

TH338 FAUST

Seminar Leader: Julia Hart
Course Times: Friday, 1:30-3:45pm
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Office Hours: Fridays 12:30-1:30pm, by appointment

Course Description

Goethe's "Faust" is the most performed play on the German stage. To this day, "Faust" continues to draw the largest audiences nationwide. Yet how have German theater artists tackled this classical work in recent years? And how can theatermakers approach this work today? This course will primarily look at landmark productions of "Faust" starting in the second half of the 20th Century through today including: the Deutsches Schauspielhaus production starring Gustaf Gründgens (1956), Einar Schleef's production at Schauspiel Frankfurt (1990), Peter Stein's complete staging of "Faust I" and "Faust II" (2000), Nicolas Stemmann's acclaimed Thalia Theater production (2011), and finally Robert Wilson's recent production at the Berliner Ensemble.

What can these acclaimed "Faust" productions tell us about current developments in the German theater? How do they reflect different approaches to theater and the changing political climate in Germany? In this course, students will watch footage and archival material of past "Faust" productions and attend current productions in Berlin. Together we will analyze and try out staging devices as well as acting and directing techniques. Students will act and direct two key scenes from "Faust", experimenting with specific theater techniques discussed in class.

Requirements

- active participation in class discussions and rehearsals
- completion of all reading assignments
- attendance (One absence is allowed. Every additional absence will result in the demotion of one-half letter grade at the end of the term.)
- completion of one performance analysis essay
- participation in the three scene study requirements: two short scenes and a final scene from Faust I (as an actor or director)

Scene Study requirements:

- choose one pivotal scene from FAUST I that you would like to explore and critically plan, devise, and rehearse as an actor or director.
- one additional 2-3 hour rehearsal per scene to be completed outside of class

Written requirements:

1. Scene Study Essay (2000 words due 31.3.17)

Scene Study Essay should contain the following:

- Rehearsal process: how the scene was chosen, a brief analysis of the scene (the situation, the characters, the central conflict), descriptions from rehearsal, including what rehearsal (as actors or directors) methods were implemented and how they were implemented, challenges and observations from rehearsals
- Evaluation of the scene presentation and a critical evaluation acting/directing methods used.

2. Performance Analysis Essay (2000 words due 12.5.17)

Performance Analysis Essays should contain the following:

- A thorough critical analysis of a performance of *Faust* seen during the semester discussing and describing the role of space, the voice, tempo, rhythm, atmosphere, sound, music, composition, costume, set design, electronic media, and further theatrical devices and symbols observed in the performance. Essays should explore how the characters of Faust, Mephistopheles, and Gretchen are portrayed on stage.

*Please note: Essays that are submitted 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade. Late essays must be turned in within four weeks of deadline and cannot receive higher than a C.

Grade Breakdown:

Scene Study 40%
Written Assignments 30%
Class Discussions 30%

Schedule

- 3.2 The German Theater and FAUST.
An brief introduction to German Theater .
An introduction to the key concepts of Goethe's FAUST.
- 10.2 Central concepts of theatre and performance research
Performance analysis
Actor's Activities and Appearance as a Sign
Spatial Signs (Stage Space, Props, Lighting)
Reading: *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance*
Pages 7-10, 18-44, 47-70
The Semiotics of Theatre 1-10
- 17.2 FAUST: the conflict, the characters, the climax
Reading: *Faust I* (trans. David Luke pages 3-148)
- 23.2 Theater Visit: FAUST I & II at the Berliner Ensemble 7pm

24.2	Robert Wilson's FAUST I & II 12 years of <i>Faust</i> in Nazi Germany Gustaf Gründgens: the best Mephisto of all time? <u>Reading:</u> <i>The Berlin State Theater under the Nazi Regime</i> 125-145 <i>German Theater Dictionary</i> 185-187	
3.3	Interpretations of <i>Faust</i> in the GDR: why did the socialists love Faust? Frank Castorf: artistic director of the Volksbühne from the former East Scene Study I roles and scenes assigned <u>Reading:</u> <i>Bennewitz, Goethe, Faust Intercultural Stagings</i> pages 71-88 <i>Theatre is More Beautiful Than War</i> 95-115	
3.3	Theater Visit: Premiere of Frank Castorf's FAUST at the Volksbühne	
10.3	No class Assignment: first rehearsal of Scene Study I	
17.3	No class Assignment: second rehearsal of Scene Study I	
24.3	Scene Study I Rehearsals, Presentations, Evaluation	
31.3 Gretchens	Einar Schlee's <i>Faust</i> (1990): Collage, Choric Speaking, 11 Fausts, and Screening of highlights from Schlee's production Workshop on choric speaking and using "multiples" on stage	14
7.4	Peter Stein's <i>Faust I & II</i> : all 12,110 verses in 22 hours. A look at acting and directing "true" to the text Screening of key scenes and discussion of critical reactions. Scene Study II: scenes and roles assigned <u>Reading:</u> <i>German Theater Dictionary</i> 344-346 <i>Goethe's Faust: Theatre of Modernity</i> 267-292 <i>Theatre is More Beautiful Than War</i> 4-25	
14.4	Spring Break	
17.4	FAUST I and II Thalia Theater Hamburg 3:30pm	
21.4	Nicolas Stemmann's <i>Faust I & II</i> : three actors play all the characters, Workshop on techniques of overlapping text, swapping roles, use of Rehearsal Scene Study II	live camera
28.4	Rehearsals Scene Study II	
5.5	Scene Study II: Rehearsals, Presentations, Critique	

12.5 Wrap-up Discussion and Review of *Faust* productions discussed
Dress rehearsals for Scene Study I and II for public performances
7pm FAUST NIGHT in the Factory