

The University of Toronto

German Theater Production: Preparation, Rehearsal, Staging

Friedrich Dürrenmatt: Die Physiker

German 380H / Winter 2010

Instructor:	EROL M BORAN	Dept:	German Studies
Office:	Odette Hall #318	Email:	erol.boran@utoronto.ca
Office Hours:	T 3-5 (& by app.)	Tel.:	416-926-2322

Class meets on **TR 6-8 AH 400**

Student Profile

This course addresses students who enjoy engaging with language creatively. No prior acting experience is required, but intermediate German language skills are recommended, as the course will be conducted entirely in German. Individual tasks of participants vary: Some will do more acting, others more backstage work. This will be determined during the first two weeks.

Note: This might turn out to be the most fascinating and satisfying class you ever take! But be warned: The nature of the project requires a high level of commitment from all involved. Since this is a group endeavor, we have to be able to rely on each individual to make this work. Failure to attend rehearsals or to complete assignments in a timely fashion may have devastating effects on the entire production. In other words: If you are one of those students who regularly miss class sessions, this course is definitely NOT for you.

Course Outline

GER 380H consists of classroom sessions, theater workshops, rehearsal sessions and three public performances. It is held entirely in German. This year we focus on reading, interpreting, contextualizing, rehearsing and staging Friedrich Dürrenmatt's grotesquely funny play *The Physicists*.¹ In the process, students will become familiar with the different steps of a theater production – from read-through to dress rehearsal and preview to the actual performance, as well as the various responsibilities that go along with any theater production, such as playbills, programs, costumes, set, sound & lights and dramaturgy. Students will be introduced to basic acting and staging techniques and get acquainted to leading 20th-century theories of theater.

The course meets twice a week, on Tuesday & Thursday from 6-8pm. During the first two weeks (seminar phase) and weeks 3-8 (initial rehearsal stage), each class lasts two hours; during weeks 9-11 (intensive rehearsal stage & performance), sessions are bound to last longer (i.e. as long as needed). Be aware that the final weeks of a production require more time involvement than regular classes. As a payback, the class ends after week 11 and there will be no final exam.

¹ If enrolment is too high, we may stage Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* instead, which has more acting parts.

Note: The course involves visiting a local theatre production on a Sunday afternoon (probably at the Tarragon Theatre) and a discussion session in a café/pub right afterwards. The exact date will be announced. Also we might add a fourth performance in Kitchener/Waterloo.

Requirements

- 20% Active Class Participation: Students are asked to participate in classroom discussions and in the preparations necessary for the stage production.
- 20% Preparation: Homework assignments, reading, memorizing of text, etc.
- 20% Writing Assignments: There will be two written assignments focusing on the theater production, e.g. the character you will be impersonating or aspects of the production to be published in the program.
- 40% Production Work (Stage / Backstage / Program): This is the crucial part of the course! Production involves rehearsals & performance, backstage work (costumes, set, stage, lights, etc.) and work on the program booklet. In other words: FUN!

Attendance: absolutely no unexcused absences in this class!