**76-311**

**TR 9:00-10:20 am**

**Baker Hall 255B**

**Instructor: Kristina Straub**

**Office: Baker Hall 245K**

**Office Hours: by appointment**

Best way to contact me: [ks3t@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:ks3t@andrew.cmu.edu)

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible.  I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate.  If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

**Course Description**

More Londoners went to the theater between 1660 and 1800 than read novels or even newspapers. The theater was THE social media of this formative period in the history of an English-speaking, urban public, and this course explores the power of the theater as a means of both social control and political resistance. What audiences did and said in the theater could matter as much as the plays in the formation of public opinion. A growing print media carried public consensus or dispute from the theater into coffee shops, taverns, and private libraries. Instead of taking a traditional “survey” approach to this period in the English theater, we will study a succession of “nights at the theater,” specific performances of plays that happened on particularly eventful evenings when the play—while significant—was not the only important performance. The introduction of an actress to a king who would make her his royal mistress, the final performance of a beloved actor, and the violent riots that were frequent occurrences in theaters are examples of cultural performances that shaped public opinion. We will read plays, of course, but also print and visual documents that speak to the moment of the play; we will listen to music, and generally immerse ourselves in the social and political struggles over public opinion in a world that very much prefigures our current world of celebrity and fake news.

**Class Participation**

*Attendance:* This part of your course obligation involves, first of all, showing up regularly and on time. If you are not here, you are not participating.

*Readings:* You will have the relevant materials with you for every class meeting, and you will have read them as carefully as possible before class. I understand, realistically, that you will have to give more attention to some tasks than to others, and that the reading for this class will not always win the contest for your time and energy. So read smart: be sure that you have at least some familiarity with every reading, whether or not you have been able to read carefully and take notes on the whole. Of course, you will probably have to prioritize the readings you post about—please don’t waste our time by posting on stuff that you have not given some time and thought to.

*Discussion:* Usually, the more you participate in the conversation, the more you get out of it, and having useful things to say will certainly help others as well. But listening carefully is just as important, so it’s not quantity but quality that counts.

How you conduct yourself in the classroom matters. Listening carefully is not easy. It demands putting away cell phones, logging out of email, if you are using a laptop for the readings, and getting enough sleep or imbibing enough caffeine to stay awake. No matter how good a conversation is, if you are too tired or too hungry, you are not going to pay attention to it. Getting up to take bathroom breaks is sometimes necessary, but always distracting to those who are engaged in the conversation—please keep them to a minimum. You are not just a spectator on the sidelines, but a performer in this class, and your grade will be assessed accordingly.

*Grade Points:* 25 possible

**Discussion Board Posting**

You owe our class one of those each week, starting the week of September 5-7. You can post on any of the materials we are discussing that week, but they must be up no later than noon on Wednesday.

These posts can be informal comments, questions about or provoked by a reading, or they can respond to another student’s post on that reading. Your audience is, of course, the class; think of these posts as written versions of things you might say in discussion. In fact, we will use these as starting points for “live” discussion in class.

*Grade Points:*  25 possible

**A Night at the Theater: Narrative**

This is a 3xx level English course, open to any student in the University who has had 76-101, so I am not assuming that you all have the specialized research skills taught in English and the Dramaturgy program. I would, however, like you to have some experience with exploring different historical and cultural contexts. This assignment will ask you to build on the historical research presented in the class to create a narrative about a night at the theater. You can choose the nights I have chosen on the syllabus or, if you want to do more original research, choose your own night.

Focus on the identity of a Theater-Goer (TG) on the night you have selected. You will need to be specific about who that voice belongs to: Male? Female? What status group do they belong to? What race or ethnicity? What kind of work do they do? How often do they go to the theater? Why are they at the theater on that particular night? What happened to them that day before they went to the theater? Did they go when the playhouse opened or later? Did they watch the play, listen to the music, watch the dancing or the afterpiece? What did they do while in the theater and where were they going afterwards?

Know as much as you can about the experience that your TG carries with them into the playhouse. What is happening in the world outside the theater that might affect their experience that evening within the playhouse? You are welcome to do your own research, but also use me and your classmates as resources: you are more than welcome to bring questions about your “night” to class discussion or to post about them on Discussion Board.

To make sure that you get feedback along the way, I have structured this assignment into 4 parts, due at different points in the semester. While these will be graded separately, they should build on each other. You may also find it necessary to change your ideas about your TG and their story as you learn more about their experiences and environment.

1. Write a short essay, 1-2 pages, double-spaced, on your TG’s identity. Please answer the following questions:

* Who is this person?
* What ethnic or racial group do they belong to?
* What is their gender identity?
* Class status? What kind of work do they do?
* What is their religion?
* Why did you create this person and what do you expect to learn by thinking about theater from their perspective?

Grade points: 10 possible

1. Write an essay on at least 2 social, political, or cultural contexts that inform the lived experience of your TG outside the walls of the playhouse. Your thesis should directly address how these contexts are important to who your TG is, and how they experience both performances and fellow audience members within the playhouse. Your context could be a specific historical event that would have impacted the theater and/or your TG’s life or it could be a more general cultural trend or historical tendency. For example, your TG may be an on-leave soldier who has fought to put down one of the Jacobite rebellions, a sailor who has been on a slave ship, or a literate, middle-class housewife who is taking advantage of the wider range of print marketed to women. Hence, you would want to know more about the Jacobite threat, the British African slave trade, and women’s education and literature, respectively. This essay should take you 10-12 pages, double-spaced, to complete. I will not ask for formal footnotes or a bibliography, but include a short statement about where you got your information. Grade points: 20 possible
2. Write the story of your TG’s night at the theater. You can assume their voice and write in first person or tell your story as a third-person narrative. You will want to draw on the work you did in the previous two assignments. Do your best to show your reader how your TG’s lived experience outside the theater shaped their experience in that performance space.

Be sure to include how they respond to the play and/or any of the other performances they may have seen on the stage that night. In addition, account for how they might have behaved as an audience member and how they might have interacted with other people in the playhouse that night. This is a fictional narrative that is informed by your historical and literary knowledge. Have fun with it! It should run around 15 pages in length. Grade points: 20 possible

**Welcome to the 18th-Century Theater!**

***August 29 Introductions and Plans***

No readings for this class.

I will introduce you to the course materials, explain what my expectations are for your contributions to class meetings, and what kinds of work you will be doing for the course. I would like you, in turn, to introduce yourselves and talk a bit about your knowledge of and interest in theater and/or the period of the British Restoration and 18th-century. Give me some baselines about your knowledge to help me know better how to teach you.

We will start a thought experiment to help us get to know each other and our subject matter: What is the theater like in the period we will be studying? Imagine the buildings, the neighborhoods in which theaters were built, the physical conditions of the house. Are theaters in large, urban centers the same as theaters in the provinces of Britain? What about the colonies, America, the Caribbean, India? From there, think about people. What is it like to be:

An audience member

An actor

A prompter

A manager

A musician

A dancer

A . . . what else? What other jobs are involved in running a theatre in the Restoration and 18th century?

What does it matter? How does understanding the experience of long-dead theater professionals and audiences help us deal intelligently with our present world of social media, fake news, and massive information and entertainment industries?

***August 31 The theater as social, political, and commercial institution.***

*Readings:*

Two introductory essays provided by instructor

Building on what you’ve learned from last class and from the readings for today, we will continue fleshing out our knowledge of what it was like to go to a theater in the early part of this period, the Restoration, or, approximately, 1660-1700. (For starters, think about these dates—why these?) How is going to the theater then different from now? What do these differences tell us about our modern social media and entertainment industries?

**Night I: *Secret Love*, March 2, 1667**

***September 5 Enter the Actress***

*Readings:*

Headnote to *Secret Love*

Dryden, *Secret Love* (read whole play)

*Images:*

Hawker portrait of Charles II

Vereist portrait of Gwyn

We will begin our work on this play by doing some readers’ theater in class. Think about scenes that you’d like to hear acted in class; think about how you would stage them, what directions you would give the actors, how you would costume them, and/or how you would play a part if you were acting it. Would you stage for a modern audience, say, one at a production here in the School of Drama? If so, what changes would you make in presentation? (Only change not allowed: the language of the play.)

***September 7 Libertine Sexuality***

*Readings:*

Rochester, “A Ramble in St. James Park”

Pepys, Diary entry on *Secret Love* and Nell Gwyn

Rochester, “Satire on Charles II”

Behn, “To the Fair Clarinda”

*Images:*

Unknown artist, portrait of Rochester

For this class, think about sexuality and how it relates to what you know about the politics and culture of this period. Rochester is generally known as the most theatrical and performative member of the King’s court, and a notorious libertine, dead of alcoholism and venereal disease at the age of 33. Behn was a spy, novelist, playwright, and poet and notorious in ways that are different from Rochester’s notoriety, raising questions about gender and libertine performance. I will give a mini-lecture on Rochester and Behn, but would like us to focus mostly on close analysis of the 3 assigned poems. What is a libertine? Is gender a qualification? Can Behn and Rochester both be seen as libertine?

**Night II: Nahum Tate’s *King Lear* and the Funeral of Thomas Betterton, April 27 and May 2, 1710**

***September 12 Who is Shakespeare?***

Readings:

Dobson, “Introduction” to *The Making of the National Poet*

Images:

Objects and art from the Folger Shakespeare Library exhibition, *Will & Jane: Shakespeare, Austen, and the Cult of Celebrity*. In-class.

We will focus on the topics of Shakespeare and celebrity, as two important cultural phenomena that emerge during the 18th century. I will share materials from an exhibit that I curated at the Folger Shakespeare Library and will help us think about what celebrity is, the cultural functions it performs, and how Shakespeare might be an example of modern celebrity—200 years after his death.

***September 14 Who is Shakespeare, cont.***

Readings:

Headnote to *King Lear*

Tate, *The History of King Lear*, Acts I-III

Images:

Advertisement from *Daily Courant*

Reader’s Theater exercise. Come to class with one speech, over 2 sentences long, that you have practiced speaking. We will rehearse these speeches in class and talk about the relationship between language and theater. Much theater is nonverbal or is focused on movement and sounds made by the body that are more important for their sensual qualities than their verbal content. English theater, however, is largely defined from the English Renaissance on as a poetic art form. Think about why this emphasis on language, rather than sound, matters. What is most important in theater—the physicality of movement and sound, or the words and their meanings?

***September 19 The Appeal of a Happy Ending***

Readings:

Tate, *The History of King Lear*, Acts IV-V

Think about how you would stage that happy ending. What difference does it make if you know how Shakespeare ended it? Would this difference be the same for the audience in 1710 as it is for us?

***September 21 What is an Actor?***

Readings:

“Epilogue Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle At the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, April 7, 1709”

“Satyr upon the Players”

Steele, on Betterton’s funeral

Images:

Kneller portrait of Betterton

Come to class with a scene from *Lear* in which Thomas Betterton would have appeared. Think about how he might have played it on this night, given his own aging body. More importantly, think about how the audience would have responded to Betterton’s performance, given their familiarity with him as an actor.

**Night III: *Giulio Cesare,* 1724**

***September 26 Crazy for Handel***

Readings:

Libretto of *Giulio Cesare*

Images:

Print edition of libretto

We will watch and discuss parts of a modern production of this opera in class.

***September 28 Divas and Castrati***

Readings:

“The Beau Monde”

Excerpt from *The Coffee House*

“One God One Farinelli”

Senesino in the *London Daily Post*

*The Contre Temps*

*The Protestant Alarm*

Mainwaring, excerpt from his *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel*

Images:

Ghezzi, Portrait of Farinelli

Portrait of Senesino

Caricature of Farinelli and Cuzzoni

Portrait of Cuzzoni

This looks like a scary amount of reading, but it’s not—most of these readings are only a couple of pages. I’d like to start us of thinking about our reactions to David Daniel’s countertenor performance as Cesare in comparison with the reactions we see in 18th-century responses to the castrati. Gender and sexuality seem to have a lot to do with English perceptions of the Italian singers who immigrated to perform in Handel’s operas. The audience for opera was largely the aristocracy; what role does class play in English responses to these performers? To Handel, who was the darling of the court?

**Night IV: *The Rover*, March 16 and April 21, 1741**

***October 3 Back to the Restoration***

Readings:

Headnote on *The Rover*

Behn, *The Rover,* Acts I-III

Letter to Ryan in *London Daily Post*

Ryan’s Response

Images:

Advertisements, March 3 and March 16

What can we learn from the enduring popularity of this Restoration play? It is the most frequently produced of Behn’s plays in the 20th century, and it had an enduring stage presence throughout the 18th century, despite the supposedly more “chaste” state of the English Theater in 1741. Our thought experiment: How would you tell a modern actor to play Willlmore, the Rover? How would you have Hellena and Angelica portrayed? How would you stage the love scenes between Willmore and Angelica? Willlmore and Hellena?

***October 5 Back to the Restoration, cont.***

Readings:

Behn, *The Rover*, Acts IV and V.

Readers’ theater today, it’s been a while. We can change it up when we get there, but I’m kind of interested in the comic scenes with Blunt—that’s negotiable, though. Please come to class with the Act and scene you’d like to work on in class and we’ll choose from there. I’d also like us to talk abou the attempted rape scenes in this play: how would a 1741 audience have responded to them? What would you do with these scenes in a modern staging?

***October 10 Afterpieces***

Readings:

Dodsley, *The Toyshop*

Dodsley, *The King and the Miller*

Afterpieces, usually short, often comical performances that served as a sort of “dessert” after the main play, were a part of every evening at the theater. *The Toyshop* was originally advertised with *The Rover*, but *The King and the Miller* was substituted the night of the actual performance. We can’t know, of course, but we might learn something by speculating about why this change was made. What are the differences and similarities, in theme and tone, between these two afterpieces?

I will start us off with a mini-lecture on the political, cultural and theatrical conditions that may have led to this change in afterpieces and shaped how the performance was received.

I’d also like us to think (as usual) about what the audience was doing, thinking, and feeling at this point in the evening. If the theater opened around 3 pm, this part of the evening’s entertainment would come after music, some dancing, and the main play—probably 5-6 hours into the evening. Based on the knowledge you have gathered about audience behavior and reception in the 18th century, who would be in the theater? And what would they be doing? Where would they go after the afterpiece?

***October 12 Actors in the News***

Readings:

Ryan’s shooting reported in the London newspapers

Davies, on Ryan from *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick*

Excerpt from the *Memoirs of the Celebrated Mrs. Woffington*

Excerpt from *The Tryals of Two Causes*

Images:

Portrait of Margaret Woffington

Portrait of Susannah Maria Cibber

*A Late Unfortunate Adventure at York*

What do Susannah, Peg, Theophilus, and Lacey have in common with Brad, Angela, Lindsay, and Brittney? Beyond the celebrity effect, what impact does “news” have on how we think about performers and performances?

**Night V: *Oroonoko*, February 2, 1749**

***October 17 Race and Slavery in an Early English Novel***

Readings:

Behn, *Oroonoko, or, the Royal Slave*

This novel was published almost 50 years before our night at the theater in 1749, and the play that is based upon it was performed not long after the novel’s publication. Let’s start by reminding ourselves of the cultural and political conditions that inform this novel. Behn takes us out of London to a British colony in the Caribbean; I will start us off with a mini lecture on the development of British colonialism and the development of the slave trade between the 1690s and 1740.

***October 19 No Class.***

Take time today to read ahead in Southerne’s adaptation of Behn’s novel, the play *Oroonoko*.

***October 24 Who is Southerne’s Oroonoko? And why is Imoinda white?***

Readings:

Southerne, *Oroonoko*

Images:

Advertisement for performance

Fuseli, *Oroonoko*

One of the “problems” this play presents for a modern audience is the mixture of high tragedy in the Oroonoko plot with the comedy of the Welldon sisters’ marriage plot. I’d like to try staging two scenes today. One obvious choice is Oroonoko’s death scene. Pick a scene from the comic plot and let’s do them together in class. We should also consider the final scene, in which comic and tragic characters are brought together on the stage.

***October 26 Afterpieces and African Princes***

Readings:

Vocal parts for *Apollo and Daphne*

Account of African Princes at the theater

This is a good time to talk about pantomime and masque in the theater. Even though the African Prince did not stay to see *Apollo and Daphne*, his servant did, and we should as well. You will get a mini-lecture from me on pantomime and masque in the 18th century British theater, to get us started on a discussion of performance forms that emphasize the body and sound over language.

**Night VI: Shylock and *Love a la Mode*, October 6, 1767**

***October 31 Ethnic Performance***

Readings:

Headnote to Macklin and *Love a la Mode*

Ragussis, “Jews and Other Outlandish Englishmen”

Images:

Advertisement for *Merchant of Venice* and *Love a la Mode*

Wenman, Macklin as Shylock

Cooke, Macklin as Shylock with Scales

What are the historical contexts for how the identity of “Jew” was constructed in the 18th century? What did it mean to be Jewish and British? Is this even a possible position? What is important about Macklin’s radical reinterpretation of Shakespeare’s Shylock? How is this character interpreted in modern performances of *The Merchant of Venice*? What do we know about the performance history of this character and how does it relate to the history of Jews and anti-Semitism?

***November 2 No Class***

Use this time to read ahead, *Love a la Mode.*

***November 7 Ethnic Performance, cont.***

Readings:

Macklin*, Love a la Mode*

Images:

*Love a la Mode Contata*

I will start us off with a mini lecture on the actor and playwright Charles Macklin, one of the century’s most interesting contributors to ethnic performance and the theater in general. His plebian, Irish origins, propensity to violence, innovative acting, and success at litigating for the rights of authors and actors make him a fascinating figure, both inside and outside mainstream English culture. Think about how we can use his play and his personal story to understand the formation of a British nation across very different ethnicities.

***November 9 British Ethnicities***

Readings:

*The Scots Scourge*

“Teague and Sawney”

Images:

Hogarth, “O the Roast Beef of England”

**Nights VII: The Chinese Festival Riots, November 8-18, 1755**

***November 14 A Prompter’s Diary and Trouble at Drury Lane***

Readings:

Transcription from Richard Cross’s Diaries

Newspaper account of rioting

Excerpt from Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, Esq.*

Excerpt from *The Private Correspondence of David Garrick*

Images:

Advertisements for the Chinese Festival

I will start us off with a mini lecture on the history of theatrical rioting in the 18th century and then hone in on the social and political contexts of 1755. We want to think about how we got from the demonstrative, even violent audiences of the 18th century to our current expectations of audience behavior in the theater? What changes in the status and function of the theater does this shift in audience behavior signal? What changes in audience composition? Think about modern audiences that behave more like 18th-century ones, such as soccer fans in the U.K. and Europe: what can we learn from this displacement of violence from the stage to sport?

***November 16 no class; use the time to work on your narratives and to prepare for your conference with me.***

***November 21 conferences***

***November 23 Thanksgiving, no class***

***November 28 Print Battles, the Chinese Festival***

Readings:

*The Dancers Damn’d*

*The Nowiad*

If we need it, I will offer another mercifully short lecture on the interactive relationship between the stage and the page that developed over the course of the period we are studying. I invite us to think about the theater as part of a larger network of social media. What is the importance of real, live, sometimes violent bodies as part of the machinery of public opinion? What happens when violence is displaced from embodied forms onto print?

**Epilogue: David Garrick and Masculinity Wars**

***November 30 William Kenrick and attacks on Garrick***

Readings:

Kenrick, *Love in the Suds*

*The Vauxhall Affray*

Images:

Portraits of Garrick

We will talk about the specific context of Kenrick’s attack on Garrick, namely, the charges of “sodomy” directed at Garrick’s close theatrical associate, Isaac Bickerstaffe and his subsequent flight from England to avoid prosecution. How do discourses of sexuality work as a means of social control? Are we looking at an early modern form of homophobia here? What connections can we draw between the historical consolidation of “perverse” sexual identities and social media?

***December 5 Garrick fights back***

Readings:

Garrick, *The Fribbleriad*

Scene from Etherege’s *Man of Mode*

Images:

A Macaroni

What are the differences and similarities between Sir Fopling Flutter, the character we meet in the scene in the Restoration Comedy, *Man of Mode*, and the “Fribbles” of Garrick’s poem? How is masculinity being imagined—and policed?

***December 7 Wrap-up***