

TH234-15 South African Theatre

20/21

Department

SCAPVC - Theatre and Performance Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Yvette Hutchison

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

50% coursework, 50% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module will introduce you to various forms theatre takes on the African continent. It will consider the influences on theatre (social, political and economic) in specific countries, while highlighting the diversity of cultural and linguistic contexts even within a country. It will consider points of comparison regarding approaches to form, engagement with history and issues of gender.

Module aims

The aim in this module is to trace South African Theatre from pre-colonial performance by indigenous peoples, through the process of colonisation, urbanisation, and Apartheid, to the post-Apartheid period. It will particularly focus on how the socio-historic and economic changes have affected the development of theatre in South Africa.

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

Week 1 - Introduction and Contextualisation of S.A. theatre development

- Context – social, political, economic (including various laws and their impact)
 - Cultural: early indigenous story-telling and enactment – San, Xhosa/ Zulu – praise singing, storytelling, song, etc; early colonial plays – Dutch, English, French
- Preparation - Read Hutchison: Chapter on SA Theatre in Banham, M. 2004. A History of Theatre in Africa, pp. 312-379. See <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/electronicresources/extracts/th216/>

Week 2: Urbanisation and racial collaboration

- Urbanisation and the development of new forms and popular plays like Gibson Kente's work, Drum magazine.
- Collaboration with white artists and the emergence of Protest theatre
Read Fugard, Athol Sizwe Bansi is Dead, and The Island (available in many collections, including Township plays, Dennis Walder (ed), Oxford Uni Press).
Research the pass laws and history of Robben Island.
Useful reference: Walder, Dennis 'Resituating Fugard in South African Theatre', NTQ, VII:32 (1992), November, pp. 343-361.

Week 3: Collaboration continued: Market Theatre & Barney Simon

Read: Junction Avenue Theatre Company 2001. Sophiatown (in Graver.)

Barney Simon, Percy Mtwa and Mbongeni Ngema, Woza Albert! (1983).

Research Sophiatown's background.

Secondary: See Kruger on space, chapter 7.

Abrahams, L. & Fox, J. (eds.) The World is an Orange – Creating Theatre with Barney Simon. (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2005), Chapter 7.

Week 4: Afrikaans Theatre

Read Bartho Smit's Christine, (copy in department, or in Hauptfleisch), copy on short loan, one 3 day, 2 standard

Reza de Wet, Crossing (in Graver, or Reza de Wet Plays One, Oberon Books).

Secondary:

Introduction to Afrikaans Theatre, in Hauptfleisch & Steadman, 1984, pp. 8-17.

Mikki Flockemann. 1998. "Women, Feminism and South African Theatre". In Goodman, L. & De Gay, J. (eds.) The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance. London: Routledge, pp. 218-222. See

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/electronicresources/extracts/th/th216>

Amanda Gouws (ed.) c.2005. (Un)thinking Citizenship: feminist debates in contemporary South Africa. Aldershot/Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers.

Week 5 - Black Consciousness Theatre & Protest Theatre

Maponya, Maishe 1997. Hungry Earth (in various anthologies, including Helen Gilbert (ed.)

Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology, Routledge), see

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/electronicresources/extracts/th/th216>, under

Aspects of Theatre, Maponya

Manaka, Matsemela: "Egoli", "Pula" in Beyond the Echoes of Soweto: Five Plays by Matsemela Manaka, (ed.) Geoffrey Davis, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997.

Preparation: Define Black Consciousness movement and what you think constitutes protest theatre?

Read: Albie Sachs. 1988. Preparing Ourselves for Freedom: Culture and the ANC Constitutional Guidelines. TDR, 35:1, 187-193.

Mike van Graan. From protest Theatre to the Theatre of Conformity? SATJ, 2006, Volume 20, 276-288.

Secondary: Manaka, Matsemela: "Theatre of the Dispossessed", in Manaka, 1997.

Week 6- Reading week

Week 7 – Performing Reconciliation: TRC and theatre

Taylor, Jane. 1998. Ubu and the Truth Commission (as a single text or in Helen Gilbert (ed.) Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology, Routledge)

Kani, John 2003. Nothing but the truth, Wits Uni Press.

Van Graan, Mike (2004) Green Man Flashing. In Fourie

Secondary: Marlin-Curiel, Stephanie. A Little too Close to the Truth, SATJ, 2001, 77-103.

Hutchison, Yvette. 'Truth or Bust - Consensualising an historic narrative or provoking through theatre: the place of the personal narrative in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.'

Contemporary Theatre Review, 2005, 15:3, 354 – 362.

Week 8 - Post-Apartheid trends – Return to Ritual (Brett Bailey's Ipi Zombie, in Graver).

Secondary:

Brett Bailey, introduction to The Plays of Miracle & Wonder, 'the zombie files, 6-9, 36-40.

Brett Bailey. Performing so the spirit may speak, SATJ, 1998, 191-207.

Daniel Larlham 2009. Brett Bailey and Third World Bunfight – Journeys into the South African psyche. Theater, 39:1, 7-27.

Week 9 – Issues of identity

Nadia Davids – At her Feet (2006, single text)

Ashwin Singh's To House (Fourie),

Secondary:

Marcia Blumberg 2011. Lifting the Veil, Breaking Silences: Muslim Women in South Africa Interrogate Multiple Marginalities, Contemporary Theatre Review, 21:1, 20-34.

Cloete, Nicola. 2011. Gendering performance in At her Feet. SATJ, 25:1 (March), 45-53.

Think about: How form affects content? How these plays compare to Apartheid plays.

Week 10 – Archaeology of Memory: Magnet Theatre

Magnet Theatre: Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints (DVD)

Read: Alex Halligey. 2005. Re-inventing mythologies: arguments towards cultural identity in Medea and Rain in a dead man's footprints. SATJ 19, 208-222.

Mark Fleischman. 2005. 'Stories like the Wind': Recontextualising /Xam narratives for contemporary audiences. SATJ 19, 43-57.

Kati Francis. 2006. Theatre of struggle and transformation: A critical investigation into the power of oral traditions as used by director Mark Fleischman. SATJ 20, 102-127.

Learning outcomes

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

- By the end of this module students will be able to: - articulate the role theatre played in the society, and how the socio-historic and economic changes affected the development of the

kinds of theatre in South Africa;

- - critically evaluate the impact these changes made on the theatre-makers and audiences of the plays
- - Independently undertake both primary and secondary reading and articulate research findings orally (possibly as presentational work) and in writing

Indicative reading list

Prescribed Collections of plays

Fourie, Charles (ed) 2006. New South African Plays. London: Aurora Metro Publishers.

Graver, David (ed.) 1999. Drama for a new South Africa. Indiana University Press.

Plays that stand alone, and/ or are available as single texts or collections, see weekly breakdown.

Recommended:

Kruger, Loren. The Drama of South Africa: Plays, pageants & Publics since 1910. London & NY: Routledge.

Articles from the South African Theatre Journal, on-line

Individual plays – in collections

Fugard, Athol Sizwe Bansi is Dead & The Island in Township plays, (ed.) Dennis Walder. Oxford: Oxford Uni Press.

Davids, Nadia 2006. At her Feet. Cape Town: Oshun.

Junction Avenue Theatre Company 2001. Sophiatown (in Graver, or in At the Junction, Wits Uni Press.)

Kani, John 2003. Nothing but the truth. Johannesburg: Wits Uni Press.

Manaka, Matsemela. 1995. Beyond the Echoes of Soweto: Five Plays by Matsemela Manaka (Contemporary Theatre Studies) Geoffrey V. Davis (Ed) Harwood Academic, 1997.

Maponya, Maishe 1997. Hungry Earth (in various anthologies: Helen Gilbert (ed.) Postcolonial Plays; or <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/electronicresources/extracts/th216/>

Mtwa, Percy, Mbongeni Ngema, Barney Simon. 1983. Woza Albert! London: Methuen. (individual in library, or in various collections)

Perkins, K. (ed.) 1998. Black South African Women: an anthology of plays. London & New York: Routledge.

Smit, Bartho, Christine. In Hauptfleisch, T. & Steadman, I. 1984. South African Theatre. Pretoria: Haum Publishers.

Taylor, Jane. 1998. Ubu and the Truth Commission (available individually Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, or in Helen Gilbert (ed.) Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology, Routledge)

Useful critical references

Blumberg, Marcia and Dennis Walder (Eds.), South African Theatre as/and Intervention (Rodopi)
Brown, Duncan. 1998. Voicing the Text – South African oral poetry and performance. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Coplan, D. 1985. In Township Tonight. Johannesburg: Ravan press.

Davis, Geoffrey & Anne Fuchs (Ed.) Theatre and Change in South Africa

Fuchs, Anne Playing the Market. (Harwood)

Goodman, Liz (Ed.), Contemporary Theatre Review, Vol. 9, Parts 1, 2, and 3: Politics and Performance in South African Theatre Today (Harwood)

Gunner, L. (ed.) 1994. Politics and performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song. Johannesburg:

Witwatersrand University Press.

Kavanagh, R. 1985. Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa. Zed Books.

Kruger, Loren. The Drama of South Africa: Plays, pageants & Publics since 1910. London/NY: Routledge.

Mda, Zakes When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre . Zed Books.

Mtwa, Credo, Indaba My Children – African tribal history, legends, customs and religious beliefs. London: Kath & Averill.

Orkin, M. 1991. Drama and the South African State. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Research element

Students will be asked to engage in some detail with the historic and social periods of South African history, and how this affected the ways in which theatre developed. They will also have to engage with non-western approaches and theories of theatre.

Interdisciplinary

It involves history, gender studies, sociological and political theories

International

SA Theatre involves hybrid interaction between a number of cultures - European, African and first nation. Students will engage with all these world views.

Subject specific skills

Students will learn to contextualise specific aesthetic and thematic shifts in South African theatre and place them in their socio-political and historical contexts.

Understand how particular socio-political realities affect theatremaking, collaboration, the development of new forms.

Be able to engage with embodied performance forms outside of the Western canon, like ritual, conceptually and be able to articulate their implications in practice.

Transferable skills

Research,

Critical reading (of text and the body) and writing

Wider socio-political awareness

Communication skills

widened performance skills

Study

Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)	
Tutorials	1 session of 30 minutes (0%)	
External visits	(0%)	1 session of 1 hour 30 minutes
Online learning (independent)	1 session of 1 hour 30 minutes (1%)	
Private study	50 hours (33%)	
Assessment	80 hours (53%)	
Total	150 hours	

Private study description

Reading texts, theory and viewing some video material before seminars.

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 C1

	Weighting	Study time
Essay	50%	40 hours
Students are invited to choose from a list of topics that explore specific issues around theatre practiced in South Africa, drawing on one or two examples, and include a full bibliography. They may also negotiate a specific, personally defined topic with me as an alternative.		
Exam	50%	40 hours
Students are asked to review the material they have learned about on this module and choose one theme with which to engage again, not reading text as closely as they have for the essay, but rather engaging more broadly with movements or theoretical concepts in this paper.		

- Answerbook Pink (12 page)

Feedback on assessment

Written for essay, with option for oral feedback in a tutorial. \r\nExam summary sent to all students on module.

[Past exam papers for TH234](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of ULNA-R1WB Undergraduate French and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UGEA-RW24 Undergraduate German and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UHPA-R4W4 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of ULNA-R3WA Undergraduate Italian and Theatre Studies
- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA99 Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
 - Year 2 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
 - Year 2 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
 - Year 2 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
 - Year 2 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
 - Year 2 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
 - Year 2 of LA80 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History
 - Year 2 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
 - Year 2 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
 - Year 2 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
 - Year 2 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies
- UTHA-W421 Undergraduate Theatre and Performance Studies
 - Year 2 of W421 Theatre and Performance Studies
 - Year 2 of W421 Theatre and Performance Studies
- Year 2 of UIPA-W4L8 Undergraduate Theatre and Performance Studies and Global Sustainable Development