

THEA 205 / 305 ENGL 241 / 341

Dramaturgy of the Real

Trimester 2 2011

11 July to 12 November 2011

20 Points



The cast of Circa Theatre's 2011 production of *The Lead Wait*, by Jo Randerson and Trouble.

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	11 July to 14 October 2011
Mid-trimester break:	22 August to 4 September 2011
Study week:	17 to 21 October 2011
Last piece of assessment due:	14 October 2011

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator/Lecturer:

James McKinnon james.mckinnon@vuw.ac.nz 463-6115 307 77 FT Office Hours: TBA

Tutor:

Joel Baxendale joel.baxendale@vuw.ac.nz

Administrator:

Claire O'Loughlin claire.oloughlin@vuw.ac.nz 463 5359 202 83FT Mon-Fri, 10am–4.30pm

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Monday and Wednesday 1.10–2pm LT306 77FT

Seminars

Wednesday and Thursday 3.10–5pm 305 77FT and 203 83FT

COURSE DELIVERY

The course will meet for two 1-hour lectures each week, and students will also meet in smaller, 2-hour seminars once a week. In both lectures and seminars, a spirit of questioning, discussion, debate, and student-led learning is encouraged; this requires strong preparation and solid engagement in all sessions. Supplementary material (images and outlines from lectures; additional (recommended) reading, and so on) will be posted on the course's Blackboard site.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Blackboard will be our primary medium for communicating, posting news and updates, and for disseminating and submitting assignments; in addition, some assignments entail contributing to online discussions on Blackboard. Therefore I strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with Blackboard and *check the site frequently*.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

COURSE PRESCRIPTION

This course explores realist drama and its theatrical conventions through the theory and practice of dramaturgy. Dramaturgy is the study of how meaning is generated in drama and performance. The heart of the course exposes students to the varied labours of dramaturgy, via a study of selected plays and a series of corresponding articles about dramaturgy. One or two of the plays are to be selected for more detailed

study and dramaturgical analysis during the final weeks of the course. The course aims to a) broaden students' exposure to the dramatic literature of theatrical realism; b) deepen students' engagement with the conventions of stage realism, and the philosophical underpinnings of those conventions; c) provide students with a critical understanding of and practical experience in dramaturgical work. Co-taught with THEA 305 and ENGL 341. 100% internal assessment.

COURSE CONTENT

“Dramaturgy of the Real” asks two main questions: “what is ‘realism,’” and “what is ‘dramaturgy’”? We will pursue these questions through a combination of lectures, readings, play analysis, discussion, and practice-based research, blending philosophical, practical, creative, and critical methodologies. You will explore the historical development and continuing influence of “realism,” and through your explorations you will gain a sense of what dramaturgy is and develop dramaturgical skills used by theatre artists and teachers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course is to facilitate critical and creative inquiry. Students who complete the course will be able to:

- develop a sense of what dramaturgy is and what the specific labours of dramaturgy entail;
- explore the dramaturgical activities associate with certain modes of theatrical realism;
- read and analyze range of realist drama;
- read a body of critical essays on dramaturgy;
- analyse one selected realist play in depth from a dramaturgical perspective;
- refine their skills in critical writing about theatre;
- take responsibility for their own learning;
- develop specific skills and general confidence in creative and critical thinking as they apply to both theatrical and scholarly practice.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours spread evenly over the 12 week trimester and breaks, or 13 hours per teaching week. Therefore you should expect to spend, on average, about 12 hours per week (apart from class time) in reading, preparation, thinking devising and rehearsing creative projects, and writing. Some students can pass (though not necessarily well) on less, and some of you will find you need or want to do more. I also encourage you to attend as much Wellington theatre as possible while you are taking this course.

GROUP WORK

This course involves a significant group work component. Twice during the term, you will work with a group of 4-6 classmates in your seminar preparing a ~10 minute performance-based inquiry into a specific aspect of the dramaturgy of the real, after which your group will lead a discussion based on your performance. Although you will work in groups on these projects, you will be marked individually.

READINGS

Essential texts:

All essential texts (plays and student notes) are available from vicbooks (see below). These are:

- Strindberg, August. *Miss Julie* (and Preface to *Miss Julie*).
- Chekhov, Anton. TBA.
- Williams, Tennessee. *Orpheus Descending*.
- Albee, Edward. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
- Randerson, Jo, and Trouble. *The Lead Wait*.
- Hare, David. *Stuff Happens*.
- THEA 205/305, ENGL 241/341 course reader (Student Notes)

Additional Reading will be posted on Blackboard.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 4 to 22 July 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 of the Student Union Building.

You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. You will be contacted when they are available.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

All assessment is internal.

- **Critical Essay** (2500 words for 200 level; 3500 words for 300 level), worth **30%** of the grade. The essay is **due 16 September**. The critical essay will further students' writing skills, and allow the opportunity for an in-depth articulation of the field of dramaturgy (including relevant scholarship) and of the dramaturgy of a particular play.
- **Practical Dramaturgy**, worth **40%** of the grade. You will collaborate in groups on two practical dramaturgy projects which entail creative and performative investigations of the texts on the

course. The first will involve addressing the problem of history: what happens when the playwright's "reality" becomes the audience's history? The second will entail an exploration of the limits of realism: what happens when the illusion of reality (scenic, psychological, perceptual, or otherwise) is pushed to the limits? What would that idea even mean in practice? For each project you will collaborate with a group on creating short performance followed by a discussion. Assessments are based on the deployment of dramaturgical skills and techniques in a creative and critical investigation of specific questions about "realism," including both the performance and the discussion which follows it.

- **Dramaturgical Workbook**, (roughly the equivalent of 2000 words for 200-level, and 3000 words for 300-level), worth **20%** of the grade, **due weekly from 17 July to 9 October**. This project entails **10** brief writing assignments devoted to various aspects of dramaturgy, including responses to readings and reflections on your collaborative creative projects. These assignments will improve your writing skills and help you track your own learning.
- **Course Contribution**, worth **10%** of the grade. This includes contributions to seminars, Blackboard-based discussion, and other work (e.g. helping a group of classmates with a practical project).

In addition to the higher word count on the essay for 300-level students, please remember that all 300-level work will be marked at an appropriately higher standard.

Further details and guidelines for each assignment are posted on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Administration office — room 202 in 83 Fairlie Terrace. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

Performance-based group projects cannot be rescheduled or extended.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must complete all the assignments listed above, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work).

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

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>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study.

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

COURSE PROGRAMME (Subject to alteration.)

Week	Lectures	Seminar	Projects Due*
1	Welcome & Introductions.	What is realism? What is dramaturgy? Defining course contribution.	
2	Pretexts of Realism	Readings on Dramaturgy.	
3	Strindberg & Naturalism	Strindberg & Zola.	
4	Chekhov's Realism	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 1
5	Realism and its Discontents I: The Avant-Garde Resistance	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 1
6	Tennessee Williams: Realism's Golden Age?	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 1
Mid Trimester Break: Monday 22 August to Sunday 4 September 2011			
7	Edward Albee Gets Real?	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 1
8	Realism and its Discontents II: Realism, Feminism, Postcolonialism	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 2
9	In Yer Face: The Lead Wait and the Naturalist Renaissance.	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 2
10	Verbatim and Documentary Theatre	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 2
11	Extreme Realism, Realism vs. Reality	Readings TBA.	Practical Dramaturgy 2
12	Realism tomorrow: what, how, why?	Readings TBA.	Critical Essay

*Note: Contributions to the **Dramaturgical Workbook** are due each Sunday. The schedule for performance projects will be determined in the first week of seminars.