

Module Guide

20th Century Practice



CWP-4-TCP

School of Arts and Creative Industries

2015-2016

Level 4

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1. MODULE DETAILS

Module Title:20th Century Practice
Module Level:Level 4
Module Reference Number:CWP-4-TCP
Credit Value:20
Student Study Hours:200
Contact Hours:36
Private Study Hours:164
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):None
Co-requisite Modules (If applicable):None
Course(s):BA Drama and Performance
Year and Semester:Semester 1
Module Coordinator:Jon Lee
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Subject Area:Culture, Writing and Performance
Summary of Assessment Method:1500 word essay
External Examiner appointed for module:Professor Franc Chamberlain, University of Huddersfield

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module is a follow on from Performance Histories. It continues student's introduction to the historical context of contemporary drama and performance, focusing on the first half of the 20th Century. Students will be introduced to a range of historically important practitioners and dramatic literature of the Modernist period. This will enable students to make connections and draw distinctions between different ideologies and performance styles. Students will explore concepts relevant to the study of drama such as performance space, dramatic language and genre, the place of the stage in society and critical performance analysis.

3. AIMS OF THE MODULE

The module aims to:

- Introduce students to the practical and intellectual study of key practitioners and dramatic texts from the various art movements of the Modernist period.
- explore selected dramatic works, considering performance and production processes as well as the conceptual underpinnings and wider socio-cultural context
- explore interactions between theatre and society
- develop skills in academic research and writing for Level 4 students

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- identify the key practitioners and stylistic features of a range of Modernist art movements and demonstrate an understanding of appropriate cultural context

4.2 Intellectual Skills

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- analyse performance material with reference to modernist influences

4.3 Practical Skills

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- apply modernist features and stylistic choices to practical work

4.4 Transferable Skills

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- write an essay analysing and synthesising more than one source of information.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

One **1500 word essay**

6. FEEDBACK

Students will receive marks and feedback on or before **20 working days after submission date**.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE MODULE

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

Picking up where the Semester One, Systems of Rehearsal and Performances Histories modules left off, the module will explore the key practitioners and art movements of the first half of the 20th Century.

Each week there will be an introductory lecture, followed by a seminar in which a key text is read and ideas explored practically. There will also be preparatory reading set to be completed before the following session.

The movements and authors / practitioners shown are representative of the type students might encounter and the list is not intended to be prescriptive:

- ☐ Symbolism (*Maeterlinck, Edward Gordon Craig, Appia*)
- ☐ Expressionism and Surrealism (*Laban, Kandinsky, Breton, Artaud*)
- ☐ Dada and Futurism (*Marinetti, Witkiewicz*)
- ☐ Piscator and Brecht

- ☐ Constructivism (*Meyerhold*)
- ☐ Absurdism (*Beckett*)

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

This module is taught in two separate 90-minute sessions per week. The first is a lecture to the whole year group, the second is a smaller seminar / workshop session where ideas can be discussed and explored practically.

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

This module continues to your introduction to the concept of independent study and research in the Higher Education environment. While classes will discuss basic theories and provide context to your work, the primary learning for this class will come from your own reading and research. This will be a big change from what you are used to. It is very important that you get used to setting aside regular reading/research time during the week. You should aim to spend at least 4 hours per week on reading and preparation for this class. Always make sure you come to the lecture and the seminars fully prepared having read the appropriate text and that you have a copy if required.

7.4 Employability

The module will equip students with generic skills of research and presentation – written and oral. Seminar presentations will encourage confidence in public speaking and an awareness of the importance of structured and well-prepared presentations in the workplace.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Week One: Introduction to Modernism

Lecture: In this lecture, we are going to explore the social and political context that led to the birth of Modernism in art and performance. We are then going to touch on the immediate precursors to Modernism and see what constitutes a Modernist work.

Seminar: No Seminar in this first week.

Preparatory reading for week 2: Emile Zola, From 'Naturalism on the Stage'

Week Two: Realism and Naturalism

Lecture: In this lecture we will take a focused look at the beginnings and development of two of the pre-modernist movements that grew out of the energy created by Romanticism. Realism and Naturalism: art movements that celebrated the deterministic world view that had gained momentum with the scientific advances made during the period.

We will explore the work of four key practitioners: Duke Georg II, Emile Zola, Andre Antione and Konstantin Stanislavski

Seminar: 20mins - Read a Naturalistic *Quart d'Heure*

- 20mins - Discuss the “clues” that allow the audience to work out what lies hidden from view. (Play criminal psychiatrists at the Gabler household)
- 30mins - In groups of 4 or 5, devise 3-minute “*quart d’heure*”
- 20mins - Show the work to the rest of the group.

Preparatory reading for week 3: Edward Gordon Craig's, *The Actor and the Ubermarionette*

Week Three: Symbolism

- Lecture:** In this lecture, we will be looking at the movement away from naturalism towards non-naturalistic modes of expression.
The first of these is Symbolism - often seen as the first Modernist movement. We will explore the movement's initial expression as an attempt at artistic mysticism, and then move on to its more mature expression as an open, poetic movement.
- Seminar:**
- 20mins - Read Maeterlinck's play *Intruder*
 - 20mins - Discuss the work's symbolist elements
 - 30mins - Rework your group's naturalistic *Quart* into a symbolic drama – shifting both the form and content to fit the concerns of this movement.
 - 20mins - Show the work to the rest of the group.

Preparatory reading for week 4: Wassily Kandinsky, From 'The Problem of Form' (1912)

Week Four: Expressionism

- Lecture:** In this session, we will start by looking at the work of Wassily Kandinsky - a painter and performance maker whose work greatly influenced Expressionism. We will then explore the growth and development of Expressionism in Germany.
- Seminar:**
- 30mins - Watch extracts from Butoh video, *Dance of Darkness* (Read extract from Expressionist play)
 - 10mins - Discuss work looking for Expressionist links
 - 30mins - Either, Create a design for the exteriorisation of the interior of your mind, or, Rework the Quart into an Expressionistic piece
 - 20mins - Show the work to the rest of the group.

Preparatory reading for week 5: Filippo Marinetti 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909)

Week Five: Futurism

- Lecture:** In this session, we will be exploring the Futurist movement. Launched in 1909 by Filippo Marinetti, it was the first radical avant-garde expression of the Modernist period.
We will see how Futurism developed in Italy and how it influenced all subsequent movements.
- Seminar**
- 20mins - Read a selection of short Futurist Dramas and a Futurist Recipe
 - 20mins - Discuss the futurist elements / devise your own futurist recipe
 - 30mins - Rework the *Quart* into a Futurist piece.
 - 20mins - Show the work to the rest of the group.

Preparatory reading for week 6: Tristan Tzara, From, the Dada Manifesto

Week Six: Dada

- Lecture:** In this lecture, we will look at how Dada developed out of Futurism, sparked by the atrocities of the First World War.
We will then examine some of the key 'principals' of Dada.
- Seminar:** 20mins - Read extract from Tzara's *Gas Heart* (also read Hemmings poems and Shwitters play)
20mins - Discuss Dada elements and make a Dada poem using Tzara's instructions
30mins - Rework the *Quart* into a Dada Piece
20mins - Show the work to the rest of the group

Preparatory reading for week 7: Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre of Cruelty*

Week Seven: Surrealism and Artaud

- Lecture:** In this session, we will explore surrealism. Founded by Andre Breton (ex-Dadaist), surrealism became one of the most well known of the Modernist movements.
We will also discover one of surrealism's rebellious sons, Artaud, and examine how he moved away from surrealism to develop his own manifesto: *The Theatre of Cruelty*.
- Seminar:** 10mins - Watch *Transfiguration* and a clip from *Un Chien Andalou*
10mins - Read Artaud's *The Spurt of Blood*
20mins - Discuss Surreal elements (Do a stream of consciousness free-write)
30mins - Rework *Quart* into a surreal / theatre of cruelty piece
20mins - Show the work to the rest of the group

Preparatory reading for week 8: Aleksei Gan, *From 'Constructivism' (1922)*

Week Eight: Constructivism and Meyerhold

- Lecture:** In this session, we will explore Russian constructivism, tracing its roots from the abstract work of Kandinsky and the pro-industrial and revolutionary work of the Futurists.
We will then go on to examine the career of Russian theatre director, Meyerhold, following his artistic journey from Stanislavski's experimental studio to the principal proponent of large-scale constructivist theatre.
- Seminar:** 20mins - Watch biomechanics vids
20mins - Discuss Constructivist elements
30mins - Rework *Quart* into a constructivist piece
20mins - Show work to the rest of the group

Preparatory reading for week 9: Bertolt Brecht, *From 'The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre' (1930)*

Week Nine: The Epic Theatre of Brecht

- Lecture:** This week's session will focus on Marxist political theatre that developed in opposition to the rising power of the right-wing fascists in Germany between the two world wars.

We will see how through Agit-Prop, Marxist philosophy and the popularist tradition a new theatre was born, epic theatre.
We will look at the two main practitioners of Epic Theatre: Erwin Piscatory and Bertolt Brecht.

Seminar: 20mins - Read Scenes from *Galileo* and *Good Soul*
20mins - Discuss Epic elements
30mins - Rework *Quart* into an Epic piece
20mins - Show work to rest of group

Preparatory reading for week 10: Grotowski, Towards a Poor Theatre

Week Ten: Grotowski

Lecture: In this session, we will be focusing on the work of Polish theatre-maker Jerzy Grotowski. We will see how his work became a synthesis of modernist practices, drawing together many of the threads of the previous experiments into some of the most influential work of the 20th Century.

Seminar: 20mins - Watch extracts from *Dionysus in '69*
20mins - Discuss Grotowski's influence
30mins - Rework *Quart* into a Grotowski influenced piece
20mins - Show work to rest of group

Preparatory reading for week 11: Eugene Ionesco, Notes on the Theatre

Week Eleven: Absurdism

Lecture: In this session, we will be looking at The Theatre of the Absurd. We will begin by examining Existentialism - a philosophy that found its initial expression in occupied Paris during the Second World War. We will then look at existentialist drama before shifting to focus on two writers who developed an altogether new theatrical expression of their existentialist ideas.

Seminar: 20mins - Watch play without words / not I / ...
20mins - Discuss Absurdist elements
30mins - Rework *Quart* into Absurdist piece
20mins - Show work to rest of group.

Week Twelve: Recap session

Lecture: How to write a compare and contrast essay.
Seminar: Discussion of major themes covered in the module

9. STUDENT EVALUATION

This module is running for the first time so there is no previous student evaluation.

10. LEARNING RESOURCES

10.1 Core Materials

Core Playtexts

Theatre of the Avant-Garde by B. Cardullo (ed) & R. Knopf (ed)

Core Reading

Berghaus, G. (2005) *Theatre, Performance and the Historical Avant-Garde*. Palgrave
Huxley, M. & Witts, N. (1996). *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*. Routledge
Braun, E. (1982). *The Director and the Stage: From Naturalism to Grotowski*. Methuen

10.2 Optional Materials

Artaud, A. (1999). *The Theatre and its Double*. Calder Publications
Barber, S. (1993). *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs*. Faber
Bentley, E. (ed). (1980). *The Theory of the Modern Stage*. Penguin
Brawn, E. (1998). *Meyerhold on Theatre*. Methuen
Carlson, M. (1993). *Theories of the Theatre*. Cornell University Press
Grotowski, J. (1968). *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Methuen
Kolocotroni, V, Goldman, J., Taxidou, O. (eds) (2013) *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. Edinburgh UP
Martin, C & Bial, H. (eds). (2001). *Brecht Sourcebook*. Routledge
Rudnitsky, K. & Permar, P. (2000). *Russian and Soviet Theatre: Tradition and the Avant Garde*. Thames & Hudson
Willett, J. (1987). *Brecht on Theatre*. Methuen