

THE 504: Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal
Fall 2020
Friday 2:00pm – 4:50pm PST
Shoup 207 and Zoom

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Alice Campbell (please call me Sarah!)

Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Office Hours: T/Th 10:30AM – 12:00PM

Phone: _____ (feel free to text/call if you are running late for class, need some help urgently, etc.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar focuses on two of the key figures in the theatre for social change movement in the twentieth century: Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal. The course examines the aesthetics, dramatic/theoretical texts, and rehearsal/working practices of Brecht and Boal and how they built upon and departed from previous movements in the theatre. We will also look to how these practitioners have inspired artists across the globe in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- 1) Discuss the theories and aesthetic practices that informed the careers of Brecht and Boal.
- 2) Apply techniques of epic theatre to the rehearsal room.
- 3) Use the techniques of theatre of the oppressed in the classroom, rehearsal room, community, etc.
- 4) Discuss the influence that both Brecht and Boal have had in the world of theatre.
- 5) Design a workshop or master class in your specific area of concentration using the tools of epic theatre or theatre of the oppressed.
- 6) Write an academic paper citing primary and secondary sources on topic related to Brecht, Boal, and/or theatre for social change; or use primary and secondary sources to inform a project related to Brecht and Boal.

COURSE TEXTS

The following two texts will need to be purchased by students. All other readings will be available either through the university library, an outside website (news outlet, *American Theatre* magazine, etc.), or will be provided in PDF form.

1. Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. (any edition of this readily available text should be ok!)
2. Willett, John and Bertolt Brecht. *Brecht on Theatre*. (any edition of this readily available text should be ok!)

COURSE COMPONENTS

A general note on feedback for assignments: I am more than happy to provide feedback in advance of any assignment, please send to my email (sarahcampbell@uidaho.edu) within 48 hours of the due date (if possible). Please don't upload to Blackboard or Weebly until it is ready to be graded.

Theatre in Society – Personal Artistic Manifesto. This text/sketch/doodle will express your goals for theatre in your community. What issues are affecting individuals where you live or work? How can theatre empower audience members to expand their horizons – whether through education, protest, social disobedience, or entertainment? Your personal manifesto is a completion-only grade. You do the assignment; you get the points. No word count/page minimum, I highly encourage you to take out a piece of computer paper and handwrite/sketch/paint/doodle your manifesto! We will set up a virtual class art gallery (just for the viewing by members of our course) of our manifesto creations. Due: September 11 by 2pm PST. 100 points.

Innovative Pedagogy Experiment. Using a text from the day's assigned reading, lead the class in a 15-20-minute innovative learning exercise. This assignment assesses your ability to read critically for the main idea(s) and synthesize what you've read into a specific pedagogical intervention designed to achieve specific goals. The hope is that each student will explore different strategies for teaching in the discipline of theatre; this then provides students with a wealth of options for teaching in future courses. A description of your activity is due on the day that you present it. 200 points.

Open Educational Resource. For this assignment, you will create an informative presentation that can be used by theatre practitioners and instructors (whether you share the final product is up to you, however). This could be a pre-recorded presentation on Zoom using PowerPoint, it could be a short documentary, or a recorded interview with an expert on the topic. If you decide to share, the resource can be posted publicly and licensed under Creative Commons for use by anyone. Due: October 23 by 2pm PST. 100 points.

Paper/Project/Syllabus – Choose your favorite below! Due: December 15 by 2pm PST. 400 points.

Paper Option: Write an 8-10-page paper (due by the end of the semester). The topic is completely up to you (within the scope of the class) but could focus on a play, a series of play texts, a playwright, or a theatrical event.

Project Option: Let your imagination run wild! Have you always wanted to design the set for Brecht's *Baal*? Perhaps you are really into the work of Augusto Boal and would like to design a workshop of theatre of the oppressed in your classroom or community. Project should be approved by me by midterm. We will work together to design a rubric for your specific project.

Syllabus Option: Are you a pedagogy-focused student? Design a syllabus at the any level (secondary, undergraduate, graduate, etc.) related to the course topics. Syllabi should include course description, learning objectives/outcomes, assignment descriptions, approximate class schedule with readings and assignments.

Community Research Project. With this project, you will respond to a series of questions about the place in which you live (or what you consider to be your artistic home); the social, economic, political, or other issues in your community (ex - homelessness, police brutality, lack of internet access, ICE raids, food deserts, COVID-19 hotspots, etc.); the community organizations that are already in place in your community that help with this issue (if present); an action plan that you could take to address this issue (on a non-theatre level, perhaps with legislation, protest, etc.); an action plan that you could take to address this issue (with theatre). It is important that this project, at this phase be research and planning ONLY. If you have not yet been a vital part of social justice or organizing in the community, the project might inadvertently cause harm. The goal for the project is to get to know your community better. Due: November 6th. 200 points.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below you will find the schedule of readings to be completed for the course. Readings are subject to change (plenty of notice will be given if this does happen!).

Abbreviation Key: *Theatre of the Oppressed* – TO; *Aesthetics of the Oppressed* – AO; *Routledge Companion to Theatre of the Oppressed* – RCTO; *Brecht on Theatre* – BOT; *Actor Training* – AT; *Brecht Sourcebook* – BS.

Part 1: Bertolt Brecht

F 8/28 **Introduction to the Course: Brecht and Boal and (Some of) the Roots of Theatre for Social Change, and Our Current Moment**

Read: Ramona Harper and Nicole Brewer, "Anti-racist theater and the #WeSeeYou movement: A Q&A with Nicole Brewer," *DC MetroTheaterArts.com*. 25 July 2020.

Jan Cohen-Cruz, "Participatory Research: Results and Further Questions – Expanding Where, Why, How, and With Whom Artists Make Work," *HowlRound.com*; 20 July 2020.

Stuart A. Day, "'A veces el pato nada': Educational Allies and Tools for Social Change," *Outside Theater: Alliances that Shape Mexico*, p. 158-171.

Dani Snyder-Young. "Why Do We Want to Use Theatre to Make Social Change?" p. 1-12.

OPTIONAL: American Theatre Wing. "Working in the Theatre: Building the Wall," YouTube.com.

<https://bit.ly/2DFEcr7>

National Theatre, "An Introduction to Brechtian Theatre," YouTube.

<https://bit.ly/2PuacRs>

Crash Course Theatre, "Poor Unfortunate Theatre," YouTube. (8:30-end of video)

<https://bit.ly/30vEvO3>

F 9/4

Bertolt Brecht: The Man Behind the Myth & Brecht's Early Works and Influences

Read: Meg Mumford, "Chapter 1: A Life of Flux," from RPPBB, p. 1-47.

Erwin Piscator, Selections from Theoretical Writings, p. 102-107.

Frederic Ewen, "In Quest of Identity," p. 143-165.

W. Stuart McDowell, "Actors on Brecht: The Munich Years," BS, p. 71-83.

Mary Luckhurst, "Revolutionizing Theatre: Brecht's Reinvention of the Dramaturg," BS, p. 193-208.

F 9/11

The Development of Aesthetic Theories

Read: Brecht, "Emphasis on Sport," BOT p. 6-9.

Brecht, "Conversation with Bert Brecht," BOT p. 14-17.

Brecht, "Shouldn't We Abolish Aesthetics?" BOT, p. 20-22.

Brecht, "The Epic Theatre and its Difficulties," BOT, p. 22-24.

Brecht, "The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre," BOT, p. 33-42.

Brecht, "The Literarization of the Theatre," BOT, p. 43-47.

Brecht, "On Gestic Music," BOT, p. 104-106.

Brecht, "The Popular and the Realistic," BOT, 107-114.

Brecht, *Threepenny Opera*.

González – *Zoetrope: Part 1*.

F 9/18

Brecht's Lehrstücke and the Epic Theatre

Read: Nottage, *Ruined*.

Brecht, "Indirect Impact of the Epic Theatre," BOT, p. 57-62.

Brecht, "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction," BOT, p. 69-77.

Brecht, "The German Drama: pre-Hitler," BOT, p. 77-81.

Brecht, "Criticism of the New York Production of Die Mutter," BOT, p. 81-84.

Brecht, "On the Use of Music in an Epic Theatre," BOT, p. 84-90.

Brecht, "The Street Scene: A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre," BOT, p. 121-129.

Gorelik, "An Epic Theatre Catechism," BS, p. 31-37.

OPTIONAL: Brecht, *The Mother*.

F 9/25

Brecht and Epic Theatre in the Rehearsal Room

Read: Treviño Orta, *Braided Sorrow*.

Brecht, "A Dialogue about Acting," BOT, p. 26-29.

Brecht, "The Question of the Criteria for Judging Acting," BOT, p. 53-57.

Brecht, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," BOT, p. 91-99.

Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting . . ." BOT, p. 136-147.

Brecht, "Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting," BOT, p. 148-153.

Mumford, "Chapter 4: Practical Exercises and Workshop," from RPPBB, p. 130-165.
Thomson, "Brecht and Actor Training: On Whose Behalf Do We Act?" AT, p. 117-129.
Keira, "Brechtian Gestus Exercises," YouTube.com. <https://bit.ly/3fy1EDE>

OPTIONAL: Brecht, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*.

F 10/2 **Brecht and Dialectics; Aesthetics Revisited**

Read: Gambaro, *Information for Foreigners*.
Booker, "Dialectics in the Theatre," p. 17-32.
Willett, "Dialectics in the Theatre: an Editor's Note," BOT, p. 281-282.
Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre," BOT, p. 179-205.
Brecht, "Stage Design for the Epic Theatre," BOT, p. 230-233.
Brecht, "From a Letter to an Actor," BOT, p. 233-236.
Brecht, "Some Things that Can be Learnt from Stanislavsky," BOT, p. 236-238.
Bentley, "Are Stanislavsky and Brecht Commensurable?," BS, p. 37-42.

OPTIONAL: Brecht, *Life of Galileo*.

Brecht, "Building up a Part: Laughton's Galileo," BOT, p. 163-168.

F 10/9 **Transnational Brecht**

Read: Weber, "Brecht's Concept of *Gestus* and the American Performance Tradition," BS, p.43-49.
Brecht, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.
Uchino, "Political Displacements: Toward Historicizing Brecht in Japan, 1932-1998," BS, p. 185-205.
Diamond, "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory," *TDR*, p. 82-94.
Martin, "Brecht, Feminism and Chinese Theatre," BS, p. 227-235.
Guangrun, "Brecht's Influence in China: A Chinese Perspective," p. 247-252.
Valdez, *4 Agitators* (adapted from Brecht's *Measures Taken*), <https://bit.ly/3a4UA0m>

Part 2: Augusto Boal

F 10/16 **Augusto Boal: The Man Behind the Myth**

Read: Babbage, "Chapter 1: Biography and Context," from RPPAB, p. 1-34.
Babbage, "New York and After: Gassner, Realism, and the "Method," from RCTO, p. 15-21.
Britton, "Politics and Performance of Identity: 25 Years of Brazilian Theatre 1954-1979," *A Boal Companion*, p. 10-20.

F 10/23 **Brecht and Boal: Comrades for Change**

Read: Taylor, "Brecht and Latin America's 'Theatre of Revolution,'" BS, p. 172-184.
Camargo Costa, "Agitprop and Theatre of the Oppressed," RCTO, p. 42-50.
Louraço Figueira, "Epic Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed: Brecht and, modestly, [Boal]!" RCTO, p. 51-57.
Balensifer Ellis, "In the Jungle of the 'Antropófagos,'" *Modern Drama*.

F 10/30 **What is Oppression? (with special guest Kate Powers!)**

Read: Löwy, "Capitalism and Environmental Destruction," from RCTO, p. 105-115.
McMaster, "Racism, Colonialism, Imperialism," from RCTO, p. 116-128.
Howe, "Patriarchy, Cisnormativity, Heteronormativity," from RCTO, p. 129- 141.
Boal, "Theatre in Prisons," from AO, p. 103-129.

F 11/6 **The Theory Behind Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (with special guest Dr. Douglas Paterson!)**

Read: Boal, "Part 1: Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy," from TO.
Boal, "Part 3: Hegel and Brecht: The Character as Subject or the Character as Object?" from TO.
Freire, Chapter 1, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 54-69 (required, can read 43-54 if you want!)
Paterson, "Three Stories from the Trenches: TO in the Midst of War," *TDR*, p. 110-117.

F 11/13 **Poetics of the Oppressed**

Read: Boal, "Part 4: Poetics of the Oppressed," from TO.
Boal, "Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses," from *TDR* p. 35-42.
Dalaqua, "Aesthetic Injustice," *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, p. 1-12.

F 11/20 **Theatre of the Oppressed in Action**

Read: Boal, "The Tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed," from AO, p.4-7. PDF.
Fairstein, et.al, "Games: Demechanization and Serious Fun," *RCTO*, p. 143-149.
Speranza, "Newspaper Theatre: the Oldest Branch of TO in the Post-Print Present," *RCTO*, p. 150-155.
Santiago-Jirau & Thompson, "Image Theatre: a Liberatory Practice for 'Making thought Visible,'" *RCTO*, p. 156-161.
Villas Bôas, "Invisible Theatre: from Origins to Current Uses," *RCTO*, p. 162-167.
Barbosa, Camarda, & Dwyer, "Forum Theatre: a Dramaturgy of Collective Questioning," *RCTO*, p. 168-179.
Jackson, "The Rainbow of Desire: Boal and Doubt," *RCTO*, p. 180-186.
Soeiro, "Legislative Theatre: Can Theatre Reinvent Politics?" *RCTO*, p. 187-194.
Santos, "Aesthetics of the Oppressed: Self-Criticism and the Re-Foundation of Theatre of the Oppressed," p. 195-200.

OPTIONAL: Boal, "Part 5: Development of Arena Theatre of São Paolo," from TO, p. 167-190.

F 11/27 NO CLASS – FALL RECESS

F 12/4 **Theatre of the Oppressed in Action pt. 2 & Beyond Theatre of the Oppressed**

Read: Babbage, "Chapter 4: Workshop Process," from RPPAB, p. 107-139.
Fox & Leeder, "Combining Theatre of the Oppressed, Playback Theatre, and Autobiographical Theatre for Social Action in Higher Education," *Theatre Topics*, p. 101-111.
Bhukhawala, "Theater of the Oppressed in an After-School Program: Middle School Students' Perspectives on Bullying and Prevention," *Middle School Journal*, p. 3-12.

F 12/11 **The Future of Theatre for Social Change in the US – Confronting Neoliberal Racist Capitalist Systems in Our Institutions**

Read: Paterson, "Early Conferences in the US: PTO and its Roots in the Academy," *RCTO*, p. 277-281.
Dardot & Laval, "Neoliberalism and the Alternative of the Common," from *RCTO*, p. 203-210.
Monedero, "Indignant Democracy: Problems of Legitimization in Neoliberal Capitalism," from *RCTO*, p. 211-224.
Menegat, "Art and the Wreckage," from *RCTO*, p. 225-247.
Chelsea Whitaker, "Exploring an Anti-Policing Theatre," *HowlRound.com*.
Ciara Diane, "When the Students Have Notes for the Teachers," *American Theatre*.
L.M. Bogad, "Tactical Carnival Social Movements, Demonstrations, and Dialogical Performance," *A Boal Companion*, 46-58.