

UC Center Program Courses - Fall 2013  
PCC 130. **Theater in France**

**Prof. William Bishop**

**Lecture**

Tuesday 12h30-14h00

Thursday 12h30-14h00

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### **Office Hours**

By appointment

This course is an introduction to the French theatrical tradition and its different techniques for staging drama from the 17th century to the present. It considers the evolving role of the theater in the political, social, cultural, and aesthetic life of France. We will do this principally in close engagement with translations of several of the most important plays in French in readings and in-class staging. We will also pursue the place of theater in Paris and its surroundings through class excursions to see at least two contemporary productions of or related to the plays we are reading. We will also be interested in theater's relation to film, and will watch and discuss several film versions of or related to the plays we're reading in class.

**5.0 quarter credits.** Suggested subject areas for this course: *Comp Lit/DArts/History*

### **Goals**

The overriding goal of this course is to provide students with an introduction to French theatre from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present through careful study of translations of several representative plays, filmed versions of plays, and excursions to theatrical performances in Paris:

Texts:

- Plays by Racine, Molière, Marivaux, Cixous, Genet, Feydeau
- Films or filmed versions of staging by Chéreau, Mnouchkine, Kechiche...
- Selected critical works

Themes/Topics:

- Shifting role of theater in public life, different relations between theater and politics
- Questions of incarnation, bodies and textuality
- Europeanization and globalization of the theatrical scene in Paris
- Familiarity with the work of key *metteurs en scène* in France

### **Learning Outcomes**

The course also seeks to develop students' written and oral rhetorical skills as well as their analytical skills through the following activities and assignments:

- Class discussion
- Class readings of plays (particularly those for which we will see productions)
- Well-argued written and oral responses to plays and films

The mid-term and final exams test students on their familiarity with the plays through quotation identifications and a choice of several essay questions that bring together different themes and topics broached by different plays and push students toward a broader comprehension.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

We will be using English translations of each of these plays either in books or included in your course reader, which will also include certain critical pieces on the plays.

- Racine, *Phèdre*, translated by Margaret Rawlings
- Molière, *School for Wives in Five Plays*, translated by Richard Wilbur
- Marivaux, *The Game of Love and Chance*, trans. by John Fowles [CR]
- Cixous, *The Terrible But Unfinished Story of Norodom Sihanouk...*, trans. by Juliette Flower MacCannell, Judith Pike and Lollie Groth
- Genet, *The Maids*, trans. by Bernard Frechtman
- Georges Feydeau, *Not By Bed Alone*, trans. by Norman Shapiro [CR]

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Attendance at lectures and excursions is mandatory. It is essential that students attend all classes and excursions and participate actively in class. As per the UC Paris Attendance Policy, excessive absences and tardies will result in a lowered final grade. Please refer to UC Paris Academic Handbook for the policy on absences and tardies.

Reading assignments are critical. Students are expected to read the material as it is assigned and come to class prepared. As a class, we will be attending at least two performances at theaters in Paris or its nearby suburbs.

In class, we will draw on certain films of or related to the plays we are studying: these may include Patrice Chéreau's production of *Phèdre*; the César winning *L'ésquive* by Abdellatif Kechiche which portrays students in the suburbs of Paris working on a production of Marivaux's play and recent productions of *The School for Wives* and *The Maids*.

### ***Grading***

- Weekly Readings and Class Participation ( 25 %)
- Writing Assignments ( 25 %)
  - 3 response papers (4 pages each) to performances and films
- Mid-term exam ( 25 %)
- Final exam ( 25 %)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1. September 10 & 12

Reading: *Phèdre*

### Week 2. September 17 & 19

In class screening of Chéreau's production of *Phèdre*

Reading: *Phèdre*

Barthes, Roland, "From On Racine" in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. by Susan Sontag, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983, pp. 169-184 [CR]

### Week 3. September 24 & 26

**Thursday September 26: Response paper 1 is due**

Reading: *The School for Wives*

In-class screening of scenes from Mnouchkine's *Molière*

### Week 4. October 1 & 3

Reading: *The School for Wives*

In-class screening of scenes from Bezace's production of *L'École des femmes*

### Week 5. October 8 & 10

Reading : Hélène Cixous, *The Terrible But Unfinished Story of Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia*

### Week 6. October 15 & 17

Reading : Hélène Cixous, *The Terrible But Unfinished Story of Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia*

**Wednesday October 16 – class excursion to the Théâtre du Soleil (if seats are available)**

### Week 7. October 22 & 24

**Mid-term Review and Exam**

## MIDTERM BREAK

### Week 8. November 5 & 7

Reading: Marivaux, "The Lottery of Love," trans. by John Fowles in *Landmarks of French Classical Drama*, London: Meuthen, 1991, pp. 252-305 [CR]

### Week 9. November 12 & 14

In-class screening and discussion of *L'esquive* by Abdelattif Kéchiche

Reading: "Marivaux in the 'Hood:.' An interview with Adelatif Kéchiche." [CR]

### Week 10. November 19 & 21

Reading: Feydeau, *Un fil à la patte* [CR]

### Week 11. November 26 & 28

Reading: Feydeau, *Un fil à la patte* [CR]

**Wednesday November 27 – class excursion to La Comédie française (if tickets become available)**

**Week 12. December 3 & 5**

Reading: Genet, *The Maids*

In-class screening of scenes from Philippe Miquel's staging of *Les Bonnes*

**Week 13. December 10 & 12**

**Review and Final Exam**

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