

THEA 1115: Twentieth Century Avant Garde Theatre
Fall 2015

Class Time: 2:00-2:50 PM
Lecture Hours: 3

Days: M-W-F
Lab Hours: N/A

Room: KT 118
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Dr. William Conte

Office Phone: 268-3117

Email: wconte@caspercollege.edu

Office Hours: KT 103
M-Th 8:30 AM-10:00 AM
or by appt.

Course Description: The course will introduce students to styles and methods of performance that emerged as alternatives to mainstream theatre during the 20th century.

Prerequisites: THEA 1010, Intro to Theatre for Majors or THEA 1000 (Intro to Theatre for Non-Majors).

Goal: Students will gain expanded knowledge of modern theatre and performance history after exploring alternative, avant garde approaches to traditional theatrical presentations. After completing the class, students will be able to apply the techniques and methods of the 20th century avant garde to their own creative work as actors and designers.

Outcomes: By means of the study of the history, theory, and literature of the twentieth-century theatrical avant garde, students will possess the ability to solve problems using critical thinking and creativity; demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures and historical perspectives; appreciate aesthetic and creative activities; and use appropriate technology and information to conduct research.

Course Objectives: Students will understand the cultural forces that result in the avant gardists' often radical departures from the mainstream theatre of their time; they will recognize the ways in which the methods of the avant gardists have been assimilated and commercialized by the mainstream theatre; and they will possess a foundation for their own explorations in the boundaries, content, purpose, and presentation of theatre and performance art.

Methodology: Lecture, demonstration, live presentation, video, the study of primary source material and students' own staged recreations of these styles constitute the methodology of this course.

Evaluation Criteria: Two (2) content-based examinations (midterm and final); three (3) performance projects with summary and evaluation. Each assignment is worth 20% of your grade. Students who show consistent evidence of preparation and who participate regularly will receive a half-grade bonus at the end of the term

Required Texts: Course packet of readings; web links; books on reserve.

Class Policies: Last Date to Change to Audit Status or to Withdraw with a W Grade is November 13. Students are expected to arrive on time and to be prepared for class by having completed the readings assigned for that particular session. Students are expected to meet the deadlines for all written assignments; late papers will be penalized a full letter grade. Without presenting evidence of a medical or family emergency, no student will be allowed to reschedule the midterm or the final examination. Cheating of any kind will be met with an automatic grade of F for the assignment and referral to the Behavioral Intervention Team. Please do not send or receive text messages during

class: IT IS RUDE. Casper College may collect samples of student work demonstrating achievement of the above outcomes. Any personally identifying information will be removed from student work.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Please refer to the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code for information concerning your rights and responsibilities as a Casper College Student.

Chain of Command: If you have any problems with this class, you should first contact the instructor in order to solve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the solution offered by the instructor, you should then take the matter through the appropriate chain of command starting with the Department Head/Program Director, the Dean and lastly the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Academic Dishonesty: (Cheating & Plagiarism) Casper College demands intellectual honesty. Proven plagiarism or any form of dishonesty associated with the academic process can result in the offender failing the course in which the offense was committed or expulsion from school. See the Casper College Student Code of Conduct.

Official Means of Communication: Casper College faculty and staff will employ the student's assigned Casper College email account as a primary method of communication.

ADA Accommodations Policy: If you need academic accommodations because of a disability, please inform me as soon as possible. See me privately after class, or during my office hours. To request academic accommodations, students must first consult with the college's Disability Services Counselor located in the Gateway Building, Room 344 (307) 268-2557, bheuer@caspercollege.edu. The Disability Services Counselor is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting accommodations, determining eligibility for accommodations, and helping students request and use appropriate accommodations.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (Aug. 24): Course Introduction; read "Performance," by Henry Sayer. Discussion: What is Performance? The differences between Comedy, Farce, Satire, Parody.

Week 2 (Aug. 31): Futurism. See also <http://www.unknown.nu/futurism/> and read at least one other Manifesto; be prepared to discuss it in class.

Week 3 (Sept. 7): DADA. Also check out the works of DADA "art" at <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/d/dada.html>.

Week 4 (Sept. 14): Performance Project #1

Week 5 (Sept. 21): Theatre of Cruelty. Read Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double* (excerpts).

Week 6 (Sept. 28): Theatre of the Absurd. Read Ionesco, *The Bald Soprano*, in *Theatre Alive*.

Week 7 (Oct. 5): Midterm Exam.

Week 8 (Oct. 12): Outside the Frame: Assemblages, Environments, Happenings.

Week 9 (Oct. 19): Outside the Frame continued.

Week 10 (Oct. 26): Performance Project #2.

Week 11 (Nov. 2): Performing Protest: The Living Theatre and *Paradise Now*.

Week 12 (Nov. 9): Read Linda Montano, *Art in Everyday Life* (on reserve).

Week 13 (Nov. 16): Pranks, Street Performance, and Other Acts. See <http://www.sniggle.net/perfart.php>. Also check out The New York Surveillance Camera Players at <http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html>. (Here is a link to their version of *Ubu Roi* <http://www.notbored.org/ubu.html>)

Week 14 (Nov. 23): Body artists and Performative Pain. Read the brief bio of Chris Burden at http://arted.osu.edu/160/14_Burden.php and see also the documentary of his work in the early 1970s at <http://www.ubu.com/film/burden.html>.

Week 15 (Nov. 30): Karen Finley, "The Constant State of Desire," in *The Drama Review* 32, 1: 139-51.

Week 16 (Dec. 7): Final Exam. Performance Project #3.