

**Theatre Arts TBA
Global Theatre
Dr. John Blondell
Spring 2022**

T and TH 3:15-5:05

Office Hours – 9-10 Tuesday and Thursday; 1-2 Monday and Wednesday; and by appointment

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**Global Theatre
Disciplinary Orientation**

25 years ago, a course in World Theatre would survey the dominant aesthetic forms of various countries in question. A study might include Kathakali in India, Kabuki or Noh in Japan, and Chinese Opera in China; plays and theatres in Latin America; and rituals and theatres in Africa. The study would trace the origins of the forms in question, cultural conditions from which the form arose, the spaces that present the form, and the approaches in design and stage behavior (acting, dance, costuming, etc.) that would communicate the stories and actions of the forms and pieces in question. The study would be insular, siloed and discrete; it would examine the forms relative to intra cultural forces, and would ignore or pass over the intra or multi-cultural forces that gave them rise.

Like most things of the last 25 years, things have changed. Though World Theatre courses like the one described above still exist, they have given over to studies that explore the Global dimension of the theatre, and the interconnective sources and forces that create new forms, and present new ways to experience life and culture. Contemporary Global Theatre courses study the interconnectivity, inclusion, and diversity of a constantly changing world. Where 25 years ago the study of global theatre artifacts might be related to the study of national forms, or insular traditional values, contemporary global practice is marked by hybridization, porosity, flexibility, adaptability, interconnectivity, multi-culturalism, and performativity of a constantly changing world, and across the cultural spectrum. Studies in Global Theatre examine the transformations of native forms, adaptations, intercultural hybridization, Global Shakespeare, cultural appropriation, theatre and disability, theatre and the environment, and other topics that place theatre and its performances as products of a myriad of forces, changes, and transformation, where the dynamic interplay of cultures creates particular kinds of global theatre experience.

Many people travel, and many people go to the theatre when they travel. They might see a play in London or Beijing or Saint Petersburg or Buenos Aires. Simply seeing a play in a particular city or region, however, doesn't make an individual a global citizen. Similarly, not every director or producer who works internationally creates global theatre experiences. An American

Commented [MOU1]: Study of interconnectedness, multiple perspectives, multi-directional forces, impact of place on culture and vice versa, and focus on regions rather than countries.

director, directing in Macedonia, doesn't necessarily direct global theatre experiences. Global theatre creation doesn't happen by accident. It is by design. The creation of global theatre needs to be strategic, specific, and intentional. The course hopes to cultivate global citizenry, and the sensitivities and awareness of what it means for Christians to locate themselves in a variety of **cultural** contexts.

This course functions as an introduction to important topics in Global Theatre Practice and Research. In it, students develop awareness, insight, understanding, and knowledge of the means and methods of cultural production through theatrical representation, in a variety of regions throughout the world. The course commences with three case studies of cultural hybridization and adaptation, when three intercultural productions are examined, watched, studied, and experienced, including the American play *Eurydice* in Armenia; the Russian play *Uncle Vanya* performed by an international group of actors on the Web; and the North Macedonian novel *Pirej*, staged by a mixed group of American and Macedonian artists in North Macedonia. The course continues with a unit on play and theatre-making in three different regions. Students study disability, as well as the interplay of Russian, Anglo, and Latin American cultures in Russian playwright Asya Voloshina's *Patients*; Finnish relationship to the EU in Sirkku Peltola's *The Finnhorse*; and Monica Maffia's intercultural work in Buenos Aires.

The course concludes with a study of Global Shakespeare, including Ecology and Shakespeare, and the range of topics that animate that subdiscipline of Global Shakespeare Studies. Concomitant with the study of Global Theatre, students read an important text in Global Christianity (still TBA), and develop connections, pose questions, raise problems, and interrogate the relationship between cultural production as it relates to both the theatre and the Christian faith. The result is a rich interrogation of culture, entertainment, spirituality, and cultural change, the forces that bring about that change, and the implications of that change for people living in the west, and for individual's personal lives.

Global Theatre as Part of a Westmont Theatre Arts Major or Minor

This is a new course in the Westmont's Theatre Arts curriculum. It suggests that disciplines are in constant flux and change, and new courses must be developed to meet the changing dimensions of aesthetic forms and the interplay of cultures that give rise to them. In addition, it reflects Westmont Theatre's commitments to aesthetic competencies, core knowledge, and effective communication, and relates directly to the department's three Program Learning Outcomes – the creation, development, and presentation of theatrical performances; disciplinary knowledge; and effective written communication. These outcomes can be found on the departmental website, and read as follows:

- **Students display appropriate skill in creation, development, and presentation of theatrical performances.**
- **Students demonstrate Core Knowledge in major literature, history, and theory of western theatre practice.**
- **Students apply discipline-specific research methodologies in crafting effective**

Commented [MOU2]: Committee Praxis: Relationship between Christianity and other cultures. Every several days, new readings in Global Christianity intersect with topics in Global Theatre. Students study possible interconnections, insights, discoveries, and impacts, and examine ways to conceive of Global Christian citizenry.

writing about theatrical practice.

The course is an upper division course in theatre arts, and develops emerging levels of competence in the discipline. The outcome, therefore, is:

- **Students demonstrate a developing level of Core Knowledge in major literature, history, and theory of western [sic] theatre practice.**

Global Theatre in General Education

Westmont has created a marvelous General Education program, which fosters intellectual vitality, Christian character, and commitment to service that will last a lifetime. The General Education program is comprised of a range of courses intended to develop competencies in a variety of different disciplines and methods of inquiry. This course satisfies Thinking Globally component of the Westmont General Education opportunities. According to Westmont's Common Document for the General Education, the "concept of the "global" refers to the growing interconnectedness of our world through systems of information, finance, trade, travel and migration, climate and biosphere, cultural and religious diffusion, or political engagement. To think globally is to understand how experiences of processes occurring in one part of the world carry immediate and lasting implications across vast distances. The study of these implications, in turn, fosters a reflexive awareness of our situated-ness in a given context. Global thinking should rigorously examine multiple perspectives and multi-directional influences – not simply Western perspectives of 'others' or the impact of the West on the rest."

The following represent Certification Criteria for GE Action.

1. demonstrate substantial engagement of trans-regional connections,
2. include multiple perspectives arising from these connections,
3. evaluate the impact of global processes on various world contexts and life experiences,
4. explore the ethical demands for Christians in light of the topic under study.

Nearly every assignment, project, discussion, presentation, and lecture will demonstrate transregional connections that exist between numerous regions, including Europe, Eurasia, Russia, the Caucasus, the United States, the Balkans, and Eurasia. Every case-study involves inter-regional connections, hybrids, intertextuality, the forces that give rise to them, and the connections that lead to a dynamic interplay of numerous cultures. From this study, students see and experience multiple perspectives that arise from the connections. The entire course explores and studies the impact of global artistic processes in numerous contexts, situations, and regions. Through readings and conversations, students will explore personal experiences, perspectives, and ethical and moral implications for Christians in light of Global Theatre study, research, and creation.

Thinking Globally Outcome

Students will be able to describe and analyze the dynamics of a particular artistic, economic, political, scientific, or social connection across cultural or regional boundaries.

Consequently, the Student Learning Outcome for this course is:

Students will effectively describe and analyze the many connections, perspectives and dynamics of a Global Shakespeare production. (See project description and requirements in the “Progress and Development” section below, in italics.)

Assignments

Unit One: Three Global Theatre Case Studies

T Jan 11 Introduction to Course
R Jan 13 *Eurydice* in Yerevan

T Jan 18 No Class: Martin Luther King Day Holiday
R Jan 20 *Eurydice* in Yerevan, continued
Readings in Global Christianity TBA

T Jan 25 Global Theatre on the Network: *The Three Sisters*
R Jan 27 Global Theatre on the Network: *The Three Sisters*

T Feb 1 *Pirej* in North Macedonia
R Feb 3 *Pirej* in North Macedonia, continued
Readings in Global Christianity TBA
Discussion: Acting, Identification with the Role, and Implications for Christian Ethics and Morality

Commented [MOU3]: Case-study that examines a play by an American female, directed by an American male, in the Caucasus, and looks at effects of memory, place, choice, genocide, and aesthetic traditions and methods.

Commented [MOU4]: Students explore transregional connections between California theatre artists; Macedonian theatre artists; forces that led to early 20th century Balkan wars; contemporary impact of those wars on contemporary Balkan spirit and mindset; the impact of place and location in terms of the novel *Pirej* on contemporary cultural makeup, context, and psychology; and story as it relates to gender in terms of Balkan and US contexts; among others.

Unit Two: Global Play and Theatre-making

T Feb 8 *Patients*, Asia Voloshina, Saint Petersburg, Russia
R Feb 10 *Patients*, Asia Voloshina, continued
First Essay Due

T Feb 15 *The Finhorse*, Sirkku Peltola Tampere, Finland
R Feb 17 *The Finhorse*, continued
Readings in Global Christianity TBA

T Feb 22 No Class: Presidents Holiday
R Feb 24 Theatre Work of Monica Maffia, Buenos Aires, Argentina

T Mar 1 Theatre Work of Monica Maffia, continued
R Mar 3 Midterm Exam

Unit Three: Global Shakespeare

T Mar 8	Case Study: <i>Henry VI, Part 3</i> at Globe to Globe, Shakespeare's Globe London
R Mar 10	<i>Henry VI, Part 3</i> , continued Readings in Global Christianity TBA
T Mar 15	No Class: Spring Holiday
R Mar 17	No Class: Spring Holiday
T Mar 22	Readings from <i>Eating Shakespeare</i> , Anne-Sophie Reskau, Copenhagen, Denmark
R Mar 24	<i>Eating Shakespeare</i> , continued Zoom with Anne-Sophie Reskau
T Mar 29	Readings from <i>Intercultural Aesthetics in Traditional Chinese Theatre</i> , Wei Fang Readings in Global Christianity TBA
R Mar 31	Readings from <i>Intercultural Aesthetics</i> , continued Zoom with Wang Xiaoying, Beijing, China Second Essay Due
T Apr 5	Readings from <i>Native Shakespeares</i> , Parmita Kapadia and Craig Dionne
R Apr 7	Readings from <i>Native Shakespeares</i> , continued Readings in Global Christianity TBA
T Apr 12	Readings from <i>Shakespeare and Ecology</i> , Randall Martin Discussion: Ethics and Morality in Theatrical Production from an Ecological Perspective
R Apr 14	<i>Shakespeare and Ecology</i> , continued Zoom with Randall Martin
T Apr 19	Final Project
R Apr 21	Final Project
T Apr 26	Final Project
R Apr 28	Final Discussion

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 3, 3-5 pm

Readings

Global Christianity Text TBA
Pirej, Petre M Andreevski
Eurydice, Sarah Ruhl
Uncle Vanya, Anton Chekhov
Henry VI, Part 3, William Shakespeare

Commented [MOU5]: Readings and discussions in cultural appropriation, change, and transformation when western theatre aesthetics meld and fuse with traditional Chinese Theatre aesthetics.

Commented [MOU6]: Committee Praxis: Readings in Global Christianity lead to conversations about Global Shakespeare in non-Western contexts that challenge notions of Western idealism, culture, and hegemony.

Commented [MOU7]: GE Student Learning Outcome and Course Outcome assessed here. See description below in Progress and Development.

The Finnhorse, Sirkku Peltola

Patients, Asia Voloshina

Eating Shakespeare: Cultural Anthropophagy as Global Methodology, Anne-Sophie Reskau

Intercultural Aesthetics in Traditional Chinese Theatre: 1978 to the Present, Wei Feng

Native Shakespeares: Indigenous Appropriations on a Global Stage, Parmita Kapadia and Craig Dionne

Ecology and Shakespeare, Randall Martin

Progress and Development

The major requirements for the course and grade percentages are as follows.

Midterm Exam	20%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Final Project	20%
Final Exam	20%

The course involves two exams (a midterm and a final), two 1250-word essays, and a final project. The exams will cover topics, principles, perspectives, and ideas that emerge from the reading and class discussion.

There are two essays required for the course. Both essays involve the ethical and moral implications for Christians in terms of Global Theatre.

Discussion and Assignment 1

Context

The first essay involves issues of acting, impersonation, and Christian Compassion. One theory of acting suggests that authenticity in acting emerges from deep and personal identification with the role. In Petre M Andreevski's Pirej, there are a range of issues for Christians to examine, investigate, and reflect upon relative to acting a performance that emerges from this book, as well as that of the performance exhibited in the case study. Some of these issues include representations of war, violence, domestic abuse, psychological degradation and dissolution, and emotional trauma. In a classroom discussion, we will present and wrestle with these topics.

Assignment

"We must learn to regard people less in the light of what people do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Using the Bonhoeffer quote above, write a 1,000-word Ethics of Compassion, which describes a Christian audience member's response to suffering in the theatre.

Discussion and Assignment 2

Context

The second essay involves ecology, theatre, and Christian Stewardship. Those of us in the theatre are involved in a transitory art form. We consciously invest and immerse ourselves in making things that are not made to last. Indeed, they are made to eventually disappear. What are the moral and ethical implications for a Christian artist in terms of the ecological aspect of Global Theatre? Topics might include recycling of scenic and costume materials, use of “disposable” items for performance, the use of food in theatrical performance, the use of animal-based food used in theatrical performance, economic implications of large budgets used to make impermanent things, and a person’s carbon footprint relative to global theatre experience. In a classroom conversation, we will discuss these challenges and problems in light of Christian Stewardship.

Assignment

Psalm 24 “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.”

Using the Psalm above, write a 1,000-word Statement of Commitment that describes the behaviors you intend to follow in your own Global Theatre practices, in the light of an ethics of Christian Stewardship.

For the final project, students research and examine one Global Shakespeare production, and analyze it in terms of issues in adaptation, cultural appropriation, translation, ecology, interculturalism, and/or performative hybridity, among other topics. Students present their project in a 30-minute oral presentation during the final two weeks of the semester.

Commented [MOU8]: Outcome: Students will effectively describe and analyze the many connections, perspectives, and dynamics of a Global Shakespeare production.

Academic Accommodations: Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (medical, learning, physical, or psychological) are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by ODS. For more information, contact Sheri Noble, Director of Disability Services (565-6186, snoble@westmont.edu) or visit the website <http://www.westmont.edu/offices/disability>. ODS is located in Voskuyl Library rooms 310A and 311.

Writing Help. Writers’ Corner, the campus writing center, is an academic support service free for all Westmont students. Peer tutors are available for one-on-one tutorials in Voskuyl Library 215. Tutorials are typically offered after 4:00 p.m. on Monday-Thursday and after 7:30 p.m. on Sunday. Appointments are encouraged in order to receive first priority (make an appointment online at <https://westmont.mywconline.com>). Drop-ins are also welcome (first come, first served). We look forward to helping you succeed as a writer. For more information, visit the writing center website: <http://www.westmont.edu/academics/departments/english/writers-corner.html>

Notes and Policies

1. Readings, assignments, projects, etc. subject to change. Things will definitely change; I can guarantee it, and the syllabus will be adjusted accordingly.
2. Complete all reading on dates indicated. As a seminar course, discussion and conversation is central to the methodology of the course, and reading the material is essential to student success and enjoyment in the course.