THEATER AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES (THST)

* THST 085a, Anatomy and Movement  Renee Robinson
This course traces connections between the study of human anatomy and dance practices of the late 20th century to the present. Over the past century, a group of pioneering practitioners sought to combine advances in human anatomical and neuromuscular science with the felt, practically applied knowledge of dance artists. Their research has spawned an array of new methods for training dance and theater artists, including ideokinesis, somatics, and body-mind centering. Immersing students in a studio-based, practical exploration, this course introduces students to key ideas and thinkers in the field of dance science. Major topics include the study of functional and kinesthetic anatomy; the neuromuscular reeducation of alignment, posture and balance; the use of imagery as a motivator of movement; and the cultivation of enhanced mind-body awareness through physical practice. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. No prior experience in dance or theater necessary. This course is open to students of all physical abilities and backgrounds. The instructor will work with students with special needs or specific physical disabilities to adapt the movement exercises to meet their capabilities. HU

* THST 092b / AFST 092b, African Rhythm in Motion  Lacina Coulibaly
This first-year seminar traces the transnational migration of the polyrhythms inherent in African dance. Based in movement practice, the course considers the transformation of rhythm through time and space, moving from traditional African dances of the 20th century into the work of contemporary African artists and far-flung hybrid dance forms such as samba and tango. Part dance history, part introduction to the art of dance, the course is open to movers of all backgrounds and physical abilities. The professor works with students who require necessary adaptations of the physical material to meet special needs. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

* THST 093b, Creativity, Collaboration, and the Art of Making Theater  Hal Brooks
Within theater, there is always an initial spark of creation, whether it initiates from the playwright, a group of improvisers, or a combination of playwright and a troupe of actors. This course focuses on how to investigate, analyze, replicate and catalyze that impulse. It sources many art forms as a window into how we create, and attempts to address how artists begin to move from idea to execution. What is creativity? Is it innate? Is it a skill that can be developed? How? What happens when two or more people are involved in that pursuit of creation? Which techniques are common across disciplines? And how might a theater artist learn about creative pursuits from artists in other disciplines including music, design, and fiction as well as theater? Students from all backgrounds and interests will delve into techniques, identifying and integrating habits that foster creativity, creating their own works over the semester, both in small and larger groups, in solo and group projects. Enrollment limited to first year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

* THST 095a / AMST 095a / ER&M 095a / SAST 061a, South Asian American Theater and Performance  Shilarna Stokes
South Asian Americans have appeared on U.S. stages since the late nineteenth century, yet only in the last quarter century have plays and performances by South Asian Americans begun to dismantle dominant cultural representations of South Asian and South Asian American communities and to imagine new ways of belonging. This seminar introduces you to contemporary works of performance (plays, stand-up sets, multimedia events, and more) written and created by U.S.-based artists of South Asian descent as well as artists of the South Asian diaspora whose works have had an impact on U.S. audiences. With awareness that the South Asian American diaspora comprises multiple, contested, and contingent identities, we investigate how artists have worked to manifest complex representations of South Asian Americans onstage, challenge institutional and professional norms, and navigate the perils and pleasures of becoming visible. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

* THST 098a, Composing and Performing the One Person Play  Hal Brooks
First-year actors, playwrights, directors, and even students who have never considered taking a theater class, create their own work through a combination of reading, analysis, writing, and on-your-feet exercises. Students read texts and view performances that are generated by one actor in an attempt to discover the methodology that works best for their own creations. The course culminates with a midterm and final presentation created and performed by the student. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

THST 110a, Collaboration  Elise Morrison and Emily Coates
This foundational course introduces collaborative techniques at the core of topics, domains, and practices integral to the major in Theater and Performance Studies. We explore the seeds of performance from its basic essence as human expression, to movement, text, and storytelling, gradually evolving into collectively created works of performance. Techniques and readings may be drawn from improvisation, dance, music, design and spoken word contexts, and will encourage cohort building, critical reflection, and the join of individual and collective artistic expression. Guests from within and outside performance disciplines enhance the potential to investigate crossover between different media. HU RP

* THST 111b, Modes of Performance  Staff
This foundational course introduces students to the breadth of topics, domains, and practices included in the major in Theater and Performance Studies, as well to faculty in the program. Building on practices of collaborative research and performance making established in MUSI 110, this course alternates between immersive, practical encounters with performance techniques from different disciplines and foundational methodologies for performance analysis. Structured around the four “domains” of study within the
The genre of tragedy from its origins in ancient Greece and Rome through the European Renaissance to the present day. Themes of justice, religion, free will, family, gender, race, and dramaturgy. Works might include Aristotle’s *Poetics* or Homer’s *Iliad* and plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Hrotsvitha, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Calderon, Racine, Büchner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Wedekind, Synge, Lorca, Brecht, Beckett, Soyinka, Tarell Alvin McCraney, and Lynn Nottage. Focus on textual analysis and on developing the craft of persuasive argument through writing. WR, HU

* THST 224a / MUSI 228a, Musical Theater Performance I Dan Egan and María-Christina Oliveras
The structure, meaning, and performance of traditional and contemporary musical theater repertoire. Focus on ways to "read" a work, decipher compositional cues for character and action, facilitate internalization of material, and elicit lucid interpretations. This semester's
course also embraces the online format to address performing and recording virtually as a vital tool in the current field of musical theater. The course combines weekly synchronous learning and private coaching sessions. For singers, music directors, and directors. Admission by audition and application only. Auditions/interviews will be scheduled during the first two weeks of August. May be repeated for credit. For audition information contact dan.egan@yale.edu.  HU  RP

*THST 225a / FREN 244a / LITR 383a, The French Stage: History and Performance of French Theater from Molière to Césaire  Staff
From Molière to Marie Ndiaye, via Augustin de Beaumarchais, Olympe de Gouges, George Sand and Wouajdi Mouhawad, theater is at the center of French artistic and political culture. This course covers four centuries of theater history, from the age of Versailles to the beginning of the twenty-first century. We discover the plays, their relationship to current events, their political and aesthetic dimensions, the history of their staging, and the material aspects of their productions.  HU  o Course cr

* THST 226b / MUSI 220b, Musical Theater Performance II  Staff
The collaborative process and its effect on musical theater performance. Choreography, music direction, and origination of new works. Analysis of texts, scripts, and taped or filmed performances; applications in students’ own performance. May be repeated for credit. For audition information e-mail dan.egan@yale.edu.  RP

* THST 227a, Queer Caribbean Performance  Emily Coates
With its lush and fantastic landscape, fabulous carnivalesque aesthetics, and rich African Diaspora Religious traditions, the Caribbean has long been a setting where New World black artists have staged competing visions of racial and sexual utopia and dystopia. However, these foreigner-authored fantasies have often overshadowed the lived experience and life storytelling of Caribbean subjects. This course explores the intersecting performance cultures, politics, and sensual/sexual practices that have constituted queer life in the Caribbean region and its diaspora. Placing Caribbean queer of color critique alongside key moments in twentieth and twenty-first century performance history at home and abroad, we ask how have histories of the plantation, discourses of race and nation, migration, and revolution led to the formation of regionally specific queer identifications. What about the idea of the “tropics” has made it such a fertile ground for queer performance making, and how have artists from the region identified or dis-identified with these aesthetic formations? This class begins with an exploration of theories of queer diaspora and queer of color critique’s roots in black feminisms. We cover themes of exile, religious rites, and organizing as sights of queer political formation and creative community in the Caribbean.  HU

* THST 228b / ENGL 423b / FILM 397b, Writing about the Performing Arts  Margaret Spillane
Introduction to journalistic reporting on performances as current events, with attention to writing in newspapers, magazines, and the blogosphere. The idea of the audience explored in relation to both a live act or screening and a piece of writing about such an event. Students attend screenings and live professional performances of plays, music concerts, and dance events. Formerly ENGL 244.  WR, HU

* THST 234a, Politics and Protest in Dance History  Emily Coates
In the wake of COVID–19, the future of Dance Studies seems more unclear and destabilized than ever, as the very act of gathering to dance or watch live performance carries new political meanings and risks. Does dance even matter in our current moment in United State history? To rephrase the question, can the tools of dance history and performance studies—with its attention not only to how individual bodies move but how we form relationships and solidarities by moving together—inform how we respond to the politics of today? This class introduces students to the intersections between dance and politics in 20th/21st century United States and its migratory spheres. Students watch filmed performance and attend live shows to understand how dancers use embodiment to make arguments, enact cultural diplomacy, and shift the grounds of activism. We analyze how our society has made meaning out of dancing bodies that move across stages, dance clubs, and film screens. We use movement analysis and choreography as a lens to understand strategies of organizing and protest. Focusing mainly on new trends in Dance Studies, we center queer theory, performance theory, critical race theory, and transnational history methodologies. By the end of the semester, students are equipped to identify key moments in American concert dance and social dance history, as well as their relation to broader political moments and social movements for class equality and racial/gender/sexual liberation, develop the descriptive and analytical tools to write about movement-based performance, design and create their own work of dance ethnography.  HU

* THST 236a / MUSI 185a, American Musical Theater History  Dan Egan
Critical examination of relevance and context in the history of the American musical theater. Historical survey, including nonmusical trends, combined with text and musical analysis. Limited enrollment. Interested students should contact dan.egan@yale.edu for application requirements.  WR, HU

Dialogue constitutes an integral part of human experience and culture ever since antiquity. Whether as a rhetorical or a dramatic device, written or oral, fictional or not – dialogue substantiates the core of any intersubjective communication, building bridges between the self and the Other while maintaining them as two separate entities. This seminar explores the form and function of dialogue through a wide range of theoretical and literary texts, focusing on a set of social, hermeneutical, poetic, and political questions. Specific attention is given to literary cases of failed dialogues and miscommunication, aiming at the unique ability of the literary text to draw our attention beyond the limits of human communication and language. Readings include texts by Plato, Schlegel, Novalis, Bachtin, Levinas, Buber, Gadamer, Parsons, Kleist, Beckett, Melville, Schnitzler, Celan, Bachmann,., and others.  HU

* THST 300a, The Director and the Text I  Toni Dorfman
Practicing fundamentals of the art of directing: close reading and deep text analysis in search of physical action; rehearsal preparation; mixing the elements of composition (scenography, light, sound & music, projections, movement, language); and most crucially–the
work with the actor. Weekly assignments (some labor intensive), discussion of same, and regular on-the-floor experiments. While concentrating on basic practices, the course is designed for students to seek out an initial understanding of individual, even idiosyncratic, artistic directorial voice. Prerequisite: THST 210.  

* THST 305a, Production Seminar: The Actor and the Text  
  Toni Dorfman  
  Critical and theatrical exploration of the relationships among biography, history, and drama, culminating in a public performance.  
  †Admission by audition, with priority to Theater Studies majors seeking a senior project.  

* THST 307a, Improvisation, Études, and Devising  
  David Chambers  
  This course, intended for actors, directors, playwrights, and others interested, moves through three related cycles of improvisational performance. While there are readings and viewings of extant materials, this class should be considered as performance research; it mostly takes place experientially, “on the floor.” The goal is to immerse students in role models and practical techniques of improvisation, études, and devising, ideas that are already popular in campus theatrical works and benefit from an applied course to underpin, challenge, and expand their efforts.  

* THST 317a / ENGL 224a / LITR 349a, Tragedy and Drama of Reconciliation  
  Jan Hagens  
  Close reading of dramas of reconciliation from the Western canon that have traditionally been categorized as tragedies. Ways in which the recategorization of such plays lends additional complexity and meaning to their endings and allows for new interpretations of the texts, their authors, and the history of drama.  

* THST 318b / MUSI 340b, Analyzing, Directing, and Performing Early Opera  
  Grant Herreid and Toni Dorfman  
  Study of a seventeenth-century Venetian opera, with attention to structural analysis of text and music. Exploration of period performance practice, including rhetorical expression, musical style, gesture, dance, Italian elocution, and visual design. Production of the opera in conjunction with the Yale Baroque Opera Project. Open to all students, but designed especially for singers, instrumentalists, and directors. Admission by audition only. May be repeated for credit. For audition information e-mail grant.herreid@yale.edu.  

* THST 319a / AFAM 313a, Embodying Story  
  Renee Robinson  
  The intersection of storytelling and movement as seen through historical case studies, cross-disciplinary inquiry, and studio practice. Drawing on eclectic source materials from different artistic disciplines, ranging from the repertory of Alvin Ailey to journalism, architectural studies, cartoon animation, and creative processes, students develop the critical, creative, and technical skills through which to tell their own stories in movement. No prior dance experience necessary.  

* THST 320a / ENGL 453a, Playwriting  
  Donald Margulies  
  A seminar and workshop on reading for craft and writing for the stage. In addition to weekly prompts and exercises, readings include modern American and British plays by Pinter, Mamet, Churchill, Kushner, Nottage, Williams, Hansberry, Hwang, Vogel, and Wilder. Emphasis on play structure, character, and conflict.  

* THST 322a / ENGL 481a, Advanced Playwriting  
  Deborah Margolin  
  A seminar and workshop in advanced playwriting that furthers the development of an individual voice. Study of contemporary and classical plays to understand new and traditional forms. Students write two drafts of an original one-act play or adaptation for critique in workshop sessions. Familiarity with basic playwriting tools is assumed. Open to juniors and seniors, nonmajors as well as majors, on the basis of their work; priority to Theater Studies majors. Writing samples should be submitted to the instructor before the first class meeting. Prerequisite: THST 320 or 321, or a college seminar in playwriting, or equivalent experience.  

* THST 323a / GMAN 328a, Adapting to the Stage  
  Staff  
  In this course, we explore theatre as a site of adaptation, as intermedial constellation. We investigate the relationship between dramatic literature and its performance and performability, between textual outlines and their realization(s): between scripts and stages. Focusing on ‘adaptations’ in their various forms, allows us to explore the history of modern German theatre (1750-present day) from a particular angle. The perspective encourages us to prioritize actors over the writers/directors, it requires us to focus on the margins of a script: paratexts—a stage direction, for example—rather than their ‘literary’ counterparts. With this shift of focus and radical widening of the perspective, the course aims to bring forth minor voices within the canons of German drama literature and to offer a way to engage creatively and in unexpected ways with the canons of our field.  

* THST 324b, Playwright-Director Laboratory  
  Toni Dorfman  
  An exploration of the collaboration between the director and the playwright in the creation of new work. Particular attention to the shaping of dramatic action, structure, and characters. Short scenes are written, staged, critiqued, and revised. Prerequisites: THST 210; for directors: THST 300; for playwrights: THST 320, 321; or with permission of instructor.  

* THST 333b / MUSI 472b, Stephen Sondheim and the American Musical Theater Tradition  
  Dan Egan  
  The musical theater of Stephen Sondheim, both as a popular phenomenon of the contemporary Broadway stage and in relation to models and forms employed in the past.
* THST 335a or b / AFST 435a or b, West African Dance: Traditional to Contemporary  
Lacina Coulibaly  
A practical and theoretical study of the traditional dances of Africa, focusing on those of Burkina Faso and their contemporary manifestations. Emphasis on rhythm, kinesthetic form, and gestural expression. The fusion of modern European dance and traditional African dance. Admission by audition during the first class meeting.  
HU RP

* THST 340a, Ballet Now  
Daniel Ulbricht  
A practical investigation of seminal ballets in the repertory of New York City Ballet. Tracing a sweeping history of artistic innovation from the early twentieth century to the present, this course covers the technique and aesthetic details that constitute New York City Ballet’s style and follow the ways that these stylistic strengths are applied and transformed in the contemporary ballets of the 21st century. Repertory excerpts move through foundational works by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins to ballets created in the past fifteen years by some of the most prominent ballet choreographers working today. Prior dance training required. Admission is by audition during the first class meeting.  
HU

* THST 343a, Public Speaking  
Elise Morrison  
Development of skills in public speaking and in critical analysis of public discourse. Key aspects of rhetoric and cultural communication; techniques for formulating and organizing persuasive arguments, engaging with an audience, and using the voice and body effectively.  
HU

* THST 380b / AMST 370b, Choreographic Invention in 20th Century America  
Staff  
An examination of major movements in the history of concert and social dance from the late nineteenth century to the present, including ballet, tap, jazz, modern, musical theater, and different cultural forms. Topics include tradition versus innovation, the influence of the African diaspora, and interculturalism. Exercises are used to illuminate analysis of the body in motion. Limited enrollment. See Canvas for details.  
WR

* THST 401a, Conceptual Sound Design for Theater  
Nathan Roberts  
Theoretical and practical considerations for conceptual sound design, the creation of aural content and imagery in support of dramatic action. The use of sound to communicate meaning and intention effectively in a theatrical setting. Auditory culture and the phenomenology of hearing; the role of technology in sound design; development of critical listerning skills and of a foundational vocabulary for the medium. Projects focus on the generation of content and ideas in support of a text.  
HU

* THST 414a, Lyric Writing for Musical Theater  
Michael Korie and Dan Egan  
The craft of lyric writing in musical theater, opera, and crossover works. Both historical models and new composition used as objects of study. Analysis of song form and placement, and of lyric for character, tone, and diction. Creation of lyrics in context. Noted composers and lyricists of produced musical theater works join the class periodically to comment on the work created. Students also have the opportunity to conceive an original work of musical theater, a crossover work, or an opera libretto, and create portions of the score with original lyrics and music by student composers, with whom the writers will collaborate. Limited enrollment. Interested students should write to dan.egan@yale.edu for application requirements. May not be repeated for credit.  
HU RP

* THST 427b / AMST 349b, Technologies of Movement Research  
Emily Coates  
An interdisciplinary survey of creative and critical methods for researching human movement. Humans move to communicate, to express emotions, to commune, to protest, to reflect and embody the natural world. Drawing on an array of artistic projects and scholarship (in dance and performance studies, art, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, cognitive science, and the history of science), we consider case studies that take up movement as both the object and method of inquiry. Class time and assignments include moving, reading, and watching. Movement exercises are adaptable to the remote environment. All physical capabilities are welcome; no prior experience in dance required. Limited enrollment. See Syllabus page on Canvas for application.

* THST 452a, Acting: Constructing a Character  
Gregory Wallace  
A practical exploration of the internal and external preparation an actor must undergo to effectively render the moment-to-moment life of a given character. Focusing on monologues, scenes, and group explorations of text the class engages in a rigorous investigation of how the actor uses the self as the foundation for transformation. Course consists of close readings, research presentations, rehearsals and in-class scene presentations. Preference to senior and juniors. Open to non-majors. Limited enrollment. Admission by audition. See Syllabus page on Canvas for audition information and requirements.  
HU

* THST 453b / ENGL 462b / FILM 401b, Writing Screenplay Adaptations  
Donald Margulies  
A workshop on the art of screenplay adaptation. Students read short stories, novels, and non-fiction; the screenplays based on that source material; and view and analyze the final product, the films themselves. Instruction focuses on the form, economy, and structure specific to screenwriting. Weekly writing exercises supplement the creation of a final project: a short screenplay based on source material of the student’s choosing. Previous experience in writing for film or stage would be advantageous but is not required. Restricted to juniors and seniors, or by permission of the instructor.  
HU

* THST 457a / AMST 452a / EVST 463a / FILM 455a, Documentary Film Workshop  
Charles Musser  
A yearlong workshop designed primarily for majors in Film and Media Studies or American Studies who are making documentaries as senior projects. Seniors in other majors admitted as space permits.  
RP
* THST 471a, Directed Independent Study  Shilarna Stokes
An independent study should generally conform to the standards and procedures of the senior project, THST 491, even when not undertaken by a senior. If the independent study is a performance or directing project, the adviser visits rehearsals and performances at the mutual convenience of adviser and student. The project must be accompanied by an essay of about fifteen pages, worth about half the final grade. Although the paper’s requirements vary with the project and its adviser, it must be more than a rehearsal log. The paper typically engages interpretative and performance issues as revealed in other productions of the work (if they exist). The writing should be concomitant with rehearsal, to enable each to inform the other, and a draft must be presented to, and commented on by, the adviser at least a week before—not after—the final performance. The final version of the paper, incorporating adjustments and reflections, should be turned in to the adviser no later than ten days after the performance closes, and no later than the first day of the final examination period. An essay project entails substantial reading, at least four meetings with the adviser, and a paper or papers totaling at least twenty pages. A playwriting project normally requires twenty new script pages every two weeks of the term and regular meetings with the adviser. A final draft of the entire script is the culmination of the term’s work. Application forms are available from the director of undergraduate studies. Juniors may use one term of these courses to prepare for their senior projects. Open to juniors and seniors. Prerequisites: THST 210 and one seminar.

* THST 491a, Senior Project in Theater Studies  Nathan Roberts and Dan Egan
Students must submit proposals for senior projects to the Theater Studies office by the deadline announced by the director of undergraduate studies. Attendance at weekly section meetings is required for all students undertaking production projects. Application forms are available in the Theater Studies office, 220 York St.