E17.2151 Theatre Practices
Winter Intersession Course –Puerto Rico
January 2013

COURSE OUTLINE

Dr. David Montgomery
Telephone: 212-998-5869, 917-922-0333 cell
Email: dm635@nyu.edu
Office Hours: 212-998-5868

OBJECTIVES

This course interrogates broad questions about drama and its aesthetic practice in educational and applied settings. We will examine the power and efficacy of theatre practices in a range of venues. Students will develop a vocabulary of theatrical skills (Physical Theatre/Mask) for use in the implementation and integration of dramatic strategies into community based work. Various approaches to applied theatre will be considered, especially those shaped by Freire and Boal. We will also explore the ways in which drama provides contexts for developing change. Students will read widely, observe the ways in with theory meets practice, and reflect on their own evolving understanding of drama in education.

Key questions which identify the key learning objectives to be addressed for this subject are:

- What is the relationship between drama education and community arts?
- What is the impact of dramatic artistry on educational attainment?
- How can teaching artists develop ongoing strategies to reflect on their work?
- What are the key competencies of a practitioner of drama in education and/or applied theatre, and how should these be attained and evaluated?
- What is the role of drama in education in the 21st century?

CONTENT

This course builds skills, knowledge and understanding in the content area and pedagogy of drama and community arts. It enhances the professional and personal skills of educators committed to drama in education.

Teaching artists require knowledge of the dynamic which occurs when a group creates a fictional world and engages in dramatic action which extends and changes their understanding of events, people and relationships. This knowledge exists as tacit and learnt understandings. This course provides opportunities for students to engage in a dialogue on drama practices and processes, to reflect on their learning, and then to evaluate their personal responses to structured drama and community-based events. As this occurs, students are introduced to ideas which power drama in education and community outreach, and, to the theoretical and conceptual bases which underpin the strategies and leadership styles appropriate for different community groups.

Informing the above is the understanding that drama is an art form which demands that students are well-grounded in the construct and delivery of artistic experience. Students will consider the
relationship of drama to the other art forms, and ways in which teaching artists develop and share their own artistry.

The central purpose of this course is:

*To provide an opportunity for students to develop their understanding of the various uses and applications of drama, through the course content, which specifically focuses on innovative community arts programs. Students will consider the potential for using drama as a learning medium in various areas as well as an expressive activity in its own right.*

The content includes:

(a) **Application of the elements of drama**: Extending the students' understanding of the elements of drama, e.g. the human context, focus, tension, contrast, symbol, ritual, time and place in drama when used in the playing and playmaking modes.

(b) **Application to teaching artistry**: *Planning* drama experiences; recognizing the teacher's goals and the students' goals, devising tasks, developing and managing dramatic action, and intervention. *Managing* drama experiences; managing dramatic action in practice, developing competencies to manipulate the action where necessary. *Reflecting* on and in drama experience - reflecting on and evaluating their processes and outcomes. *Evaluating* the drama curriculum that one participates in, and plans, and the teacher's delivery of it.

**ORGANIZATION and TEACHING METHODS**

Through a series of workshops and experiences, students will develop their thinking through a reflective practice, informed by practical circumstances, their own reading and theorizing. An action research approach is encouraged wherein students reflect both in and on action.

This course will involve considerable out of class reading, planning, conceptualizing. Students are expected to attend classes and to demonstrate their commitment to the process of drama and community arts in a range of settings. All assessment tasks need to be satisfactorily committed in order to receive a satisfactory grade.

**ASSESSMENT**

1. **Participation**

   Attend all classes punctually and contribute actively and constructively to the workshops.

   Demonstrate competence in basic dramatic techniques (where appropriate).

   Complete all assigned tasks as outlined, especially participatory and reading assignments.

   Work as a cooperative ensemble member.

   Reflect in and on action, through discussion and evaluation, as well as peer and group assessment where appropriate.

   Contribute to a strong sense of ensemble and community.
2. Community Theatre Logbook

Students will keep a documented record of their experience in the Caribbean and the connections they are making to the development of drama in education within their own professional contexts. This record should include written log entries outlining cumulative knowledge; artefacts collected which demonstrate learning; analyses of the reading wherein theoretical connections are made; and other materials which represent inspiration and depth of thought. Students should think of the logbook as an invaluable record of their own learning experiences in this winter intersession. However, the logbook should be presented in an engaging, practical and accessible manner, wherein students take ownership of their work both visually and professionally.

Possible Table of Contents:

- An opening statement describing what you hope to achieve from your Caribbean experience: Due January 7th in San Juan
- Log book entries which reveal the development in your learning
- Responses to the Key Course Questions (page 1)
- Essay on the Caribbean community theatre experience and how it has shaped your understanding of applied and community theatre
- The contribution of Freire, Boal and other authors to your knowledge of drama in education and/or applied theatre
- A closing statement on your own progress and development during this course
- Appendices: Artefacts (materials, resources, pictures, documents, pretexts, other information than you collect while in PR that have made an impact upon you and which you have referenced above)
- Bibliographic List

This Logbook should be delivered no later than Friday March 1, 2013, 10:00pm to the Program in Educational Theatre Office. Include a large padded self-addressed envelope for timely return. Late delivery of assignments will be penalized.

ADMINISTRATION

Assignments must be handed in on the due date. Only substantial medical conditions (medical certificate stating specific condition) or exceptional personal circumstances (confirmed in writing by an appropriate person) will be considered for an extension of the deadline, provided notification is made before the due date.

All written assignments must be legible.

You must keep a copy of all assignments to be submitted.

Written assignments must be in appropriate style - syntax, spelling, grammar and structure.
TEXTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Required Reading

Books:


Articles:


Physical Theatre Resources:


**Drama in Education Resources:**


**Journals**

*Stage of the Art*  *Research in Drama Education*  *Youth Theatre Journal*

*Drama Research*  *Lowdown*