Why do we still go to the theatre to watch plays? What is it about drama that can often seem to express so much about the tensions and stresses found in a given culture? Why does classical drama in particular continue to be performed and speak to so many different audiences? What is a classical play and how do theatre artists interpret them for contemporary spectators and why have so many works of drama been used to reflect the social, political and economic situations of peoples all over the world? This new course takes its title and inspiration from Paul Woodruff’s book, The Necessity of Theater: The Art of Watching and Being Watched (Oxford 2008) and will be an exploration of the cultural significance of classical Theatre and how and why it continues to be performed today. Students will examine Theatre from four distinct periods focusing on plays that are still regularly performed on contemporary stages: Athens in the Fifth Century BCE, Elizabethan London, Early Modern Europe and Contemporary America. Plays from each period will be read and discussed as well as supporting chapters and articles and sections from Woodruff’s book. In addition to illustrated lectures and class discussions there will also be participatory workshops and class visits by artists working in the field. We will be discussing these plays from a cultural, historical and a practitioners perspective. Students will be asked to participate in readings, exercises and demonstrations but they do not need to have any acting or performance ability.
**Requirements**

Your presence is expected at all lectures and recitations. Bring all assigned readings to class: if you don't have the text, you can't follow the lecture or answer questions.

You must complete all components of the course: that is, you may not opt out of any papers, reports, or exams or make a practice of skipping recitation; if you do so, you risk failing the course, regardless of your grades in other components.

**Class Etiquette**

1. Please refrain from talking when your professor or a classmate is addressing the class or when the class is listening to audio/video course materials.
2. Please do not eat in class. Drinks are fine.
3. Please clean up any mess you make during class.
4. Please treat your professor and classmates with respect.
5. Please sleep in your own bed at home and not in class.
6. Please bring an open and inquiring mind to class and be prepared to discuss views that may differ from yours, intelligently and with respect.
7. Please do not leave class or start packing up your belongings until your professor has informed you that class has finished.
8. Please treat any visitors to class as you would your professor.
9. Please do not be late for class.
10. Please turn off cell phones, blackberries, I-pads, laptops and remove headphones. Technology is great and we will be using it in class but as this is a humanities class let's try and be human. If you need to take notes on a computer please supply a note from the Moses Center.
11. Also please do not use the internet, instant messages, Skype, MP3 players or any other electronic device that will impair your full participation on class.
12. Please remember to silence your phones.

**Mitigating Circumstances**

If you are aware of any conditions or circumstances that will affect your course work in any way (such as learning disabilities, medical problems etc.) it is your responsibility to make your professor fully aware of them at the earliest opportunity either in person after class, by scheduling an appointment, via telephone, e-mail or in writing and by communicating with the relevant advisory department such as the Moses Center. If a student fails to make due notification the professor will be unable to take any such circumstances into consideration when setting work or calculating grades.

**Grading**

**Written work**
There will be six written assignments set (in addition to a final paper). Three will be one page each and three will be three pages each. Students will receive written work back with comments and grades in a timely fashion. TA’s will discuss written assignments with students in recitations.

2 one-page reports worth 5% each (total 10%)
2 two-page papers worth 5% each (total 10%)
1 three-page paper worth 10% each (total 10%)
1 one-page play report worth 5%
Final Paper (see below) worth 30%

All written assignments must be completed and turned in by the date and time listed on the syllabus. **LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER.** Failure to complete any of the written assignments will result in a failing grade.

**Mid Term Exam 25%**

This will comprise of ten questions on the course material that will each require a one or two paragraph response.

**Final Paper 30%**

This will be a final 8-page paper due at the time of the last class. Students may choose a title from one of five assigned topics. The final title and thesis must be approved by the TA’s or Instructor.

**Participation 10%**

This grade will be based on attendance, class participation in discussions and exercises in class. After two classes and or recitations missed the grade drops 2% for each subsequent missed class unless for medical reasons which must be documented by a dated doctor’s note, or religious observances.

**Class Theatre Visit**

There will be one mandatory theatre visit. Students will need to purchase their tickets and for the class trip at student or group rates.

**Readings**
Readings are set on the day they appear in the schedule and must be completed by the following class period for discussion. Additional readings may be assigned in class as well as those that appear on the syllabus. It is imperative that students keep up with the readings and are prepared to discuss them in class and precept groups.

**Recitations**

The recitation is an integral part of this course. You must attend every meeting. Speaking up in recitation is required, not optional: if you’re shy or having trouble with the work, consult your instructor. Missing more than two meetings will bring down your grade. If you miss more than half the recitations, you will fail the course.

**NYU Classes**

Please consult out NYU Classes site for the Syllabus, course information and announcements and to exchange information and ask questions on the discussion board.

**Meetings**

If you would like to meet with Professor Meineck or one of the Recitation Instructors please e-mail them directly to arrange a meeting. E-mail addresses are listed on the top of this syllabus.

**Missing Work**

Please try not to miss any classes. If you must then it is your responsibility to catch up on what you have missed by consulting your classmates and consulting their notes etc.

**Plagiarism**

Essay and exam questions are designed specifically for this course, and they must be answered without using, print or internet resources, Wikipedia, essays- for-sale sites, the services of a hard-up graduate student, friends or family members etc. Copying or paraphrasing or rewriting words that someone else has written is cheating. Students caught cheating will receive an F for the entire course.

**Required Texts**

These books are at the NYU Bookstore. Please use these editions as we will be using their introductory and critical materials.


Decaul, Maurice, Dujla Wal Furat – Between the Tigris and the Euphrates (2014) [Provided in class]

**Syllabus**

Readings are **SET** on the day they appear in the syllabus and **DUE** in the next class period. Please bring at least two discussion points on each reading to class ready to discuss when called upon.

September

**Week 1.**

**Thu** 3rd  
Course Introduction: The Necessity of Theatre  
Reading Set: Woodruff: Prologue and Introduction (pp. 3-28)

**Week 2.**

**Tue** 8th  
Watching and Being Watched: Defining Theatre  
Reading Set: Woodruff: Part One: 1 and 2 (pp. 31-62)

**One page Paper 1 Set**

**Thu** 10th  
The Origins of Theatre.  
Reading: Woodruff: Part One: 3-4 (pp. 63-92)

**Week 3.**
Tue 15th  
Before Theatre: Procession, Cult and the Chorus

Reading: Woodruff: Part One: 5-6 (pp. 93-122)

One Page Paper 1 Due

Thu 17th  
The Theatricality of Greek Tragedy

Reading: Sophocles *Ajax*

One Page Paper 2 Set

Week 4.

Tue 22nd  
The spectacle of Greek Theatre: Environment

Reading: Woodruff: Part One: 7 (pp. 123-140)

One Page Paper 2 Due

Thu 24th  
The Politics of the Theatre

Introduction to Sophocles, *Four Tragedies*.

Two Page Paper 1 Set

Week 5.

Tue 29th  
The Tragic Paradox: Pleasure in Pity and Fear

Reading: Sophocles *Philoctetes*

October

Thu 1st  
Tragedy and Trauma.

Reading: Woodruff: Part Two: 8-9 (pp. 145-187)

Two Page Paper 1 Due

Week 6.
Tue 6th Obscenity, inhibition and laughter: Comedy and Catharsis

Reading: Aristophanes *Wasps*

**Two Page Paper 2 Set**

Thu 8th Comic Justice: Aristophanes *Wasps*

Reading: Woodruff: Part Two: 10, 11, 12 and Epilogue (pp. 188-231)

Week 7.

Tue 13th **FALL RECESS. NO CLASS**

Thu 15th Mid Term Review

Reading: Mid Term Study

**Two Page Paper 2 Due**

Week 8.

Tue 20th **MIDTERM EXAM**

In class - one hour ten minutes.

Thu 22nd *Really* Reading Shakespeare: A workshop

Reading: Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**Three Page Paper 1 Set**

Week 9.

Tue 27th *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Reading: Staging Shakespeare Project
Thu 29th  Staging Narratives

In class participation

Reading: Shakespeare’s *Othello*

Week 10.

November

Tue 3rd  *Othello*

*Three Page Paper 1 Due*

Reading: Introduction to *Tempest*

**FINAL PAPER SET**

Thu 5th  Interpreting *Othello* Today

Reading: Ibsen *An Enemy of the People*

Week 11.

Tue 10th  Ibsen’s Environmental Anarchy: *An Enemy of The People*

Reading: Introduction to *Enemy*

Thu 12th  *An Enemy of The People 2 – Modeling Ibsen’s Characters.*

In class participation.

Reading: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

Week 12.

Tue 17th  Staging Surrealism: *Six Characters in Search of an Author 1*

Reading: Sarah Ruhl’s *Eurydice*

Thu 19th  The future of the classical: *Eurydice*
Reading: *Dujla Wal Furat: Between the Tigris and the Euphrates*

**Week 13.**

Tue 24th  
Class Visit by Maurice Decaul.
Playwright, *Dujla Wal Furat: Between the Tigris and the Euphrates*

**One page play reports set.**

Thu 26th  
**THANKSGIVING NO CLASS**

December

**Week 14.**

Tue 1st  
Theatre as Experiment
Theatre Visits

Thu 3rd  
Producing Theatre
Theatre Visits Ongoing

**Week 15**

Tue 8th  
Theatre Visit Reports and Discussion 1

**One page play reports Due**

Thu 10th  
Theatre Visit Reports and Discussion 2

**FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

**Week 16**
The future of Theatre