

SYLLABUS FOR THEA 3385/J-TERM 2025-26
Including required readings, assignments, and daily schedule

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Welcome to THEATRE ALIVE!

During this short class, we'll focus on a couple of themes, read a few plays, see six performances, and talk *a lot* about the coupling of city and theatre.

Themes include: tourism, bodies, spaces & geography,
and (of course!) performance.

We'll also talk about William Shakespeare, Pablo Picasso, John Millington Synge, David Garrick, Ellen Terry, Laurence Olivier, and Elizabeth I, and other folks key to theatre between 1570 and 2024.

Whether you've taken multiple theatre courses or none, been onstage or not, you'll be able to participate in our class discussions.

We'll transform you from a tourist to a fledgling local by the end of this program.

Class meetings will be split between discussion of the texts we read/productions we see, exhibitions and sites we visit, and lectures about the history, geography, and people of Theatre in London. It is expected that all students will contribute to in-class discussions daily – which means preparing the readings.

Before arriving in London, it is strongly recommended that all students read the plays and the Kennedy article and examine the historic maps of London (see the course site).

REQUIRED READING

PLAYS

TWELFTH NIGHT by Shakespeare*

PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD by J.M. Synge*

ALL MY SONS by Arthur Miller*

BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO by Rajiv Joseph (posted on TEAMS page)

ARTICLES and SHORT PIECES (on TEAMS site)

“The Spectator as Tourist” by Dennis Kennedy

Summary, Performance Studies (PowerPoint)

OTHER

- Buy a map of London: a paper/foldable map of London - not on your phone.
- Show programs for each performance we attend (approx 5GBP each)

***Buy IRL books for this class:** no e-versions, please. I will send recommendations for editions that will be most useful for our purposes.

ASSIGNMENTS

PARTICIPATION: 15%

All students are expected to participate daily in class discussions and during site visits, events, and daytrips. Students are required to share their voice in the lively discussions about the readings, productions, site visits, and events of the course. This not only means sharing your personal viewpoints and discoveries but treating everyone in the program with respect.

Participating means being prepared: reading or watching the assigned materials and applying our in-class work to it. Take notes while you read, identify passages or topics that strike you, identify the areas where you have questions or need some clarification.

Be aware of the schedule and arrive to class or meeting sites on time; being late will cost you points in this area.

REVIEWS: 45% (15% each)

Each student will write 3 reviews:

1. BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO or PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD – due January 8, 9:30am
2. THEATRE PICASSO at TATE MODERN (exhibition) - due January 12, 9:30am
3. TWELFTH NIGHT – due January 15, 9:30am

LETTER HOME: 15%

Each student will write a "letter home" discussing and comparing the "bodies in performance" seen in THE RED SHOES and SIX. Obviously, both events focus on performance and representation in very specific ways. SIX, for example, shifts the attention of the historic narrative to the "wives" and their stories through the utilization of a rock musical; THE RED SHOES focuses on the main character's conflict between choosing an artistic life or the love of her life in a traditional genre, ballet. Using our in-class and on-site discussions of "bodies in performance" write a loved one at home about your experience of and reaction to both productions.

You should also include a response to one of these three course events, sharing that response in detail with the person you write to: 1/ Backstage tour, National Theatre; or 2/ Dennis Severs's House; or 3/ Blitz! Exhibition at Design Museum.

Note: write to the person "as if" they have not visited London or experienced these events/shows. We will discuss this assignment, like all assignments in class before it is due.

FINAL PRESENTATION: 25%

Rather than give a traditional "final exam," I am instead requiring each student to give a final presentation: a 15- to 20-minute oral/visual "Letter from London" summing up their experiences. In that time, each student will connect their individual experiences to the themes of the course, share their transformation from "tourist" to semi-local, and articulate some of their cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual discoveries during their time in London.

HELPFUL NOTES for the course and events

Basic Expectations

1. Be on time -- with all necessary items (phone, Oyster card, etc.) for the events of the day.
2. Be respectful and tolerant to the leaders and to each other.
3. Take care of yourself: eat, drink, and sleep in the best way to make sure you stay healthy for the whole trip. When you have a free morning, afternoon, or evening use it to relax and catch up on the course reading.
4. Breakfast is available in hotel everyday: make time!
5. Prepare the day's readings and assignments with notes, questions, opinions!
6. Speak up in class: share your opinions, thoughts, questions, enthusiasms.
7. Keep your phone charged and on and stay in touch with the group.
8. Download **CITYMAPPER** and **WHATSAPP** to stay connected: I will group text through WHATSAPP.

Before arriving in London

1. Read all plays
2. Read "The spectator as tourist"/Kennedy
3. Buy a PAPER map of London
4. Watch on YouTube or streaming the clips or programs noted below
5. Download CITYMAPPER (free app that shows best way/routes to get around London on bus, tube, or walking)

Some information you may find useful:

1. The London Underground (subway) generally runs between 5am and midnight Monday – Saturday, with reduced hours on Sundays and holidays.
2. London cabbies/black cabs will cost the same *or less* than UBER – plus they will get you where you are going more quickly and accurately. They take credit cards, too.
3. Bring an umbrella, waterproof shoes, and a rainproof/windproof coat. Temperatures during this period are generally between 35 and 55degrees Fahrenheit. A warm hat and gloves (ear covering) are necessary!
4. **Don't** bring logo wear: SMU or other university, sorority/fraternity, etc. This will quickly identify you as a tourist and potential mark for pickpockets.
5. One nice outfit for theatres and afternoon tea; obviously, you can bring more than one., but most of the places we go are not fancy: don't overload your suitcase!

COURSE SCHEDULE – December 29-January 15

Monday, December 29, 2025

Arrive in London

Travel to the TAVISTOCK HOTEL, check in – contact Lindsey about arrival

17:00 – Introductions/Orientation in hotel lobby

18:00 -- Group Dinner, FRIEND AT HAND (pub). We'll walk over as a group from the hotel.

Tuesday, December 30, 2025

9:30-12:00 – Class #1 (FSU London Ctr., 99 Great Russell St.)

EXPECTATIONS for the course: now that we're here...

HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY & THEATRE: LONDON INTRODUCTION

THE RED SHOES – in-class discussion of story, performance

12:00 – Lunch (on your own)

13:30 - Walking Tour, Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace

19:00 – Performance – *THE RED SHOES* at Sadler's Wells (Tube: Angel)

Wednesday, December 31, 2025

9:30 – Class #2

READ: “The tourist as spectator”/Kennedy (pages 94-105)

Discussion: *THE RED SHOES* & Review assignment,

Tourism and theatre - Southbank, maps, Tate Modern

12:00 – Lunch

17:45 – New Year's Eve dinner – Côte Brasserie, St. Katharine's Docks

Thursday, January 1, 2026 - Free day!

Suggestion - read BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO by Rajiv Joseph

Friday, January 2, 2026

9:30 – Class #3

Read: BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO by Rajiv Joseph

Discussion: BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO by Rajiv Joseph,

Tate Britain exhibitions: LEE MILLER & TURNER/CONSTABLE

12:00 - Lunch

13:30 – Exhibition – Tate Britain, LEE MILLER (photos),

19:30 - Performance - *BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO* at Young Vic
(Tube: Southwark or Waterloo; Bus #1 or #68)

Saturday, January 3, 2026

930 - Class #4

Discussion: BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO/Young Vic,

Tate Britain exhibitions, British Museum: Elgin Marbles, exhibitions, what to see

12:00 - Lunch

13:30 - British Museum – enter with group from back entrance, MONTAGU PLACE

Free evening

Sunday, January 4, 2026

9:00 - Train to Hampton Court, the palace of Henry VIII and wives (estimated)

10:00 – Hampton Court visit (audio guides)

15:00 – Return to London (TBD)

19:00 – Performance: *SIX* at Vaudeville Theatre (Tube: Charing Cross)

Monday, January 5, 2026

10:00 – VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM: Raphael Rooms, Performance Galleries

12:00 – Lunch at V&A Museum

13:45 – Backstage Tour, Royal Opera House

15:30 – Brief tour of Covent Garden with Gretchen

Free evening

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

9:30 – Class #5

Read: PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD by Synge

Discussion: PLAYBOY (script and Wilde), SIX (performance)

V&A, Covent Garden, Backstage tour (walking tour)

12:00 - Lunch

13 :30 – Exhibition – CECIL BEATON'S FASHIONABLE WORLD

16:00 - Backstage tour, National Theatre (meet in lobby)

18:30 - Performance – PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD at the National Theatre

Post-show: Group heads to nearby café for discussion

Wednesday, January 7, 2026 – OXFORD DAY TRIP

7:45 – Oxford Tube Stop 10A (corner, Grosvenor Gardens & Ebury Sts)

10:00 - University College tour

11:30 – Coffee and discussion at VAULT & GARDEN café

12:30 – Walking Tour of Oxford center

15:00 – Oxford Museums, Blackwell's Bookstore

17:00 – Dinner at King's Arms (pub)

TBD – Tube to London (High Street)

Thursday, January 8, 2026– Free day... with an option!

Optional: Meeting at Phoenix Arts Club

15:00 - Visit with working actors from West End productions

20:00 - Open Mic night at Phoenix Art Club

Friday, January 9, 2026

10:00 – Walking Tour – BRICK LANE (Tube: Aldgate East)

12:00 – Free time to explore Brick Lane

13:00 – SHEBA group lunch

15:00 – Dennis Severs's House

Free evening

Saturday, January 10, 2026

9:30 – Class #6

Discussion: *Bengal Tiger & Young Vic*; Oxford day; Brick Lane walking tour; Southbank walk: Borough Market, Shakespeare's Globe, Tate Modern, Millennium Bridge, St. Paul's, National Theatre

12:00 – Leave for **BOROUGH MARKET: LUNCH**

13:30 – Walking Tour - Southbank

14:30 – **TATE MODERN, Exhibition – THEATRE PICASSO (entrance time: TBD)**

Free evening

Sunday, January 11, 2026

9:30 – Class #7

Discussion: Shakespeare, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, TWELFTH NIGHT Design Museum exhibitions

Free afternoon/evening

Monday, January 12, 2026

10:30 – **DESIGN MUSEUM – Exhibition, WES ANDERSON**

Free afternoon

18:45 – Meet at BARBICAN (Tube: Barbican)

19:15 – Performance - **TWELFTH NIGHT** by Royal Shakespeare Company

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

9:30 – Class #8

**Read: "The spectator as tourist" (pp 105-114); ALL MY SONS by Arthur Miller
Discussion: TWELFTH NIGHT, Design Museum exhibitions, ALL MY SONS; Globe theatre**

12:00 - Lunch

13:00 - Backstage Tour, Shakespeare's Globe

19:30 - Performance – **ALL MY SONS** at Wyndham's Theatre
(Tube: Covent Garden or Leicester Square)

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

9:30 – Class #9

Discussion: ALL MY SONS, Shakespeare's Globe

12:00 – break/group travels to Sanderson's Hotel

13:00 – Mad Hatter's Afternoon Tea

Sanderson's Hotel, 50 Berner's St.

Free evening

Thursday, January 15, 2026

9:00 – Final exam presentations

Free afternoon

18:00 – Farewell dinner at DIN TAI FUNG, Covent Gardens

Friday, January 16, 2026

11:00 – everyone checks out of hotel by this time