discern the different elements of theatre production (writing, directing, acting, design, the role of the audience)

- produce critical response to (live) performance via various forms of writing as well as visual and digital forms of communication, and have improved skills in written critical expression
- distinguish between various forms of performance criticism and critical theory and examine how they are shaped by social, political, and historical contexts
- analyse the role of theory and criticism in the processes of theatrical production and reception
- have a more nuanced understanding of contentious concepts such as taste, quality, and beauty

Transferable skills

teamwork, technical ability, creativity, discipline, time management , organisation , communication

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Assessment	246 hours (82%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A3

	Weighting	Study time
Criticism Project	20%	66 hours
Criticism Project (20%) – oral and written feedback		

Weighting

Study time

Criticism Project (20%) (autumn term)

In the second half of autumn term, students will work in self-selected groups on projects that extend their creative and critical engagement with theatre criticism, working in a form of the students' choosing (these could include, but are not limited to embedded criticism; vlogs or other YouTube content; podcasts; and graphic novel-style criticism). Groups and forms will be finalized in the session of week two. Each group will create an outcome in its chosen form, to be agreed on with the course team, who will assure that there is parity in the amount of work each group/individual undertakes.

Portfolio 1500 words

30%

80 hours

Portfolio (30%) Maximum 1500 words (spring term)

Portfolio of: An abstract for an essay and an annotated bibliography (5 entries).

Essay 2000 words

50%

100 hours

Essay (50%) 2000 words (summer term)

An essay addressing an aspect of theatre and performance analysis and the broad concerns of the module.

Feedback on assessment

Criticism Project (20%) ; oral and written feedback
Portfolio (30%) Maximum 1500 words ; written feedback
Essay ; 50% 2000 words ; written feedback

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- UTHA-W421 Undergraduate Theatre and Performance Studies
 - Year 1 of W421 Theatre and Performance Studies
 - Year 1 of W421 Theatre and Performance Studies
- Year 1 of UTHA-W422 Undergraduate Theatre and Performance Studies (with Intercalated Year)