COMMUNITY-BASED THEATER - Let's go!

Tuesdays and Thursdays  2:45 – 4:15 PM   Spring 2007
Theater and Dance Department   Room 204

Professor Harry Waters Jr.
Office – Room 112  Telephone:  X6256
Office Hours – by appt.

Course Objectives: Community Based Theater is a relatively new “field” in theater studies. The presentation, the creation and the politicalization of this specific field has been the source of controversy within theater scholarship and practice for many years. Yet many companies and organizations around the world have seen their Community Based Theater work affect hundreds of thousands of people in various walks of life. In this course, we will be investigating the theories, practices, and processes of several organizations around the United States. The examination of this field of practices -- their successes as well as challenges -- will give us a preliminary road map for practicing civic engagement at Macalester and beyond academia.

Within the weeks of this course we will together travel the streets, buildings, offices, homes, alleys and classrooms of the humblest practitioners of this problematically named hybrid called Community-Based Theater. There is one element of this course that cannot be avoided: the community involvement that is necessary to experience the power and enrichment of connecting (to) communities through a theater based medium. Admittedly, there are many ways to talk to our neighbors. This course will culminate in a communal production shared with In the Heart of the Beast Theater and their May Day Parade and Ceremony in Powderhorn Park in Minneapolis. This annual event is primary in its focus of finding themes within the surrounding communities that address the current relevant issues that are important in their neighborhoods.

Materials: 1. You must have a journal that has pages that stay in the book; not stuffed, folded or crammed in. There must be a chronological order and process to the dates and information that you will be putting into this journal. All the information that you write in there will be for your reflection, enjoyment, observation as well as critical reaction to sensitive moments of revelation that will occur throughout the semester, as well as keeping track for your fourth paper (due May 1).
2. **You must have a bus pass or access to one**, particularly in the second half of the semester. You will be expected to participate in a minimum of 6 hours per week off campus working with IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST THEATER and the surrounding communities. Your trip on the bus will take you West on Marshall, across the Lake Street Bridge, to HOBT on Bloomington and Lake St. I will be willing to travel with you for initial visits, but will expect that you follow through with the teams that will be created to reach your destinations in a timely and respectful manner.

3. **Books:**
   Performing Democracy *(PD)*: International Perspective on Urban Community-Based Performance – Susan C/ Haedicke and Tobin Nellhaus, Eds.

   **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** – Paulo Friere

   Taking it to the Streets *(ELAM)* – The Social Protest Theater of Luis Valdez and Amiri Baraka – Harry J. Elam Jr.

   Performing Communities *(PC)*: Grassroots Ensemble Theaters – Robert H Leonard and Ann Kilkelly

   In addition there will be a reader (referred to as Reader) handed out with supplemental sources. You will be responsible for raising questions or concerns in response to your readings.

   Additional references will include several readings from outside sources especially from Radical *Street Performance* edited by Jan Cohen-Cruz.

   And most importantly -

4. **Your civic community-minded spirit**, knowing that there will be so much more to gain here than just the simple task of getting a grade.

*Grading: There will be four (4) papers throughout the semester. The dates are to be presented in time for you to research and complete. The length of the first three (3) must be no less than 5 pages. The length of the last paper will be at a minimum of 8 pages but not more than 20. This last paper will encompass the entire semester, your journal reflections as well as the involvement and participation in the MAY DAY celebrations.

   Papers 1, 2, 3  30% - 10% per paper
   Paper 4  15%  Hint: Look at history of MAY DAY globally
   Participation in class  30% - which includes leading discussions
   Community Participation  20% - which will be discussed in detail
Reflection Papers/Journal 5% - having it up to date at all times

*Expectations: Show up, do the readings and be prepared to talk about these writers, artists and scholars in a way that resonates honestly as you gain insight and perspective during the course of the semester. There will be times that articles assigned to you out of the reader may seem irrelevant to the course of study. You will find that the connections return in interesting and unexpected ways.

*Additional Course Expectations: There will be a series of reflection papers that you must submit. These must be no more than 2 pages, 12-point font, double spaced TYPED – not emailed. Your name, the course and number, the instructor and date must be on the upper right hand corner. Please give the paper a TITLE. The paper itself will reveal any personal and/or intuitive reactions that the readings provoke in you.

*Community Commitments: These will be discussed in detail during the first weeks of class. While there is the understanding that you may be a. acting in a show, b. have a full time campus job or c. simply need more time to catch up on your studies, the purpose of this class is to get you actively into a community that creates theater out of their stories and concerns. You will aid them in the process of creating a piece of performance/theater that will happen on Sunday April 29, 2007 - May Day – embrace their ideas, visions or dreams/concerns in a constructed public parade concluding with the traditional HEART OF THE BEAST ceremony, which you may or may not be directly involved in. This class has the vision of offering you the opportunity to actively learn skills to “change your world.” It is up to you how you commit to that “process”.

Syllabus:

January 23 Class introduction - Syllabus construction, assign leaders for discussions during the semester. We hope to start by defining “community”

Reading assignment:
Performing Democracy (PD) -
Introduction and Bruce McConachie pp. 1 – 55
Reader – Rustam Barucha “Interculturalism and multiculturalism in an age of globalization”
January 25  Discussion Leader on PD – bring in questions/concerns to share
Reading assignment:
PD – E.J. Westlake – pp. 67 – 78
Reader – Augusto Boal – Legislative Theatre, excerpt

January 30  Discussion Leader on PD/Reader – bring in questions/concerns
Begin discussion on research topics: community Theaters around country/globe.
Reading Assignment:
Reader – Paulo Freire – Pedagogy of the Oppressed excerpt
PD – Sonja Kuftinec – pp. 58 - 65

February 1  There will be an adjustment of the class this day.
FILM – “Laramie Project”

February 6  Visit by Chen Alon – with Sonja Kuftinec from U of Minnesota
Workshop in Black Box
INVITE YOUR FRIENDS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

February 8  Discussion Leader on PD/Reader – bring in questions/concerns
Discussion Leader on PD/Reader –
Bring in Questions/concerns
Continue talk about national/regional community-based theater models – find resources
Reading Assignment:
PD – Alan Filewood – pp. 89 -103
Reader – Bernice Johnson Reagon – interview with Claire Peeps
Reminder – 1st paper date to be decided
February 13 Discussion Leader on PD – bring in questions/concerns
Questions about Paper addressed today.

*Topic: Your Choice of a Community Based Theater and its founding principles*

Reading assignment:
PD – Harry Elam and Kim Fowler – pp. 197 – 211
and Jan Cohen Cruz – pp. 213 – 224

**Reflection paper on readings/discussions due today.... 1-2 pages**

February 15 Discussion Leader on PD – bring in questions/concerns
Reading assignment:
Taking It to the Streets *(ELAM)* – Chapter 1 pp. 1- 17.
PD – Anne Davis Basting w/Peggy Pettit pp. 231 -241

February 20 Discussion Leader on TAKING IT TO THE STREETS
Reading assignment:
**Reader:** Robbie McCauley “Thoughts on my Career”
Vaclav Havel excerpt from “Public enemy” and
“The Politics of Hope”
*ELAM* – Chapter 2 pp. 19 – 46

February 22 Discussion Leader on TAKING IT TO THE STREETS/McCauley
and Havel
Reading assignment:
Performing Communities: Chapters 1,2,3, & 4
Discussion for Research Project for 2nd Paper –
**Reflection paper due today on the readings from the past two weeks.**

February 27 Discussion Leader on TCA articles
Reading assignment:
*Staging America *(SA)* - Sonja Kuftinec pp. 1 – 22
Cornerstone Community Collaboration Handbook
as well as *SA* – “Identity Traces”: pp. 23 – 58

March 1 Discussion Leader on Staging America/ Cornerstone Comm. Handbook
Assignment: ROADSIDE THEATER WEBSITE
Research Dudley Cocke of Roadside Theater/Appalshop – for Tuesday’s meeting with Founder
Reading Assignment:
Performing Communities – Chapters 5, 6, 7, & 8

MARCH 3 – CORNERSTONE THEATER WORKSHOP 10 – 8 pm

MARCH 4 – CORNERSTONE THEATER WORKSHOP 10 – 4 pm

March 5 – Symposium in Weyerhaeuser Board
BLUE NOTES: Intersections of Race, Class and Gender in BLUE

March 6 Discussion and visit by DUDLEY COCKE from Roadside Theater

March 8 Discussion Leader on Dudley Cocke’s visit
Reading assignment: - for March 29
SA – “Rural routes, Urban Revisions, Regional Returns”
pp. 85 - 183

**** SPRING BREAK *****
COMMUNITY-BASED THEATER  THDA 294-07SPRING  2007

Syllabus update

March 1 **NO CLASS – PREPARE FOR CORNERSTONE VISIT ON WEEKEND**

MARCH  3, 4 **CORNERSTONE THEATER COMPANY**

**2 DAY WEEKEND INTENSIVE – MainStage Theater/Room 204**

March 6 DUDLEY COCKE – Founder, ROADSIDE THEATER - CLASS VISIT.
BE SURE that you have visited the website, read the PD article on Roadside

March 8 **MID – TERM**  Brief discussion on Cornerstone/Roadside Theater

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS - OF SELECTED COMMUNITY-BASED THEATERS**

Reading Assignment: - for March 20
SA – “Rural Routes, Urban Revisions, Regional Returns” pp. 85 – 183
IN ADDITION – please scan at least the first 84 pages for pertinent references in the assigned chapters.

SPRING BREAK...

March 20 Discussion Leader on **SA** – reading; updates on Jane Adams School visits

*Discussion on alternatives to Final Exam: Paper vs. MayDay Participation*

Reading Assignment
ELAM – Chapters 3, 4 pp. 47 – 95

March 22 Discussion Leader on Elam

Reading Assignment
ELAM – Chapters 5, 6 pp. 97 - 139

March 27 Discussion Leader on

Reading Assignment
**PD** – Susan Suntree pp. 243 – 252
and Marcia Blumberg pp. 254 – 265
and Susan Haedicke pp. 269 – 279
MARCH 27 COMMUNITY MEETING 7 PM
In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater – May Day theme creations
Community meeting – Bloomington and Lake

March 29 Discussion Leader on PD Reading/ Impressions of Past Readings
Reading Assignment
Bread and Puppet Theater company articles, viewing of Video
REFLECTION PAPER on HOBT experience

April 3 Discussion Leader on Bread and Puppet Theater
Reading Assignment
In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater

April 5 Discussion Leader on HOBT history – perhaps visit to Theater/facility

***MAY DAY COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS***
Begin this month
IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST PUPPET THEATER –
All required to attend at least two sessions per week...
Document them in journals and reflection papers.

April 7                  Saturday 9 – 11 AM
                        Saturday 1 – 3 PM

April 10 Discussion Leader on HOBT readings
Reading Assignment
Handouts regarding Community Arts Programming
HOBT: Tuesday Community workshop 7 – 9 PM

April 12 Thursday No Class
In The Heart of the Beast 7 – 9 PM

April 14                Saturday 9 – 11 AM
                        Saturday 1 – 3 PM

April 17 Discussion Leader from April 10th
Reading Assignment
TBA
HOBT: Tuesday Community Workshop 7 – 9 PM

April 19 Thursday No Class
In The Heart of the Beast 7 – 9 PM
April 21  
Saturday 9 – 11 AM
Saturday 1 – 3 PM

April 24 Discussion Leader from April 17th
HOBT : Tuesday Community Workshop  7 – 9 PM

April 26  
Thursday No Class
In the Heart of the Beast  7 – 9 PM

April 28  
Saturday 9 – 11 AM
Saturday 1 – 3 PM

April 29  
Sunday  12 – 5 PM
Ceremony Rehearsal in Powderhorn Park

May 1  
Tuesday 7 – 9 PM
Last Class – Final Paper Due
Topic- Experiences of Theater vs. Social exchange/learning/sharing
through the historical contexts of national/Minneapolis CBT.
PLEASE approach this from your varied views and points of entry.

May 3  
HOBT: Thursday Community Workshop  7 – 9 PM

May 5  
Saturday 9 – Possible AM/ PM Rehearsal for Parade sections
8:30 AM – 3 PM Ceremony rehearsal in Powderhorn.

May 6  
SUNDAY 7:30 AM  PRE-PARADE MEET
MAY DAY PARADE –

MAY DAY CEREMONY IN POWDERHORN PARK –
those attending get EXTRA CREDIT
– MAY BE A CHALLENGE WITH EXAM CONFLICTS

DINNER FOR THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE
AT **ME GUSTO** RESTAURANT

May 8  
12 – 9 PM Cleanup in the Theater

May 9  
11th Cleanup in the Theater  9 am to 5 PM

May 10 GRADES DUE – if needed, will consult with you before that 12 NOON deadline.

*END OF SEMESTER*
Have a great and socially aware summer wherever you land and breathe.