

## THE 5317 – SPECIAL TOPICS

### US THEATRE: COMMUNITY, IDENTITY & THE MYTH OF “AMERICA” THROUGH 1939 FALL, 2014

**INSTRUCTOR: DR. BETH OSBORNE**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** 324 Fine Arts Building (FAB)  
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Course Blackboard Site (login with FSU username at campus.fsu.edu)

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday 1-2; Thursday 1:30-2:30; and by appointment  
Schedule appointments via email or stop in!

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Examination of American theatre and drama in its cultural and social context.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Read, discuss, and analyze US Theatre through close readings of the text and surrounding social, political, and cultural contexts.
- Locate and use primary and secondary source materials related to US Theatre.
- Conduct in-depth research on a specific topic in US Theatre History, synthesize an argument, and present that argument in written and oral forms.
- Develop a repertoire of major US plays, practitioners, historical events, and movements. Topics will both form the canon and operate outside of the canon, but will focus on the specific themes of this seminar.
- Identify and articulate major themes and conventions of US theatre.
- Discuss and write about the development of US Theatre using specific case studies from the colonial era through the Great Depression.

#### **TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:**

How does “America” perform its own identity? How is the construction of “America”—as a formulation, theory, or attitude rather than a specific “truth”—reflected and reified by the creators of the American Theatre? Who is included or excluded? Does one include only the United States of America? The Americas? What of the history that took place before the arrival of the European colonizers? Though the U.S. has been represented as a single, homogenous nation—welcoming of immigrants seeking a new, better future—for generations, that identity has fractured in a multitude of ways, based on the very real differences of race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, politics, and more. How have these communities, real or imagined, intentional or accidental, shaped the theatre? If, as Jeffrey Mason has argued in *Melodrama and the Myth of America*, America is a land whose identity is based on the welcoming (and absorption) of anyone with a dream, can it have a “reliable, discernable or even approximately stable being of its own”? The stage has become a site of the struggle for ownership of “America” and for the formulation and performance of American identities and communities. In this course, we will attempt to parse out the many ways in which American identity has been negotiated on stage and in popular entertainments, and examine the many myths of “America” in the process.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:** Books are available in the FSU Bookstore and Bill’s Bookstores. I have also put many of these on blackboard (as copyright permits) and made use of free online texts to

help alleviate course costs. Note: I include only those books available for purchase below. For more information on specific items, see the course schedule.

**Required:**

- *Early American Drama* (Jeffrey Richards)
- *Adding Machine* (Elmer Rice)
- *Waiting for Lefty and Other Plays* (Clifford Odets)
- *History of North American Theatre: The United States, Canada and Mexico from Pre-Columbian Times to the Present* (Felicia Hardison-Londré & Daniel Watermeier)
- *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography* (Thomas Postlewait)

**Recommended:**

- *A Century of American Historiography* (James M. Banner, Jr.)—This book was originally required and is great reading, but we won't have a chance to focus on it this semester.

**BLACKBOARD:** I will use Blackboard for announcements, assignments, readings, etc. Students must check their official university email accounts daily, and this course blackboard site at least 2 times per week. I strongly encourage you to check this site the night before each class for important announcements and reminders.

**QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, & EMAILS:** To get in touch with me, locate me after class, call or stop in during office hours, or send an email. For all emails, include your name (first and last) in the message (even if you think it is redundant). Realize that I am not online 24 hours a day, and must be able to focus on course preparation and grading as well! Expect an email turnaround time of 1-2 business days. Please let me know if you have any issues receiving email this semester as this is the first way I'll reach out when needed!

**COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:** Many of the required readings in this course are copyrighted. While you have had to purchase the majority of the plays, I will post some readings (or links to readings) on the course blackboard site. The posted readings are available to students registered for this course in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act, and may not be retained beyond this semester or distributed to anyone outside of this course.

**TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:** We are here to learn. Cell phones, pagers, blackberries, etc. should be turned off for class and headphones must be removed. Computers may be used during class meetings for notes, but if they become a distraction or are used for activities not related to class, students will lose this privilege.

**COURSE CONTENT:** In this course, I challenge you to experience life from perspectives other than your own. Because of this, you may consider some course language or topics objectionable. If some of this material is so offensive to you that it negatively affects your ability to learn, please see me during the add/drop period so that we can discuss your options.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** Written work should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced with 1 inch margins, free of typing and grammatical errors, and in correct Chicago Style. All outside materials must be fully and accurately cited. Failure to cite your sources correctly may result in disciplinary action per the FSU Honor Code. For citation guidelines, refer to *A Manual for Writers* by Kate Turabian (often used by those writing dissertations/theses!) or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (also available online at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>). Due to the nature of this course, **late assignments will not be accepted and presentation dates will not be extended**. Computer or printer failure will **not** be considered an acceptable excuse. I strongly suggest that you submit your papers

through the course link on blackboard and then place a copy in Dropbox as a backup (follow the link I post on blackboard). Electronic versions of papers/projects should be formatted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text (.rtf) files. Please don't submit pdf's as they are much more cumbersome to comment upon. Keep a copy of ALL written work for this class until final grades have been submitted at the end of the semester.

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:** This is a discussion-based graduate seminar and I expect each student to be a fully participating member of the class—on time, fully prepared, every week. We meet only once a week and have limited time to explore a huge range of materials. Unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of one third of a letter grade for each absence. Arriving late disrupts the conversation, and will thus negatively affect your final grade as well. Excused absences (including documented illness, religious holy days, official University activities, crisis in the immediate family, call to active military or jury duty, and other documented crises) must be documented. Students who need to miss class due to observation of a religious holy day should notify me in writing in advance so that steps may be taken to ensure that assignments can be completed in a timely manner. Call or email me immediately if an emergency prevents your attending class.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Important Note on Topics:** I encourage you to think strategically about your topic choices. Whether it is collecting research around a specific historical moment, considering different methodological possibilities, or working on what you think may become the topic for your final paper (or even your thesis or dissertation!), use these as an opportunity to delve deeply into an area that will help you to move forward with your larger research agenda whenever possible. That said, do NOT plan to do more than one topic/facilitation on the same day. These assignments have several different functions, including:

1. The chance to practice the research process, including the formulation of good research questions and the structuring of an argument.
2. The opportunity to explore possibilities for future research by expanding students' knowledge base and learning about topics with little extant scholarship.
3. The compilation of numerous case studies for your own "archive" of US Theatre History.

If at all possible, use this course to explore the viability of what may occupy a huge part of your life in the next (few) year(s).

**UNCLE TOM'S CABIN INTENSIVE:** Each student will locate and bring two primary source materials related to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to class. To prevent duplication, there will be a discussion board on blackboard for you to post a quick description/bibliography for your findings before you come to class.

**SHORTS:** There are more plays, documents, novels, individuals, and other information regarding the formation of an "American" character than we can possibly explore in a single semester (which doesn't mean we can't try!). Therefore, students will research and present on two topics over the semester. Each "Short" will consist of two sections – written (1 page, single-spaced) and oral. Additional details on the assignment will be posted on blackboard. Topics are listed in the Course Schedule on the day that they are due. If you have another idea for a topic, see me about it. Submit your papers online AND bring copies to class for everyone. Please note that, while I expect you to know more about your topic than your classmates, I don't expect you to know everything there is to know about it for this report!

**FACILITATION:** Each student will serve as the facilitator for part of one of our class sessions. This assignment will involve intensive research, synthesis, analysis, and preparation. Like a seminar paper, you will develop an argument around which to base your facilitation, asking the questions that a historian/scholar would ask when confronted with your topic. You will then conduct in-depth research, exploring the myth surrounding your topic, the cultural/historical/social context that is relevant to it, the

gaps in our knowledge, and the possibilities of it. I expect that you will go well beyond the assigned readings on your topic. You will likely need to use Interlibrary Loan, so begin this process early. In addition to your facilitation of the class discussion, you will create a handout for the class detailing the information you found (including citations). More information on the facilitations will be posted on the course blackboard site.

**FINAL PAPER:** Students will write an article-length paper (about 15-20 pages) based on original research and focusing on some aspect of US Theatre between its origins and the end of the Great Depression. As this will involve intensive research, I suggest you begin relatively early in the semester and, when possible, choose facilitation/discussion leader topics that may help shape or guide this research. A draft or prospectus is required. I strongly encourage each of you to come speak to me about your paper during the semester, particularly if you are considering different ways your research interests may intersect with the other assignments in this course. Benchmarks for the final paper include:

- ❑ October 13 – Submit topics and major questions
- ❑ November 17 – Prospectus of final paper DUE and short in-class presentation of project, questions, and methodology
- ❑ December 1 – Presentation on final paper
- ❑ December 8 by 5pm – Final papers due

**EXTRA CREDIT OPTION:** There are hundreds of archives in this country, many of which contain historical treasures – but only if you can unearth them! Scout out some of these archives with theatre collections and write up a 1 page, single-spaced report for the class describing particularly interesting collections. You might try: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Library of Congress, Harvard Theatre Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Smithsonian, or locate some of the tinier collections with oral histories, personal papers/collections, old newspapers, and much, much more. Students can earn up to a 3% total grade boost with this opportunity (1.5% per paper/archive; repeatable).

**GRADES:** In general, grades for written work are administered according to the following criteria:

A = excellent in all areas. The assignment presents a strong thesis statement, is argued coherently, and offers clear evidence to support ideas. Documentation follows correct citation format.

B = good. The assignment presents a good thesis statement; the argument and evidence are okay, but could be stronger. Documentation mostly follows correct citation format.

C = meets minimum requirements of assignment. The assignment presents a passable thesis statement, and argument and evidence exists, but is either not convincing or not well articulated. Citations often weak.

D = falls short of minimum requirement, but effort in completing the assignment clearly made. Thesis, evidence, and argument either very weak or missing. Citations often ignored.

F = does not meet minimum requirement in any way.

**GRADE SCALE:** (FSU doesn't allow A+'s.)

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82	C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76	C- = 70-72	D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62	F = < 59

## GRADE BREAKDOWN:

DAILY PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION	10%
SHORT PRESENTATION/PAPER (2 @ 7.5%)	15%
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN SOURCES	5%
FACILITATION	25%
FACILITATION PEER EVALUATIONS	10%
FINAL PAPER (DRAFT/PROSPECTUS)	10%
FINAL PAPER	25%

## UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL OF THEATRE POLICIES:

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY:** The University's policy on religious holidays provides that students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed because of individual participation in religious observances. Students have the responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances by the end of the second week of class, and must complete assignments by their deadline.

**UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (FSU Academic Honor Policy, <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.) We are all bound by the policies and procedures set forth in this document. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all work completed in this class must be done individually and should be entirely original. Any words or ideas derived from outside materials (including books, journals, websites, and any other published material)—no matter how much or how little material is used—must use proper citations. All work submitted in this course is subject to this policy.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact: Student Disability Resource Center, 874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167; 850-644-9566 (voice); 850-644-8504 (TDD); [sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu); <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

**SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

**INSTRUCTIONAL RECORDING TECHNOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION POLICY (SCHOOL OF THEATRE):** A long history of faculty use of recording technology exists within the School of Theatre. Faculty

have relied upon these methods to further the students' educational experience and by extension to enhance their classroom effectiveness. This policy is not intended to interfere with that practice. The purpose of this policy is to protect both student and faculty privacy. The use of recording devices, including those brought by students in any School of Theatre classroom or performance space/location, is at the discretion of the classroom instructor. Items in this category include, but are not limited to, camcorders, cameras, cellular phones, and audio recorders. Any device that stores video, audio, or still images is subject to this policy. Beyond permission of the instructor to utilize recording technology for any course content or activities, written permission must be obtained from all individuals being recorded by filling out SOT Record/Tech forms. The School of Theatre at Florida State University policy mandates that no recorded image (still, moving, or audio) may be distributed without express written permission of all individuals presented on an image or sound to be distributed. This applies to all formats of distribution including, but not limited to, print, digital, and analog. Students may take and are encourage to take in-process shots of their work during class for use in their portfolio, webpage for obtaining work and internship placement. This may include others at work. All violations will be reported to the Associate Dean, who will retain records of all violations. Students found to be in violation of the policy a second time will be subject to sanctions beyond those associated with the class up to and including dismissal from the School of Theatre. In addition, students violating the policy a second time will be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and subject to further University sanctions. This policy does not supercede any Federal, State, Local, or Institutional policy regarding recording or distribution of materials. It applies solely to instructors and students in School of Theatre courses. Furthermore, it should not be implied that permission to record and/or distribute material from classes extends to the content presented.

\*Do not hesitate to contact me via office hours, appointments, or e-mail. If you have concerns about a classroom activity or need to speak with me regarding a personal matter, religious observance, or documented disability, bring it to my attention sooner rather than later. Requests for accommodation presented after the second week of class cannot be assured.

**American Theatre – Schedule**  
**Fall 2014**  
**Dr. Beth Osborne**

\*As always, this schedule is subject to change as needed during the semester.\*

**Readings, Assignments, Shorts, and Facilitation Topics should be prepared for class on the day they are listed.**

**Recommended Readings:** Everyone is always welcome to read more. To do so, move on to start the “Recommended Readings” as available (and hang on to the list of recommendations for the future – I certainly don’t expect anyone to get through all of these this semester!). I’ve put the \* next to those recommended readings that would be particularly interesting to read.

**Key:**

- BB = Reading will be found on the blackboard site in the Course Library.
- Readings located in required books (Londré/Watermeier, Postlewait, etc.) will NOT be posted on blackboard.
- Facilitation = potential (broad) topics for Facilitations. These will need to be focused in consultation with me and will be accompanied by handouts.
- Shorts = potential starting points for the Shorts. These will also need to be focused, and will be accompanied by compact, fact-ridden, 1-2 page papers.

**8/25: Introductions to the Course**

Readings: “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin,” Robert Darnton (Email); Introduction to *Theatre Culture in America, 1825-1860*, Rosemarie Bank (Email); “Introduction,” Jim Cullen (in *The American Dream*, Email).

**9/1: Labor Day – No class**

Assignments:

- (1) Be sure that you have spoken to me about which facilitation you would like to choose no later than 9/2! Meet with me about your facilitation **at least** 1 week ahead of time (preferably at least two weeks ahead of time!) to go through research and help define questions. Bring a bibliography and ideas for your central questions to that meeting.
- (2) Read Ahead!!!

**9/8 — Colonial America: Founding (Constructing) the U.S.A.**

Readings: “Dream of the Good Life (I): The Puritan Enterprise,” Jim Cullen (in *The American Dream*, BB); “The American Colonies,” Londré/Watermeier, 64-75; “Introduction: on some preliminary matters,” Tom Postlewait (in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, BB); “Introduction,” Benedict Anderson (in *Imagined Communities*, BB); “Theatre Companies Before the Revolution,” Odai Johnson (in *The Oxford Handbook of American Drama*); “Introduction” and “Recording the Birth of the American Nation,” Ernst Breisach (in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, BB).

**Assignment: Come prepared to choose “Shorts” topics today.**

Recommended: *Theatre U.S.A. 1665-1957*, Barnard Hewitt; “Class Positioning and Shays’ Rebellion: Resolving the Contradictions of *The Contrast*,” Richard Pressman; *The Theatre in America During the Revolution*, Jared Brown; *The Prince of Parthia*, Thomas Godfrey; *Early American Theatre from the Revolution to Thomas Jefferson: Into the Hands of the People*, Heather Nathans; *The Theatre of Colonial America*, Hugh Rankin.

## 9/15 — Revolution, Independence & the Formation of “American” Identity

Readings: The Declaration of Independence (link on BB); The U.S. Constitution (link on BB); “Dream Charter: The Declaration of Independence,” Jim Cullen (in *The American Dream*, BB); André, William Dunlap (*Early American Drama*); *The Group*, Mercy Otis Warren (link to Project Gutenberg on BB); *The Contrast*, Royall Tyler (*Early American Drama*); Londré/Watermeier, 81-98; “Historians and the Building of the American Nation,” Ernst Breisach (in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, BB).

Facilitation: Revolutionary Era & Political Theatre

Shorts: Mercy Otis Warren; Susanna Rowson; Charlotte Cushman; Hallam-Douglass Company

Recommended: *The Prince of Parthia*, Thomas Godfrey; *Cato*, Joseph Addison; *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Gordon Wood; *Declaring Independence*, Jay Fliegelman; *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, Richard Lyman Bushman; *The Coquette*, Hannah Foster; *Slaves in Algiers*, Susanna Rowson.

## 9/22 — Constructing the Self/Other on American Stages

Readings: *Metamora, or the Last of the Wampanoags*, John Augustus Stone (BB); “Metamora and the “Indian” Question,” Jeffrey Mason (in *Melodrama and the Myth of America*, BB); “The Savage Other: ‘Indianizing’ and Performance in Nineteenth-Century American Culture,” Rosemarie Bank (in *Interrogating America Through Theatre and Performance*, BB); “Indian Tribes: A Continuing Quest for Survival, US Commission on Human Rights,” Paula S. Rothenberg (in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, BB); Londré/Watermeier, 111-148; “Performative Time,” Tracy Davis (in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, BB).

Facilitation: Native American Theatre & Performance

Shorts: Lynn Riggs’s *The Cherokee Night*; Philip Deloria’s concept of “Playing Indian”; *Metamora, or, the Last of the Pollywogs*, John Brougham

Recommended: *Metamora, or, the Last of the Pollywogs*, John Brougham; *Melodrama and the Myth of America*, Jeffrey Mason; *The Girl of the Golden West*, David Belasco; *The Cherokee Night*, Lynn Riggs; Spiderwoman Theatre; *Native American Drama*, Christy Stanlake; plays of Hanay Geiogamah; *Native North American Theatre in a Global Age: Sites of Identity Construction and Transdifference*, Birgit Däwes; \*Londré/Watermeier, 15-38 (especially 31-38).

## 9/29 — Division Looms

Readings: *Fashion*, Anna Cora Mowatt (*Early American Drama*); *The Octoroon*, Dion Boucicault (*Early American Drama*); *The Escape, or, A Leap for Freedom*, William Wells Brown (BB); selected minstrel shows (BB); *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (selections), Lawrence Levine (BB); “The Image of Fashionable Society in American Comedy,” Tice Miller (in *When They Weren’t Doing Shakespeare*, BB); “The Historical Event,” Thomas Postlewait (in *Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*).

Facilitation: Civil War Dramas

Shorts: Astor Place Riot; Edwin Forrest; Joseph Jefferson; T. D. Rice

Recommended: *Shenandoah*, Bronson Howard; “‘Blood Will Have Blood’: Violence, Slavery, and *MacBeth* in the Antebellum American Imagination,” Heather Nathans (in *Weyward MacBeth: Intersections of Race and Performance*); “In Search of a National Drama,” David Grimsted (in *Melodrama Unveiled*, 137-180); *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre & Society, 1820-1870*, Bruce McConachie; *Melodrama and the Myth of America*, Jeffrey Mason; *The Drunkard*, William Henry Smith (*Early American Drama*); “Blackened Irish and Brownfaced Amerindians: Constructions of American Whiteness in Dion Boucicault’s *The Octoroon*,” Katy Chiles; “How to End the Octoroon,” John Degen.

## 10/6 — *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Intensive!

Readings: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, George Aiken (*Early American Drama*); "Uncle Tomitudes: Racial Melodrama and Modes of Production," Eric Lott (in *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, BB); Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln (link on BB); "Racial Innocence: Childhood, Race, Performance," Robin Bernstein (in *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*, BB); "Deep Skin: Reconstructing Congo Square," Joseph R. Roach (in *African American Performance and Theatre History*, BB).

**Assignment: Find two primary source documents or objects regarding *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, on stage, screen, or page and bring them to class. How do they add to our conversation?**

Shorts: Ira Aldredge; African (Grove) Theatre

Recommended: "Uncle Tom's Women," Judith Williams (in *African American Performance and Theatre History: A Critical Reader*); "The African Theatre to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," Errol G. Hill; \*University of Virginia's *Uncle Tom's Cabin & American Culture* Multi-Media Archive - <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/> (look around and find tons of fabulous primary sources); "Out of the Kitchen and Into the Marketplace: Normalizing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for the Antebellum Stage," Bruce McConachie; *Slavery and Sentiment on the American Stage, 1787-1861*, Heather Nathans; *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, Eric Lott; "Uncle Tom From Page to Stage: Limitations of Nineteenth-Century Drama," David Grimsted; *Uncle Tom's Cabin on the American Stage and Screen*, John Frick.

## 10/13 – The Woman Issue, Melodrama & Spectacle

Readings: *Under the Gaslight*, Augustin Daly (BB); *Margaret Fleming*, James Herne (BB); *They That Sit in Darkness*, Mary Burrill (Black Drama database); "The Railroad Rescue: Suffrage and Citizenship in *Under the Gaslight*," Amy Hughes (BB); "The New Woman, the Suffragist, and the Stage," Katherine E. Kelly (in *The Oxford Handbook of American Drama*, BB); "A First Prefatory Note to Modern Historiography" and "The Peculiar American Synthesis," Ernst Breisach (in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, BB); "The Theatrical Event," Thomas Postlewait (in *Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*).

**Assignment: Submit final paper topic and major questions by today. Be prepared to present your ideas to the class.**

Facilitation: Melodrama and Moral Reform (Temperance Melodramas, Abolitionist Melodramas, etc.)

Shorts: Rachel Crothers; Women's Suffrage/the New Woman

Recommended: *He and She*, Rachel Crothers; *The Poor of New York*, Dion Boucicault; "An 1890 Account of Margaret Fleming," Donald Pizer (JSTOR); "Margaret Fleming and the Boston Independent Theatre," Theodore Hatlen (JSTOR); "Margaret Fleming in Chickering Hall: The First Little Theatre in America?," Barnard Hewitt; "Art for Truth's Sake in the Drama," James A. Herne.

## 10/20 – “The peculiar, chosen people”: Vaudeville, Burlesque, and the Frontier Phenomenon

Readings: “Phenomenon: 1883-1892,” Roger Hall (in *Performing the American Frontier, 1870-1906*, BB); “The Rise of the Leg Show,” Faye E. Dudden (in *Women in the American Theatre: Actresses & Audiences 1790-1870*, BB); “The Making of Theatre History,” Susan Bennett (in *Essays in Performance Historiography*, BB); Londré/Watermeier, 168-228; “Negotiating a New Identity: Irish Americans and the Variety Theatre in the 1860s,” Susan Kattwinkel (in *Interrogating America Through Theatre and Performance*, BB).

Facilitation: Burlesque, Vaudeville, and/or Spectacle Pantomimes

Shorts: Lydia Thompson & the British Blondes; Hanlon Brothers; Tony Pastor

Recommended Readings: \*Virtual Vaudeville (<http://www.virtualvaudeville.com>); *The Black Crook*, Charles Barras; “This Motley Mixture,” David Grimsted (in *Melodrama Unveiled*); “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” Frederick Turner (chapter 1 in *The Frontier in American History*; <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>); *The Most American Thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as Performance*, Charlotte Canning; *Women in the American Theatre: Actresses & Audiences 1790-1870*, Faye E. Dudden; *Interrogating America Through Theatre and Performance*, William Demastes and Iris Smith Fisher; *Tony Pastor Presents: Afterpieces from the Vaudeville State*, Susan Kattwinkel; *Entertainment in the Old West: Theater, Music, Circuses, Medicine Shows*, Jeremy Agnew.

## 10/27 – Pageants, Tent Shows & Popular Entertainments

Readings: *The Clansman*, Thomas Dixon, Jr. (BB); *The Star of Ethiopia*, W.E.B. DuBois (in the Black Drama database); “‘The Pageant Is the Thing’: Black Nationalism and *The Star of Ethiopia*,” David Krasner (in *Performing America: Cultural Nationalism in American Theatre*, BB); “Patriotic Pageantry in America,” Richard M. Fried (in *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming! Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America*, BB); “Historians Encounter the Masses,” Ernst Breisach (in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, BB); “Hot Pursuit: Researching Across the Theatre/Film Border,” Henry Bial (JADT online; <http://jadtjournal.org/2014/05/30/hot-pursuit-researching-across-the-theatrefilm-border/>).

Facilitation: Patriotic Pageants

Shorts: Medicine Shows, Chautauqua, Tent Shows, Dime Museums

Recommended Readings: \*\**Birth of a Nation* (film—strongly recommended if you haven’t seen it; you can find it free on YouTube); *Rebirth of a Nation*, DJ Spooky/Paul Miller (film); *The Most American Thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as Performance*, Charlotte Canning.

## 11/3 — World War I, Industry & Expressionism

Readings: *The Adding Machine*, Elmer Rice; *Machinal*, Sophie Treadwell (BB); “The Expressionist Moment: Sophie Treadwell,” Jerry Dickey (in *The Cambridge Companion to American Women Playwrights*, BB); “Naturalism and Expressionism in American Drama,” Julia A. Walker (in *The Oxford Handbook of American Drama*, BB); “The Idea of the ‘Political’ in Our Histories of Theatre: Causal Contexts for Events,” Thomas Postlewait (in *Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*).

Facilitation: Expressionism on US Stages; Canteen Theatres

Shorts: Washington Square Players/Theatre Guild; Alfred Lunt & Lynn Fontanne

Recommended: *What Price Glory*, Maxwell Anderson; *Technology in American Drama, 1920-1950: Soul and Society in the Age of the Machine*, Dennis G. Jerz; “Staging the Great War in the National Red Cross Pageant,” Jenna Kubly (JADT); “Female Playwrights, Female Killers: Intersecting Texts of Crime and Gender in Glaspell, Watkins and Treadwell, Lisa Hall Hagen; “Working Women and Violence in Jazz Era American Drama,” Jerry Dickey; *Broadway’s Bravest Woman: Selected Writings of Sophie Treadwell*, Jerry Dickey; “Between Two Worlds: Elmer Rice Chairs the Thirties Debate,” Barry Witham.

## 11/10 — The Little Theatre Movement & the Progressive Era

Readings: *Trifles*, Susan Glaspell (BB); *Emperor Jones*, Eugene O'Neill (BB); "On the Threshold of Sexual Politics in American Theater and Drama: The Provincetown Players," Cheryl Black and Robert K. Sarlós (in *The Political and Personal in American Drama*, BB); Londré/Watermeier, 260-325; "American Political Drama: 1910-45," Christopher J. Herr (in *The Oxford Handbook of American Drama*, BB).

Facilitation: Little Theatre Movement

Shorts: KRIGWA Players; Hull House; Vassar Experimental Theatre; Cleveland Playhouse

Recommended: *The Women of Provincetown, 1915-1922*, Cheryl Black (parts are in Google Books); *Composing Ourselves: The Little Theatre Movement and the American Audience*, Dorothy Chansky; *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*, C.W.E. Bigsby; *Life with Father*, H. Lindsay and Crouse; *The Provincetown Players and the Culture of Modernity*, Brenda Murphy; "Eugene O'Neill: From Nobody to the Nobel," Miller & Frazer (in *American Drama Between the Wars*, 46-97); plays by any of the Little Theatre writers—particularly the women!

## 11/17 — The Harlem Renaissance & the Great Depression

Readings: *Color Struck*, Zora Neale Hurston (in the Black Drama database); *Safe*, Georgia Douglas Johnson (in Black Drama database); "The Harlem Renaissance," James V. Hatch (in *A History of African American Theatre*); *Waiting for Lefty*, Clifford Odets (*Waiting for Lefty and Other Plays*); *Of Thee I Sing*, George Kaufman, Morrie Ryskind, George Gershwin & Ira Gershwin (BB); "Culture and Commitment," Warren Susman (in *Culture as History*, BB).

**Assignment: Prospectus for final paper due (2-3 pages, outlining research questions, argument, and evidence); short in-class presentation of ideas.**

Facilitation: Harlem Renaissance

Shorts: Group Theatre, *Of Thee I Sing*

Recommended Readings: *Awake and Sing*, Clifford Odets; "The Group Theatre and Clifford Odets," C.W.E. Bigsby (in *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*); "Of Thee I Sing: Contesting 'America,'" Robert James Branham; *Life with Father*, H. Lindsay and Crouse; *American Drama Between the Wars*, Jordan Miller; "Myth in American Drama Between the Wars," Winifred L. Dusenbury; plays by any of the Harlem Renaissance writers—particularly the women!

## 11/24 — The Nation's National Theatre: The Federal Theatre Project

Readings: *Power*, Arthur Arent (<http://newdeal.feri.org/power/contents.htm>); *The Cradle Will Rock*, Mark Blitzstein (BB); *Arena* (selections), Hallie Flanagan (BB); *Staging the People: Community and Identity in the Federal Theatre Project* (selections), Elizabeth Osborne (BB).

Facilitation: Federal Theatre Project

Recommended: *Arena*, Hallie Flanagan; "Backstage at *The Cradle Will Rock*," Barry Witham (BB); *The Federal Theatre, 1935-1939*, Jane De Hart Mathews; "Propaganda Plays and American Labor," Susan Duffy (in *American Labor on Stage: Dramatic Interpretations of the Steel and Textile Industries in the 1930s*, p.5-24 - blackboard); "The Federal Theatre Project's Living Newspapers: New York's Docudramas of the Thirties," John Vacha; *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study*, Barry Witham; *Furious Improvisation*, Susan Quinn; *Free, Adult, and Uncensored*, John O'Connor and Lorraine Brown.

12/1 — Catch up & Wrap up

Assignment: Presentations of final papers

12/8 — Final Papers due by 5pm!

**\*\*We'll also gather for a final end-of-class celebration at some point during the last week or class or finals week - time & place TBA.**

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\*\* I'll post more recommended readings on blackboard as they arise. If you come across anything you think is particularly great, be sure to let me know so I can post it!

**Other Recommended Readings:**

All the parts of Londré/Watermeier that we're not reading in class

Chinoy, Helen Krich & Linda Walsh Jenkins, Eds., *Women in American Theatre* (a lot of this is in Google books)

Dunlap, William, *A History of the American Theatre: From Its Origins to 1832*

Dyer, Richard, *White*

Frick, John, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America*

-----, *Uncle Tom's Cabin on the American Stage and Screen*

Gill, Glenda, *No Surrender! No Retreat! African American Pioneer Performers of Twentieth Century American Theatre*

Hughes, Glenn, *A History of the American Theatre, 1700-1950*

McArthur, Benjamin, *Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920*

McDonough, Carla, *Staging Masculinity: Male Identity in Contemporary American Drama*

Meserve, Walter, *An Outline History of American Drama* (this is a great place to go for a quick overview of many topics in American Theatre History through c. 1960)

Poggi, Jack, *Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1967*

Senelick, Laurence, *The American Stage: Writing on Theatre from Washington Irving to Tony Kushner*

Stanlake, Christy, *Native American Drama*

Wilmeth, Don and Christopher Bigsby, Eds., *The Cambridge History of American Theatre* (3 volumes of fantastic work)

Wilson, Garff B., *Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre: From Ye Bare and Ye Cubb to Hair*

Young, Harvey, Ed., *The Cambridge Companion to African American Theatre.*

Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the United States*