

THTR 403 The Performing Arts

Tuesday/Thursday 2:00 – 3:30 VKC 203

Dr. Melinda C. Finberg

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, by appointment

Course Description and Overview

An interdisciplinary inquiry into the nature and aesthetics of the performing arts. The course will be taught through the prism of a single classic dramatic work and its adaptations in spoken theatre, musical theatre, opera, ballet, and film: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Special attention will be paid to the history of each performing art and the ways in which actors, dancers, and singers tell the same story differently. The course also examines how the performing arts express and reflect culture and values in different historical eras. The course is required for the Performing Arts Minor and is available for upper division and graduate elective credit. Anyone with an inquiring mind and a love of the arts and performance is welcome.

Learning Objectives

- Building knowledge and appreciation of the performing arts and performance virtuositities.
- Understanding performance through its cultural, historical, and theatrical contexts.
- Analyzing dramatic and performance texts through close and careful readings and observations.
- Sharpening critical thinking skills by writing essays that argue a thesis through textual evidence.
- Sharpening presentational skills through oral reports.

Class Meetings

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:00 pm, in VKC 203
- A seminar that includes screenings, analysis, and discussion
- Required reading is due **on** the listed day; **always bring assigned readings to class.**
- Turn off all cell phones during class and examination sessions. Use of cell phones in class will result in deductions in class participation grade.
- Use of any electronic devices other than for class purposes will also result in deductions in class participation grade.
- **If your cell phone is on during examinations, you will be asked to leave the room. No make-up will be offered.**

Required Readings and Viewings

Required Texts

The following paperbacks have been ordered for you at the USC Bookstore:

- *Course Reader*

- Shakespeare and Laurents, *Romeo and Juliet and West Side Story* (Bantum/Doubleday)

Required Viewing:

- Gounod, *Roméo et Juliette*, as performed by the Royal Opera, Covent Gardent, London, 1994 (DVD on Kultur, 171 minutes), starring Roberto Alagna and Leontine Vaduva.

NOTE: There will be a class screening of this opera on **(date to be announced)** If you cannot make this screening, you will be required to finda and view the video on your own before the scheduled class discussion on **(date to be announced)**. (A copy is available in the Leavey Library and it is widely éavailable for rent.

Students also may wish to consider, individually or as groups, getting subscriptions to Amazon Prime or Netflix to have easier access to many of the films we will be discussing. Copies of most will be in Leavey Library, but they will be on reserve and there aren't many of them.

A Reference List of Versions of *Romeo and Juliet*:

- Films dir. George Cukor, 1935 (MGM; starring Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard)
 dir. Renato Castellani, 1954 (filmed in Italy)
 dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 1968 (starring Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting)
 dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1996 (starring Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio)
- Operas Georg Benda, *Romeo und Julie*, 1776
 Vincenzo Bellini, *I Capuleti e Montecchi*, 1830
 Charles Gounod, *Roméo et Juliette*, 1867
 Frederik Delius, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, 1907
- Ballets Music by Sergey Prokoviev
- Choreography: Leonid Lavrovsky, Russian, 1940 (starring Galina Ulanova)
 Kenneth MacMillan British, 1966 (starring Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev)
 Angelin Preljocaj, Romanian in France, 1992
- Musicals *West Side Story* (Bernstein, Laurents, Robbins, and Sondheim
 Broadway Production – 1956 (starring Carol Lawrence and Larry Kert)
 Film directed by Robert Wise – 1961 (starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer)

Description and Grading Breakdown of Assignments/Examinations

I: Projects (to come)

- A. **In-class presentatio**
- B. **Paper**

II. Examinations

- A. **In-Class Short Examinations**

- B. **Comprehensive Final Examination** (25% of the Final Grade) which will cover class lectures, viewings, discussions, and readings
- The exam will include both objective and essay questions.
 - **NOTE:** The Final Examination will take place according to the USC Final Examination Schedule; make all travel plans with this date in mind

Grading Policy

A (A 95-100% / A- 90-94%): Superior work demonstrating student's ability to engage the materials in a provocative, creative, and insightful manner; clearly written with no or minimal typographical or grammatical errors.

B (B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82): Completion of requirements demonstrating student's understanding of materials and ability to apply knowledge; minor writing and/or conceptual problems

C (C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / C- 70-72): Satisfactory completion of assignment requirements demonstrating accurate understanding of materials; lacks clear writing and/or is inadequately proof-read

D (D+ 67-69 / D 63-66 / D- 60-62): Failure to meet majority of requirements of the assignment

F (below 60): Failure to complete the assignment

Unexcused absences will not be permitted. If you need to be absent due to illness or emergency, please send me an email.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/> . Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/> .

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us> . This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali> , which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Course Outline

All readings should be completed before arriving to class on the listed day.

THE NATURE OF PERFORMANCE

Tuesday, January 12

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
Plot/Story in Performance

Thursday, January 14

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?
READ in the COURSE READER: Beckerman from *The Dynamics of Drama*; Cole from *The Theatrical Event*; Cohen, "What is Performance?"
VIEW: *Cirque de Soleil* and *The Bird Cage*

Tuesday, January 19

Planning Presentations and Related Papers

SPOKEN DRAMA: TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

Thursday, January 21/TUESDAY, January 26 THEATRICAL TEXTS AS DISTINCT FROM NARRATIVE TEXTS

READ: Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Thursday, January 28

READ in the COURSE READER: Brooke, *Romeus and Juliet*

Tuesday, February 2

READ in the COURSE READER: Ustinov, *Romanoff and Juliet*

Thursday, February 4

DUE: 12 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS ON SPOKEN DRAMA TODAY!

4 pm to 7:30 pm, (Room to be determined): The Class Screening of Gounod's opera, *Roméo et Juliette*. If you are unable to attend this screening you are required to watch the video of this opera on your own.

Tuesday, February 9

SHORT EXAM TODAY ON PERFORMANCE AND SPOKEN DRAMA.

Class continues with lecture below

OPERA

THE HISTORY AND CONVENTIONS OF OPERA

VIEW: Various Clips

Thursday, February 11

DISCUSSION OF GOUNOD'S OPERA AND CASTING FOR VOICE

READ in the COURSE READER: Grout from *A Short History of Opera*; Abel from *Opera in the Flesh*; Levin from *Opera Through Other Eyes*; Gross and Parker from *Reading Opera*: Robinson, "Postscript"

VIEW: Various clips

Tuesday, February 16

DUE: 12 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS ON OPERA TODAY!

CINEMA

THURSDAY, February 18

THE IDIOM OF FILM

READ in the COURSE READER: Matby, *Hollywood Cinema*; Davies, *Filming Shakespeare's Plays* ("Introduction"; "Cinematic and Theatrical Space"); Manvell, *Shakespeare and the Film*, Freytag's Triangle

VIEW: Prologues and Potions in *Romeo and Juliet*: 1936 dir. George Cukor; 1954 dir. Castellani, 1968, dir. Zeffirelli; 1996 dir. Luhrmann

Tuesday, February 23

VIEW: First meetings of *Romeo and Juliet*: 1936 dir. George Cukor; 1954 dir. Castellani, 1968, dir. Zeffirelli; 1996 dir. Luhrmann

Thursday, February 25

SCREENPLAY MEETS REALIZATION

READ in the COURSE READER: The Fifth Act of Pearce/Luhrmann's Screenplay and "An Interview with Baz Luhrmann"

Tuesday, March 1

VIEW: Luhrmann's Fifth Act

Thursday, March 3

VIEW: Opera from Familiar Directors – Zeffirelli and Luhrmann

Tuesday, March 8

DUE: 12 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS ON CINEMA PERFORMANCE TODAY!

Thursday, March 10

SHORT EXAM TODAY ON OPERA AND CINEMA

Class continues with a Discussion on the Cultural Value of the Performing Arts

SPRING BREAK!!!

DANCE

Tuesday, March 22

THE HISTORY AND AESTHETICS OF BALLET

READ in the COURSE READER: Volinsky, "The Vertical"; Cohen, "Swan Lake"; and Langer from *Feeling and Form*

Thursday, March 24

GREAT JULIETS

VIEW: The Nurse Scene in four versions: Russia, 1954 and 1980; England, 1966; and France, 1992

Tuesday, March 29/ Thursday, March 31

PERFORMING CHEMISTRY: MARGOT FONTEYN AND RUDOLF NUREYEV

VIEW: The 1966 *Romeo and Juliet* (chor. Kenneth MacMillan)

Tuesday, April 5

MODERN DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATER

VIEW: Clips and Selections from a Postmodern Dance Version of *Romeo and Juliet*, (France 1992)

Thursday, April 7

DUE: 12 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS ON BALLET TODAY

NOTE: Friday, April 8 is the last day to drop this course with a mark of W

Tuesday, April 12

SHORT EXAM TODAY ON DANCE

Class continues with the lecture below

MUSICAL THEATRE

THE HISTORY AND ART OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE

VIEW: Various clips

Thursday April 14

MORE ON MUSICAL THEATRE

READ in the COURSE READER: Miller, *Assassins to West Side Story*; Lawson-Peebles, 2 selections from *Approaches to the American Musical*; Shariff, from *Broadway and Hollywood: Interview with Sondheim* from *The Dramatist*

Tuesday, April 19

VIEW: Selections from *West Side Story*, dir. Robert Wise

Thursday, April 21

HOW *WEST SIDE STORY* MOVES FROM BROADWAY TO FILM

READ: Laurents, *West Side Story*

Tuesday, April 26

CLASS CONCLUSIONS

Tuesday, April 28

DUE: FINAL PAPERS

REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAMINATION

Final Examination Date: Tuesday, May 5 2 – 4 pm