



**DR 444 - THEATER IN BERLIN**  
IES Abroad Berlin

**DESCRIPTION**

This course will give students fundamental insights into post/modern theater in Berlin. It will provide students with historical, analytical, and performative knowledge about Bertolt Brecht's theatre model, its realization and abjection in the theatre landscape of divided Berlin (1949-1989) and today's postdramatic form(s) of Berlin theater. Students will be introduced to different analytical approaches to dramatic texts, both from the perspective of Literature and from the perspective of Drama. We will be dealing with various German theater plays and read them in their aesthetic and political contexts. Most of the plays read in class will be watched in famous Berlin theaters such as Berliner Ensemble or Gorki Theater as well as off-theatres. Thereby, we will be discussing theater directors, such as Heiner Müller, Yael Ronen or 'free' art collectives. In cooperation with Berlin theater practitioners, students will deepen their theoretical knowledge of the plays through performative research. This gives students not only a practical understanding of the process of theater making but also of performative practices as research instruments in academia. At the end of the class students will be familiar with current trends, schools, aesthetic, and sociopolitical discourses of Berlin theater and of Berlin *as* theater.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** German

**ADDITIONAL COST:** none

**PREREQUISITES:** 4 semester German studies completed.

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

- short lectures
- four to six theater performances
- deep analysis of plays
- expert talks
- group discussions
- performative research units
- moodle will be used to enhance students' learning experiences.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- course participation - 10 %
- deep analysis of the plays – 20%
- four short response papers - 40 %
- final research paper or final performance - 30 %

**Course Participation (10%)**

Attendance of the seminar and all theatre performances, as well as active participation in class discussions, is expected and required for full credit. The grading rubric for participation is available in the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle.



### Response Papers (40%)

You will write four response papers during the course (each 250-300 words) on a play we will watch and discuss in the seminar.

- Every response paper has the following goals:
  - 1) Identify, in your own opinion, the key scene or passage of the play in question. Justify your choice and describe the meaning of this particular scene or passage for the play in its entirety. Don't forget to take into account the performative means of the scene (e.g. stage and costume design, music, speech acts, choreography).
  - 2) Formulate three questions for discussion in class that have resulted from your choice of the particular scene or passage.

Response papers are due on Monday of week 2, 4, 7, and 9.

### Scene Analysis (20%)

Alongside **one** of your response papers, choose 2 to 3 technical elements (speech acts, music, stage and costume design, choreography) that contribute significantly to the play's overall effect, and analyze in some detail the contributions of each. When examining the specific technical elements, ask yourself the questions:

- What is the director's purpose or primary aim in making the play?
- Why did the director make the choices (s)he made?
- What (emotional) effect do these choices have on the audience?

Your analysis should have 1,500-2,000 words and please don't spend more than one short paragraph describing the plot of the play. The scene analysis is due on Monday of week 7.

### Final (30%)

You will have **two options** taking your final:

**A. Research Paper:** You write a 2,500-3,000 word research paper.

Topics: Any topic covered in class. You are welcome to use one of your scene analyses (theoretically or performatively) as a starting point, or to develop an individual topic relating to this course. Make sure you have my okay for it. Discuss your thesis/structure of argument with me well in advance.

Research: Your paper should demonstrate two things: your ability to interpret a play and your ability to connect your interpretation to existing academic ideas/research. At least three secondary texts are required in your bibliography: they can relate directly to the text/play under consideration, or to its cultural and historical backgrounds, or to a theory that helps you interpret the text/play. The final research paper is due on Thursday of the last week of classes.

**B. Final Performance:** You do a final performance.

Topics: Any topic covered in class. You are welcome to use one of the performative research methods developed in the two performative workshops of the class and create something new and individual. Please discuss the concept of your performance with me well in advance. You need to make sure that you get my okay for it.

Performance: Your performance should demonstrate two things: your ability to perform a text (or: dramatic conflict) and your ability to connect your performance to existing aesthetic forms and practices of current Berlin theater.

Your performance will be in the final course session and be graded on the above-mentioned criteria.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students should:

- have a general overview of current Berlin theater
- be enabled to situate German plays within the history of German theater from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century until today
- be introduced to concepts of theater lesser known in the US, such as "Regietheater", "Docu-Theater" and "Postdramatic" and "Postmigrational" forms of theater
- understand general differences between theater in the US and Germany
- be able to analyze current Berlin plays according to methods and criteria of recent theater theory
- reflect critically on theatrical representations in Berlin and their socio-political, aesthetic and economic contexts
- be able to experience theatre aesthetics by performative research methods

### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance and punctuality in all courses and field studies are mandatory. Absences can only be excused for valid reasons. Unexcused absences can affect students' grades. Students who miss 25% or more of all class sessions will fail the course. Missed exams cannot be taken at another time except in case of documented illness. Late submission of term papers and other work will result in grade reduction unless an extension due to illness or an emergency is approved. Please consult the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle for additional details.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Academic Integrity Code. Assigned papers need to be properly and amply footnoted where appropriate, with all sources attributed. Poorly written and grammatically sloppy papers will be judged more severely.

**CONTENT:**

Please note: the actual plays discussed in any given semester depend on the repertoire and playing schedule of theaters in Berlin and will be introduced in the first week of classes. The following syllabus is a sample, but may vary due to performance dates of the Berlin theaters.

Week	Content	Homework/Reading Material/Assignments
<p><b>Week 1</b> <b>Brecht Theater</b></p>	<p>Session 1-2: <b>Introduction</b> to terms and methods of the seminar</p> <p><b>Discussion</b> of Brecht's Epic Theatre, the "Verfremdungseffekt" and its cultural, political and aesthetic implications</p>	<p><b>Homework: Reading</b> Melchinger, Siegfried. <i>Geschichte des politischen Theaters</i>, Velbert 1971, pp.1-19.</p> <p>Salvati, Claudio. „Einleitung“, in: <i>Brechts politisches Theater. Ein Überblick</i>, 2014, pp.1-25.</p> <p><b>Homework: Reading</b> Bertolt Brecht: <i>Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui / The resistable Rise of Arturo Ui</i> (1941)</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> <b>Brecht in the GDR I</b></p>	<p>Session 3-4: Close Reading &amp; Analysis of Bertolt Brecht's <i>Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui</i></p> <p>Theater evening <i>Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui</i> (Berliner Ensemble, director: Heiner Müller, 1995)</p>	<p><b>Assignment (due Mon 6:00 pm)</b> First Response paper on theater evening (focus: directing style)</p> <p><b>Homework: Reading</b> Heiner Müller: <i>Der Auftrag / The Mission</i> (1979)</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> <b>Brecht in the GDR II</b></p>	<p>Session 5-6: <b>Discussion</b> of the theater performance <i>Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui</i></p> <p><b>Close Reading &amp; Analysis</b> of Heiner Müller <i>Der Auftrag / The Mission</i> (1979)</p>	<p><b>Homework: Reading</b> Klessinger, Hanna: <i>Postdramatik: Transformationen des epischen Theaters bei Peter Handke, Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek und Rainald Goetz</i>. Vol. 209., Walter de Gruyter, 2015. (Chapter on Heiner Müller)</p> <p><b>Homework: Close Reading</b></p>

		„Der Mann im Fahrstuhl“ / „The Man in the Elevator“, in: <i>Der Auftrag / The Mission</i> (Heiner Müller, 1979)
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Postdramatic Theater I</b>	Session 7-8 <b>Workshop I</b> – Performative research on <i>Der Mann im Fahrstuhl</i> with theater practitioners  <b>Theater evening:</b> <i>Der Auftrag / The Mission</i> (Gorki Theater, director: Mirko Borscht, 2018)	<b>Assignment (due Mon 6:00 pm)</b> Second Response paper on theater evening (focus: stage design & costumes)
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Postdramatic Theater II</b>	Session 9-10: <b>Discussion</b> of the theatre performance <i>Der Auftrag / The Mission</i>  <b>Selected Screenings</b> of postdramatic plays and performances at the East Berlin Volksbühne: Christoph Schlingensiefel <i>Atta Atta</i> (2003) Christoph Marthaler: <i>Murks den Europäer</i> (2007)	<b>Homework: Reading</b> Drewes, Miriam. "Theater jenseits des Dramas: Postdramatisches Theater", in: <i>Handbuch Drama</i> . JB Metzler, Stuttgart, 2012, pp. 72-84.  Nonoa, Koku G. "Gegenkulturelle Entgrenzung des theatralen Schauplatzes: Schlingensiefs Container", in: <i>Acta Germanica: German Studies in Africa</i> 45.1 (2017), pp. 131-214.  <b>Homework: Reading</b> <i>Franz Schubert: Winterreise</i> (1827)
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Postmigrational Theater I</b>	Session 11-12: <b>Close Reading &amp; Analysis</b> of <i>Winterreise</i>  <b>Theater evening</b> <i>Winterreise</i> (Maxim Gorki Theater, director: Yael Ronen, 2017)	<b>Homework: Reading</b> Lehmann, Hans-Thies. "Multikulturalität— Verlorene Illusionen?", in: <i>Neue Beiträge zur Germanistik</i> 111 (2003): 135-140.  Pewny, Katharina. <i>Das Drama des Prekären: über die Wiederkehr der Ethik in Theater und Performance</i> . Vol. 26. transcript Verlag, 2014
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Postmigrational Theater II</b>	Session 13-14: <b>Discussion</b> of the theater performance <i>Winterreise</i>  <b>Theater evening</b> <i>Atlas des Kommunismus</i> (Gorki Theater, director: Lola Arias, 2017)	<b>Assignment (due Mon 6:00 pm)</b> Third Response Paper on theater evening (focus: music & lightning)
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Docu Theater</b>	Session 15-16: <b>Discussion</b> of the theater performance <i>Atlas des Kommunismus</i> with the theater musician Jens Friebe	<b>Homework: Reading</b> Legal Documents, NSU-Files  <b>Homework: Reading</b>

	<b>Theater Evening</b> <i>NSU Monologe</i> (Heimathafen Neukoelln, director: Bühne für Menschenrechte)	Carrie Sandahl. "From the Streets to the Stage: Disability and its performing arts", in: PMLA, Vol. 201, No.2, pp. 620-624.
<b>Week 9 Disabled Theater</b>	Session 17-18: <b>Discussion</b> of the theater evening <i>NSU Monologe</i>  <b>Theater Evening</b> at Ramba Zamba (play according to the theater schedule)	<b>Assignment (due Sat 6:00 pm)</b> Fourth Response paper on the theater evening (focus: body language & political action)
<b>Week 10 Theater of / as Revolution I</b>	Session 19-20: <b>Theater Evening</b> <i>Lenin</i> (Schaubühne, director: Milo Rau 2018)  <b>Discussion</b> of the theater evening <i>Lenin</i>	<b>Homework: Screening</b> Revolution 11/4/89 on Berlin Alexanderplatz
<b>Week 11 Theater of / as Revolution II</b> Dramatizing the revolution 11/4 1989	Session 21 Selected Screenings of the Revolution 11/4 1989  <b>Workshop II</b> – Staged & Staging revolutionary speeches	<b>Homework: Reading</b> Fischer-Lichte, Erika. <i>Die Entdeckung des Zuschauers: Paradigmenwechsel auf dem Theater des 20. Jahrhunderts</i> . Francke, 1997, pp. 3-33.
<b>Week 12 The 'real drama' of Berlin Theater</b>  <b>&amp; Finals</b>	Session 22-23 <b>Expert Talk</b> on the 'real Drama' of the East Berlin Volksbühne  <b>Round Up-Discussion &amp; Presenting</b> the concept of your final paper or performance in two minutes	

#### READING MATERIAL:

All texts will be available on moodle and in a reader handed out in class.

#### PERFORMATIVE STUDIES:

- Performative research units with theater practitioners

#### REQUIRED READINGS (Theater Plays):

- *Atlas des Kommunismus* (Gorki Theater, director: Mirko Borscht, 2017)
- Brecht, Bertolt *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* (1941)
- *Lenin* (Berliner Schaubühne, director: Milo Rau, 2018).
- Marthaler, Christoph *Murks den Europäer* (2008)
- Müller, Heiner *Der Auftrag* (1979)
- Müller, Heiner *Der Mann im Fahrstuhl* (1979)
- NSU-Files, Legal Documents (2018)
- Schlingensief, Christoph *Atta Atta* (2003)
- Schubert, Franz *Die Winterreise* (1827)

#### OTHER REQUIRED READINGS:

- Drewes, Miriam. "Theater jenseits des Dramas: Postdramatisches Theater", in: *Handbuch Drama*. JB Metzler, Stuttgart, 2012, pp. 72-84
- Entgrenzung des theatralen Schauplatzes: Schlingensiefs Container", in: *Acta Germanica: German Studies in Africa*, 45.1 (2017), pp. 131-214.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika: *Die Entdeckung des Zuschauers: Paradigmenwechsel auf dem Theater des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Francke, 1997, pp. 3-33.
- Klessinger, Hanna: *Postdramatik: Transformationen des epischen Theaters bei Peter Handke, Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek und Rainald Goetz*. Vol. 209., Walter de Gruyter, 2015. (Chapter on Heiner Müller)
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. "Multikulturalität—Verlorene Illusionen?", in: *Neue Beiträge zur Germanistik* 111 (2003): 135-140
- Melchinger, Siegfried: *Geschichte des politischen Theaters*, Velbert 1971, pp.1-19.
- Pewny, Katharina. *Das Drama des Prekären: über die Wiederkehr der Ethik in Theater und Performance*. Vol. 26. transcript Verlag, 2014
- Salvati, Claudio: „Einleitung“, in: *Brechts politisches Theater. Ein Überblick*, 2014, pp.1-25.

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Bähr, Christine 2014: *Der flexible Mensch auf der Bühne: Sozialdramatik und Zeitdiagnose im Theater der Jahrtausendwende*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Drewes, Miriam 2012: "Theater jenseits des Dramas: Postdramatisches Theater", in: *Handbuch Drama*. JB Metzler, Stuttgart, 72-84.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika 1997: *Die Entdeckung des Zuschauers: Paradigmenwechsel auf dem Theater des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Tübingen, Basel: Francke.
- Gilcher-Holtey, Ingrid et al. 2006 (eds): *Politisches Theater nach 1968: Regie, Dramatik und Organisation*. Vol. 8. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag
- Hassan, Najat ISA 2014: "DAS EPISCHE THEATER ALS POSTDRAMATISCHES THEATER.", in: *Journal of the College of Languages* 29 (2014), 296-314.
- Klessinger, Hanna 2015: *Postdramatik: Transformationen des epischen Theaters bei Peter Handke, Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek und Rainald Goetz*. Vol. 209. Walter de Gruyter. Berlin/Boston.
- Klöck, Anja 2008: „Heisse West- und kalte Ost-Schauspieler? Diskurse, Praxen, Geschichte(n) zur Schauspielausbildung in Deutschland seit 1945“, in: *Theater der Zeit*. Recherchen 62. Berlin: Verlag Theater der Zeit, 2008.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies 2003: "Multikulturalität—Verlorene Illusionen?", in: *Neue Beiträge zur Germanistik*, 111, 135-140.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies 1991: "Mythos und Theater heute—einige Vorbemerkungen", in: *Theater und Mythos*. JB Metzler, Stuttgart, 1-8.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies 1999: *Postdramatisches Theater*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren.
- Melchinger, Siegfried 1971: *Geschichte des politischen Theaters*. Velbert
- Nonoa, Koku G. 2017: "Gegenkulturelle Entgrenzung des theatralen Schauplatzes: Schlingensiefs Container", in: *Acta Germanica: German Studies in Africa* 45.1, 131-142.
- Pewny, Katharina 2014: *Das Drama des Prekären: über die Wiederkehr der Ethik in Theater und Performance*. Vol. 26. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Rossbach, Nikol 2014: "Das Theater von Dea Loher: Brecht und (k)ein Ende", in: *Forum Modernes Theater*. Vol. 21. No. 1. München.
- Salvati, Claudio 2014: *Brechts politisches Theater. Ein Überblick*. Norderstedt.
- Schößler, Franziska, and Hannah Speicher 2015: "Statistiken, Stücke und (West-Ost) Debatten: 1995 im Theater und Drama", in: *Wendejahr 1995: Transformationen der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, 51, p. 300. Berlin.
- Tigges, Stefan 2015 (ed.): *Dramatische Transformationen: zu gegenwärtigen Schreib- und Aufführungsstrategien im deutschsprachigen Theater*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.