

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
CIVILIZATION SEQUENCE PROGRAM**

**CVSP 265                    INTRODUCTION TO THE THEATRE**

**1. Course Learning Outcomes**

This course offers a fundamental overview of theatre and its development in the western world. It introduces the student to the main trends and styles of theatre both, in concept and practice. It acquaints the student with the pre-requisites of theatre production, the components of theatre, and helps the student discover the varied usage of theatre and its points of emphasis in different times and places within a relevant cultural and historical framework.

**2. Resources Available to Students**

History of the Theatre, G. Wickam, 1999 ed.

There will also be a collection of handouts and additional sources that the students will have to use throughout the course.

**3. Grading Criteria**

Class participation and Seminar work	350 PTS
Midterm Exam or Term Paper	250 PTS
Final Exam	400 PTS
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,000 PTS</b>

**4. Schedule**

<b>WEEK 1</b>	Towards a Definition of "Theatre" Theatre as expression Theatre as reformation Theatre as ritual Communication and the theatre
<b>WEEK 2</b>	The theatrical vs. the natural Elements of theatre: Acting, directing, design, etc... The theatre experience: Actor/audience dynamic
<b>Week 3</b>	Augusto Boal: Forum Theatre, theatre of the oppressed Augusto Boal: Rainbow of desire

**Seminar 1:** Herman Nitsch, Orlan and Athey: Theatre or Massacre?

**WEEK 4** Grotowski: Poor theatre  
Grotowski: Theatre as ritual  
Grotowski: Theatre: Healing for the actor

**Seminar 2:** Audience Seating in Laboratory Theatre Productions: A Phenomena of Changing Roles!

**WEEK 5** Strasbourg: Method Acting  
Strasbourg: The Actor's Studio  
Brook: The Empty Space

**Seminar 3:** Meryl Streep in Sophie's Choice  
Olivier to Hoffman: "Have you heard of acting?"

**WEEK 6** Brecht: The narcissist: In search of his head casts...  
Brecht: Storytelling, Epic Theatre and the Berlin Ensemble  
Brecht: Alienation

**Seminar 4:** Otto Dix, Berlinesque Cabaret, Kurt Weil and Brecht's three penny Opera.

**WEEK 7** Stanislavski: The Acting craft  
Stanislavski: The magic "if"  
Stanislavski: Motivation for the actor: an act of psychology

**Seminar 5:** A Reworking of Tolstoy: A Stanislavskian Approach

**WEEK 8** Naturalism as an extreme form of Realism  
The suspension of disbelief  
Anti-Realism  
The Absurd and the Surreal  
Alternative and experimental

**Seminar 5:** The Work of Opera Circus and Theatre de Complicite

**WEEK 9** Ibsen and Chekov: A Time of Change  
Period Drama  
Restoration theatre

**Seminar 6:** Sarah Bernhardt: Against the Stereotype?

**WEEK 10** The Renaissance  
The resurgence of classical conventions  
Theatre worthy of Kings and Queens

**Seminar 7:** The Proscenium Arch...

- WEEK 11** Elizabethan Theatre  
 Shakespeare's "GLOBE"  
 Traces of the Medieval: Liturgical roots  
 The immorality of the theatre vs the general concept of art as craft
- Seminar 8:** EVERYMAN: A Morality Play
- WEEK 12** Early Middle Ages: The three Mary figures  
 Liturgical drama : The way to reach the masses  
 The Church : Heir of the glory of the Roman empire
- Seminar 9 :** An Analysis of Liturgical drama within the contemporary sacrament of the Catholic Eucharist and Easter week
- WEEK 13** Theatre of the Romans
- Seminar 10 :** Roman Gods and Christian Saints : A Merge of Cultures
- WEEK 14** Theatre of the Greeks :
- Seminar 11 :** The Role of the Mask in Greek Theatre : The Case of Sophocles' Oedipus
- WEEK 15** Student Presentations

## 5. Course Policy

Thorough reading and active research play a vital role in this course. Alongside the textbook, students will be advised about various sources that they are required to use in their personal study. Each week, a pre-assigned seminar will be various students and underneath the supervision and guidance of the course instructor. The seminar will deal with an aspect or example of the main topic discussed in that week. The material will mostly be presented through an investigation of one or more key practitioners whose work is reflective of the periods and/or styles covered by the course. As far as the teaching method is concerned, it will mostly make use of visual and auditory aids to support the lectures. Lectures will always be based on the allocated readings from the textbook and the additional sources.