

# THEA 406 Special Topic: Asian Performance Tradition and Innovation

**Trimester 1 / 2009**

(Monday 2 March – Monday 15 June 2009)

**30 Points**



*Matsukaze, photo by Akira Iwata*

## STAFF

Megan Evans / [megan.evans@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:megan.evans@vuw.ac.nz) / office phone: 463-9793 /

Rm 302, 77 Fairlie Terrace – office hours by appointment.

## CLASS TIMES AND ROOMS

Tuesdays 3.10 - 6pm Room 205, 77 FT

## COURSE CONTENT

This course will investigate theoretical frameworks of several Asian performance traditions as an entry point for study of related performance forms and dramatic texts. Topics covered will include The Natyasastra and Sanskrit Theatre, Zeami's writings and Nō theatre, and writings of various Chinese theorists and *xiqu* (Chinese opera). This study will then inform exploration of contemporary theatre artists, such as Richard Schechner, Tadashi Suzuki and Gao Xingjian, who claim inspiration from these theoretical frameworks and traditions.

## READINGS

Readings available from the Course Coordinator and/or on library e-reserve.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students should

- Have a working understanding of fundamental theoretical frameworks dealing with performance from India, Japan, and China
- Be able to apply these fundamental principles to investigation of related performance traditions
- Be able to apply knowledge of traditional theories and systems of performance to analysis of the work of contemporary artists claiming inspiration from those systems

## EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The university usually anticipates that you should be able to devote at least 24 hours per week to a half-year paper in a 4-paper graduate programme. Therefore you should probably expect to spend, on average, about 18 hours per week (apart from class time and screenings) in reading, preparation, thinking, and essay writing. At Honours and Masters level it is expected that students will attend every seminar; if you are going to miss a seminar through ill health or whatever, please contact the course co-ordinator in advance if possible.

## ASSESSMENT

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Seminar Presentation (approx. 30 mins) and handout      | 25% |
| • Essay #1 (2,500 words) DUE Thur 30 April                | 30% |
| • Essay #2 (3,000 words DUE Mon 15 June                   | 35% |
| • Participation in weekly seminar discussion & activities | 10% |

**Relationship of assessment to learning objectives:** Participation in weekly activities ensures engagement with the full range of material covered in the course. Essays #1 and #2 allow the student to examine in more depth theoretical concepts, traditional performance elements and/or related contemporary creative work of particular interest to the student and to assess progress toward meeting the learning objectives. Seminar presentation allows the student to apply material from the course to analysis of other traditional and contemporary works.

**Essay marking criteria:** Strong thesis, logically developed discussion, accurate and adequate use of examples, clarity and concision

**Presentation marking criteria:** Logically organized material, engaging presentation style, clarity and concision, effective accompanying handout

**Important Note:** For THEA 406, 'grades gained in individual papers are always subordinate to the overall assessment made by the full group of examiners for the Honours programme as a whole' (*Graduate Programme in English, Film and Theatre 2001*).

## **PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS**

Unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical reasons with certificate), or a previously agreed extension, work handed in late will normally lose half a grade (2½%) for each weekday or part-weekday late, starting from the hour the work is due. Comments on late work will be minimal. Work submitted late without an extension will not normally be accepted if it is more than two weeks after the due date. **Note:** if you fail to hand in work by this two-week deadline, you will normally be considered as having failed to meet a mandatory requirement and therefore fail the course.

Aegrotat provisions may apply if you are unable to submit your final project for unavoidable reasons. The Aegrotat procedures are listed in *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under “about Victoria” on the Victoria homepage at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx>

In such a case you should also contact the course co-ordinator. There is a university policy on reasonable accommodation with respect to assessment procedures for students with disabilities (see *Calendar* as above).

### **Extensions and absolute deadlines**

If you wish to ask for an extension (e.g., because of pressure of work) please do so well before the due date. Extension requests on the day the assignment is due will not normally be accepted.

Requests for extensions must be made in writing, by filling out the extension form (available on your course Blackboard site) and getting your Course Co-ordinator to sign it. Only Course Co-ordinators may grant extension, not tutors. The signed Extension form must be attached to the assignment when it is submitted, plus any relevant documentation. If circumstances prevent you from accessing the extension form, you must attach an email from the Course Co-ordinator, which confirms that an extension has been granted, to your assignment. In real emergencies we can of course be flexible, but the most important thing is for you to somehow let us know as soon as possible.

Extensions will not be granted beyond 15 June except under exceptional circumstances. The University does not permit the School to accept work after the last day of the examination period.

## **MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

In order to pass the course, completion and submission of all assignments is required, as well as an overall passing grade.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such MATERIAL.

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

### COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information will be posted on Blackboard and/or emailed directly to students. It is your responsibility to ensure the Course Coordinator has an accurate email address and that you check this regularly.

### GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

A copy of the General University Statutes and Policies can be found on Blackboard.

### COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	March 3	Introduction
Week 2	March 10	<b>Readings:</b> India (Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre)  Excerpts from <i>The Natyasastra</i> (Origins, Rasa, Theatrical Success);  F. Richmond, 'Characteristics of Sanskrit Theatre and Drama' (also investigate chapters in original [Robert Lord Library—77FT209] for topics as assigned.
Week 3	March 17	<b>Readings:</b> Cambridge Guide: 'Kutiyattam'; 'Kathakali'  <i>Recognition of Sakuntalā</i>  Zarilli, 'What does it mean to become the character? Kathakali actor training and characterization'
Week 4	March 24	<b>India-related student presentation</b>  <b>Readings:</b> Schechner, 'Rasaesthetics';  Zarilli, 'The psychophysical actor's "I can";  J.R. Brown 'Shakespeare, the <i>Natyasastra</i> , and Discovering <i>Rasa</i> for Perf.'

Week 5    March 31    **Essay #1: topic with initial bibliography DUE**

Zeami material from Worthen Anthology

Additional Zeami excerpts (*On the Art of Nō*)

Week 6    April 7    **Readings:** Cambridge Japan intro [8 pp];

Plays--Nō *Atsumori* and *Izutsu*; Kyōgen *Boshihari* and *Susugigawa* (kyōgen)

**For next class: Be sure to get Kabuki play volume from Course Coordinator**

**Mid Trimester Break:** (Good) Friday 10 April – Friday 24 April 2009

Week 7    April 28    **Essay #1 DUE Thursday**

**Readings:** Kabuki plays as selected by student interest (available from Course Coordinator)

Week 8    May 5    **Japan-related student presentation**

**Readings:** Suzuki: 'Grammar of the Feet'; Ota Shogo: *Water Station*

Week 9    May 12    **Readings:** Cambridge Guide: China

Chinese Theory excerpts, various authors:

Week 10    May 19    **Readings:** Plays: Yuan Zaju--*Autumn in the Palace of the Han*;

Jingju--*Silang Visits His Mother*

Week 11    May 26    **Readings:** Brecht: Alienation in Chinese Theatre ;

Min Tian: 'Re-Theatricalizing Theatre of the Grotesque: Meyerhold's "Theatre of Convention" and Traditional Chinese Theatre;

Mao: 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and the Arts' ;

Model Revolutionary Beijing Opera: *Shajiabang*

Week 12    June 2    **China-related student presentation**

**Readings:** Gao Xingjian: 'Another kind of theatre; *Wildman*

**Essay #2 DUE** Mon 15 June