

Department of Theatre, 0192-201, EXPERIENCING LONDON THEATRE
Winter Intersession 2019 / Prof. Sean Sullivan and Prof. Evangeline Whitlock

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students experience the wide range of London theatre in a trip including eight theatre productions seen in ten days, theatre-oriented tours and other events. The productions reflect varied styles, genres, design techniques and venues of British theatre. Students demonstrate their critical perspectives through written reviews and seminars on campus.

GEN ED LEARNING GOALS/DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS:

This course provides an Arts Distribution credit, and a Global Learning Goal credit. It also provides three academic credits to be applied to the Spring 2016 semester.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS:

Students will:

- 1) practice techniques of play-production criticism, following a rubric. The student will sharpen critical skills and exercise writing skills through six production critiques (one submitted before the trip and five after);
- 2) see and discuss a wide range of theatre, including musicals, world premieres and classics, in large theatres and small, from established companies and newer ones, to gain insights into the range of theatre and drama, and, through discussion, become conversant with it;. These productions will be the objects of the final writing project;
- 3) add to their back-stage production and historical background of theatre, through tours of important theatrical locations including backstage and other guided tours, for the enrichment of their written and oral commentary;
- 4) enhance their appreciative understanding of the skills and goals of various artists that make up a theatre production, reflecting upon their skills through written reviews;
- 5) learn to navigate a foreign capital safely, how to take advantage of another nation's unique cultural offerings beyond the theatre, and to experience international travel with its broadening, or even life-changing, effects.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

None.

ASSIGNMENTS/COURSEWORK:

- 1) There will be two compulsory lecture/discussion sessions of three hours each. These will cover issues of travel and travel safety; of navigating and enjoying London; theatre criticism and using the rubric for the course writing project; the techniques of playwrights, designers, actors and directors; more specifics about the shows we are going to see.
- 2) There will be a quiz on the use of the London transit system and on the use of the "A to Z" London street guide.
- 3) There will be an initial review assignment, due on the first day of class. You will be reviewing a theatre production captured on a DVD. Details will be provided to you well before the course begins.
- 4) Your major assignment for the course is a set of five reviews chosen from the eight productions you'll see. The finished document should be at least 18-20 pages (double-spaced, 12 point type, ½ inch (Note!) margins, no extra spaces wasted at the top. That's about four pages per production. But feel

- 5) free to write as much as you like, since I think you'll find that the productions give you lots to think about. You will follow the rubric provided. It will be due FEBRUARY 10TH; it must be submitted both digitally as a Microsoft Word attachment to an email (rose@adelphi.edu), and in a hard copy brought to my office (or sent), 255 PAC. PLEASE READ the excellent example of a final set of reviews by a student who was not a theatre major, and is at the end of this handout;
- 6) There will be a two-hour group meeting in London to discuss the growing collection of theatre we are seeing, and to practice critical techniques in discussion;
- 7) You will be sent a reaction form to help future course planning. It's filling out and submission are mandatory for the course, and substitute for a final meeting on campus.

TEXTS:

- 1) A "LONDON A TO Z" street guide to the city, available in a range of forms in bookstores and on-line book sources, such as Amazon, or www.abebooks.com (I suggest this site if you want a hard copy inexpensively) or downloadable from the App Store. There is a free "A to Z" app called Visitor's London that is for the center of the city, which houses the majority of typical locations and sights. About \$7 downloads the 'full monty', with all the locations in greater London.
- 2) An on-line UNDERGROUND MAP (that's the mass transit system) and BUS MAP are also free: download it now! I will also give you a small transit map. **YOU WILL NEED TO HAVE SOME VERSION OF THE "A TO Z" ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS!**
- 3) The optional purchase (highly recommended) of any one of a number of London tourist guides for further information on the city, its activities, modes of transport, food sources, tourist activities and other information; the Center for International Education also provides each student with one, as part of a comprehensive handout that outlines safe travel techniques and essential information for Adelphi students traveling abroad.

GRADING EVALUATION:

Due to the short length and intense nature of the course, absences from the two initial seminars are not permitted. All seminar meeting must be attended and missed material cannot be made up, including any quizzes.

Lateness for planned London events is not permitted. Lateness and/or absences at planned London events (unless due to illness or unavoidable circumstances) will result in severe downgrading and potential failure. On-time attendance at all activities or times determined by the instructor must be adhered to: it is possible that late students may miss planned activities if travel is involved.

Appropriate personal discipline for Adelphi students travelling abroad makes this a substantial portion of your grade. For the course, proper decorum includes:

- 1) strict attention to all tour-guided experiences, with no use of cell phones at any time during planned course activities;
- 2) the use of phones in any theatre is **FORBIDDEN**: doing so will result in the dropping of the student's grade by two full grade level (A to C, for example);
- 3) you will be sharing a room with another student; all students in this course must be respected and rules of courteous conduct applied to shared living experiences. Grades will be adjusted accordingly. I regard this as extremely important:
 - a) excessive drinking in the hotel rooms after course activities is strongly discouraged;
 - b) all social activities in any room must be agreed upon by both students;
 - c) any complaint about your behavior made to me by the hotel management will result in the dropping of your grade by two levels, as will damage to hotel facilities;

4) any event resulting from excessive drinking (arrest, a fight, etc) will result in failure of the course.

ALSO NOTE:

- 1) YOU MAY NOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY OF GREAT BRITAIN. You CANNOT go to Europe or Ireland.
- 2) You MUST SLEEP IN THE HOTEL every night.
- 3) YOU MUST SIGN IN AT THE DESK WHEN YOU RETURN TO THE HOTEL. I will knock loudly on your door or call you at 7:30 A.M. OR CALL THE ROOM if your name is missing, and your grade will be docked three points.

REMEMBER: you are representing Adelphi, and America. Conduct your public behavior with decorum.

SO: let's sum this up: attendance, active participation, timeliness for all London events and appropriate behavior during international academic travel, which includes attention during tours, decorum during productions, roommate behavior, other factors noted above, and the absence of alcohol or drug abuse: **30% of your grade.**

One written review of a DVD captured production, following the rubric and notes for theatre critique (disk to be provided prior to course meetings), and due on the first class meeting of January 2016: **10%**

Participation in class seminar discussions, and for quizzes given during class or as take-home assignments: 5% for involvement, 5% for quiz, total 10%

Collection of five written reviews/analyses of theatrical productions: **50%**

ASSIGNMENT GRADING GUIDELINES:

The following elements will, upon assessment, determine your grade for both written assignments (the first review of captured production and your final review-packet of five show reviews):

1) How well is it written? Sentence structure, ability to clearly convey information, punctuation, writing mechanics, and the organization of your ideas into paragraphs or sections will be assessed. The mechanics of good writing should be used as tools to make your own ideas and perceptions clearer, and more persuasively argued.

2) How deep is your critical perspective? The depth of your insights, and your willingness to use the guidelines you are given to review material with intelligence and insight, will be assessed as part of the assignment. On-line research is encouraged: not to plagiarize, but to provide needed background and content for thought.

3) How well do you use the full scope of the guidelines? How well did you follow, or allow yourself to be guided by, the advice and example of example of theatre reports provided in the THEATREGOER'S GUIDE, or the sections of the student paper in this handout? Your ability to critique as many of the aspects of production as possible, including theme, text, acting, direction and the physical aspects of production (lights, set, costumes, etc.) will be assessed: talking about just the acting and the play is not deep enough to fully satisfy the needs of the assignment.

COURSE TOPICS OUTLINE

JANUARY 3, 2017: FIRST ON-CAMPUS MEETING [THREE HOURS] 10 am to 1 pm, PAC ROOM 216 (MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM ONE):

Introduction of faculty members and guides for the trip; orientation to the city of London's geography and transit systems, with a practical set of exercises for moving about the city according to our planned itinerary; review of the template for critical written report, and expectations for the assignment; introduction to the techniques of properly critiquing a theatre production, using the outline attached to this syllabus. Quiz will be given on navigating London streets to specific locations.

JANUARY 4, 2017: SECOND ON-CAMPUS MEETING [THREE HOURS], as above.

Discussion of the roles of the various artists making theatre, and how one might critique their work; your thoughts on the theatre piece you reviewed will be sought out and listened to: sum up your thoughts, and let's share them. We will also discuss the specifics of what we will be seeing in London.

WE FLY ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 5th, AND RETURN IN LATE AFTERNOON OR EARLY EVENING on JANUARY 16th, 2017

Student Syllabus Contract

**EXPERIENCING LONDON THEATRE (0192-201),
JANUARY INTERSESSION 2017**

This is a contract form provided by the College of the Arts and Sciences. It signifies that you are entering into the EXPERIENCE with foresight and understanding of responsibility.

PLEASE SIGN BELOW, AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO THE INSTRUCTOR ON THE FIRST DAY OF ON-CAMPUS TIME:

I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE SYLLABUS FOR 0192-201, "EXPERIENCING LONDON THEATRE." BY SIGNING THIS, I CERTIFY THAT: a) I HAVE READ THIS SYLLABUS; b) THAT I UNDERSTAND THE COURSE'S REQUIREMENTS; c) THAT I MUST ABIDE BY THEM; d) THAT FAILURE TO DO SO MAY MEANINGFULLY AFFECT MY GRADE, UP TO AND INCLUDING FAILURE; e) THAT UNLESS THE INSTRUCTOR HAS MADE AN ACKNOWLEDGED ERROR IN GRADE COMPUTATION OR TRANSCRIPTION, THE GRADE I RECEIVE WILL NOT BE CHANGED AFTER SUBMISSION TO C.L.A.S.S.

NAME SIGNED: _____ PRINTED: _____

DATE: _____

“EXPERIENCING LONDON THEATRE” CONTINGENCY PLAN IN CASE OF A PROLONGED OR
INDETERMINATE CLOSING OF ALL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

There have been security issues in Europe and other places that have alerted me to the need for a contingency plan in case of problems. I have worked out one with out service provider in London, Select Travel Services.

Of course, if there is truly major incident, but one that does not shut down the transit system, you will be contacted by phone by the faculty and given directions, probably to return to the hotel. But the most likely problem that we might encounter during our stay is the closing of the transport system, as happened in Brussels, Belgium, and which lasted for several days during the recent incidents in Paris.

THIS PLAN ASSUMES THAT, AS WAS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED, YOU ARE TRAVELING IN PAIRS, TRIOS OR OTHER SMALL GROUPS. IF THE WHOLE SYSTEM CLOSES, NOT JUST THE LINE YOU EXPECTED TO TAKE, CONTACT ME OR PROF. SULLIVAN IMMEDIATELY.

IF THE *ENTIRE* TRANSIT SYSTEM IS SHUT DOWN while we are not together (at, say, a theatre) YOUR GOAL IS TO GET TO THE HOTEL so we can re-group. IF YOU CAN'T DO SO BY WALKING TO IT, OR GRABBING A CAB (which will be hard to get under the circumstances), THIS PLAN IS TO SET UP YOUR PICK-UP BY A CAR OR BUS HIRED FOR THE PURPOSE. If we are all together when an emergency occurs that stops transport, we will immediately arrange for a hired van to get us to the hotel.

IF YOU AND FRIENDS ARE TOURISTING AND THE SYSTEM CLOSES, HERE IS WHAT YOU MUST DO:

1: STAY CALM AND ALERT! TRY TO FIND OUT FROM POLICE, TRANSIT WORKERS OR OTHER SOURCES WHAT THE NATURE OF THE CLOSURE IS (is it TEMPORARY, or JUST ONE UNDERGROUND LINE, or is the UNDERGROUND SYSTEM CLOSED BUT BUSES ARE AVAILABLE, or is there a TOTAL CLOSEDOWN WITH NO TRAINS OR BUSES). If the closure is temporary, or just on one line (the one you happen to be planning to take) then do your best using another line or bus or cab to get to the show scheduled for that day AFTER CONTACTING ME AND/OR SEAN SULLIVAN to alert us to your situation.

2: *IN THE EVENT OF AN OCCURANCE WHICH CLOSES THE ENTIRE SYSTEM, CONTACT ME OR PROF. SULLIVAN IMMEDIATELY, USING THE NUMBERS ON YOUR ITINERARY, which you are TO HAVE WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.* There are two numbers for each of us, one for cellphones that we use when in London, and our personal American iPhones. It may take you a few tries since you will all be trying to contact me. Keep trying until you get one of us. Sean and I will have phone lists on our persons, and we will also be trying to contact you. WE WILL NEED TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE.

3: IF IT IS POSSIBLE, YOUR FIRST GOAL SHOULD BE TO RETURN TO THE HOTEL.. If you can CATCH A CAB from ANY PART OF LONDON, provide the driver with the hotel address, which is ON THE

ITINERARY: you can pay with a credit card or cash, and if you are in a small group, the fee will not be large when shared.

4: If you cannot walk to the hotel, or if you cannot get a cab, after CONTACTING US, PROCEED TO THE BOX OFFICE OF THE 'LONDON EYE', THE HUGE FERRIS WHEEL ON THE SOUTHERN BANK OF THE THAMES RIVER, using your "A TO Z" OR APP TO FIND OUT WHERE IT IS in relation to your location).

We have chosen this location because it is far from potential danger sites, is on the South Bank, where traffic flows more easily, and because it is in walking distance from your most likely locations: Trafalgar Square, the National art galleries, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square, Chinatown, Theatreland, Covent Garden, the Embankment crossover bridge connecting to Southwark (which is on the South Bank of the Thames River), St. Paul's Cathedral, Oxford Street, Regent Street, the British Museum, the Globe, Tate Modern, Parliament, Westminster Abbey and other sites south of the Thames. You may cross the Thames from the North Side by going over the Embankment Bridge, or any other bridge spanning the river. THIS LOCATION IS WALKABLE FROM ALL THESE LOCATIONS OR ANYWHERE NEAR THEM.

5: If you are too far from either of these pick-up points, WE WILL DECIDE ON A PICK-UP POINT FOR YOU WHEN WE SPEAK ON THE PHONE.

REMEMBER: Stay calm; investigate your situation; contact us; try to get to the hotel (where we will all reconnoitre; and if need be, get to the TICKET BOOTH OF THE "LONDON EYE".

