

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS  
SEMS 3500-109

Voyage: Spring 2013  
Discipline: DRAMA  
Course Title: Puppet Theatre  
Division: Upper  
Faculty Name: Susan Kattwinkel  
**Class Time: 8:00 – 9:15 B days**

**Pre-requisites:** None

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In what ways can puppets represent human experience better than human actors? What sorts of stories are suited for puppet performances? What does puppet theatre offer to conversations about a culture? How can we use puppet performance to reflect our own intercultural experiences? This course will look at puppet theatre forms from around the globe, focusing on the areas of our voyage. Puppet theatres take many forms, from the water puppets of Vietnam, to the shadow puppets of Burma and Malaysia, to the wooden puppets of Japan and Ghana. In order to help us understand how puppets can communicate in unique ways the class will also include a project where we make shadow puppets and create our own story of our voyage and cultural encounters.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Develop a working knowledge of the major puppet forms of countries visited in spring 2013.
- Be able to recognize and articulate the cultural purposes and applications of various forms of puppetry.
- Be able to articulate in written form some of the theory behind puppetry - how it works psychologically and in relation to other forms of performance - in relation to your own experience as an audience member.
- Apply techniques and theories learned to the creation of your own puppet performance.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of tourist performance through an oral analysis of your personal experience as an audience member at performances.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

AUTHOR: Donald Keene (trans.)  
TITLE: Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu  
PUBLISHER: Columbia University Press  
ISBN #: 978-0231111010  
DATE/EDITION: 1997

AUTHOR: Millar, Mervyn  
TITLE: Journey of the Tall Horse  
PUBLISHER: Oberon  
ISBN #: 978-1840025996  
DATE/EDITION: 2006

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Readings and Assignments should be completed by the date assigned in the syllabus.

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| Class 1  | Introductions and Business<br>What is our experience of puppets?<br>Assign group projects  |
| Class 2  | Interculturalism and Cultural Tourism<br>Introduction to Puppetry<br><b>Reading:</b> "Playing with Stuff: The Material World in Performance" John Bell   |
| Class 3  | American puppetry/Asian fusion<br><b>Reading:</b> "Interculturalism, hybridity, tourism" from <i>Theatre Histories</i>   |
| Class 4  | Basic puppet types<br><b>Reading:</b> "Show Breeds" from <i>Puppetry</i>   |
| Class 5  | Japanese Puppetry: Bunraku<br><b>Reading:</b> Bunraku Theatre, from <i>Oriental Theatre</i>  |
| Class 6  | Japanese Puppetry: Bunraku script<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>The Love Suicides at Sonezaki</i> - Chikamatsu   |
| Class 7  | Post-port performance discussion (Bunraku)<br>Introduction to Chinese Puppetry   |
| Class 8  | Post-port performance discussion: Shanghai and Hong Kong<br>Introduction to Vietnamese Water Puppetry<br>Reading: "Vietnamese Water Puppetry as a Representation of Modern Vietnam"<br>(Kathy Foley)                                       |
| Class 9  | Post-port performance discussion: Ho Chi Minh City<br>Malaysian Puppetry - Wayang Kulit<br><b>Reading:</b> "The Shadow Puppet Theatre in Southeast Asia" and "Dalang Muda" in<br><i>The Shadow Puppet Theatre of Malaysia</i> (Beth Osnes) |
| Class 10 | String Puppets of Burma<br><b>Reading:</b> "Burmese Marionettes" (Kathy Foley)   |

Class 11      **Reading:** "Three bodies, one soul: Tradition and Burmese puppetry" (William Condee)

**Field Lab: Burmese Marionettes**

Class 12      Post-performance discussion, Burma  
Indian Puppetry  
**Reading:** "If Gandhi could fly . . ." (Salil Singh)

Class 13      Post- performance discussion, India  
Catch-up on Asian puppet forms

Class 14      Personal reflection on puppetry, discussion of American puppetry

Class 15      Creation of puppets  
**Due: Puppetry Plan**

Class 16      Puppetry in Africa

Class 17      Modern Puppetry in South Africa  
**Reading:** *Journey of the Tall Horse*

Class 18      Post-performance discussion: South Africa

Class 19      Work on project

Class 20      Theatre in Ghana  
**Reading:** "Social Dynamics in African Puppetry" (Marie Kruger)

Class 21      Post-performance discussion: Ghana  
Rehearsal day

Class 22      Rehearsal day  
**Last Chance to hand in Site Reports**

Class 23      **Final Puppet Performance**

## FIELD WORK

### *FIELD LAB*

**Rangoon, Burma, February 25, 2013**

**Participation in the Field Lab is mandatory. Attendance for the entire lab and the resulting response paper will constitute 20% of the course grade.**

#### **Burmese String Puppets**

Our field lab will expose us to the history and practice of Burmese string puppets, one of the most cherished of Burma's traditional arts. Dating back to at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century and probably earlier, string puppets (marionettes) were an important national art form until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Popular with royal courts and connected to the Buddhist traditions of Burma, the *yokthe thay* were considered high art and demanded highly trained puppeteers who could execute the slapstick humor and acrobatics demanded by the texts. In recent years there has been an attempt to revive the form as a nationalistic representation of traditional Burmese culture.

We will visit the National Museum to see traditional puppets and musical instruments, and then we will visit the Traditional String Puppet Theatre. Director Khin Maung Htwe and his professional puppeteers will tell us about the history of the form, and conduct a workshop on puppet making and manipulation. Finally, we will see a Burmese string puppet performance.

Students will write a five-page paper following the field lab that will analyze the performance they saw in the following ways: 1) as an example of the form as we discussed it in class; 2) in terms of its observable connection to contemporary culture (i.e. is it a tourist performance, heritage performance, ongoing cultural practice); 3) as an audience member, articulating your own experience.

### *FIELD ASSIGNMENTS*

- Students are required to see at least two other performances that fit into a broad description of puppetry during the voyage. Students may select a performance from a suggested list, or may attend an individual performance. **Students may encounter street puppet performances at any time. These will count as witnessed performances even without prior approval if 1) you are able to observe the performance for at least 15 minutes, and 2) if you are able to bring back visual evidence (photos) of the performance.** In the absence of sufficient available performances, visits to museums featuring puppets will be acceptable. (A list of these will be provided for you.)
- As part of the participation grade, after each port call, students will discuss performances seen, and share photos or other ephemera. Please contribute your observations of productions viewed and listen actively to those observations if you did not see the performance.
- Students will submit 2-3 page reports for two performances seen independently.

## METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

### 1. **Attendance and Participation, 15%**

Students are expected to participate in all discussions, both faculty led and student led. Active contribution to in-class discussions will contribute to your grade. Part of your participation grade will rely on your reports to the class about your performance experiences in port. You must contribute to at least two of those discussions (most likely the two performances on which you write your Performance Reports).

### 2. **Quizzes on Readings 10%**

This course requires significant reading of essays on performance, as well as three plays. In order to participate fully and get value from the class students must keep up with the reading material. There will be several short unannounced quizzes based on the day's reading.

### 3. **Field Report 20%**

Students will submit a 5 page analysis paper of the Field Lab performance experience as described above. A full assignment and rubric will be provided to you. *The paper will be due five class days following the lab.*

### 4. **Performance Reports 20%**

Students will submit 2-3 page performance reports for two performances of puppet theatre, or performances including puppet elements. A full assignment and rubric will be provided to you. *Performance reports will be due three class days after leaving that particular port.*

### 5. **Comparison Paper 15%**

Students will analyze one type of puppet theatre not covered in depth in class. This form can be from anywhere in the world. The paper will be 2-3 pages long and focus on a comparison of the form with one of the forms covered in depth in class. A full assignment and rubric will be provided to you. *The comparison paper will be due on the last day of class.*

### 6. **Final Group Project 20%**

The final project, to be performed for our peers towards the end of the semester (on a day convenient on the ship) will be a puppet performance, using theories and techniques we have learned along the way, about our personal journeys on the voyage. Material will be provided to you for the making of shadow puppets, but you may expand on these in any way you like with any materials you choose. Your group will turn in a script and a process paper. A full assignment and rubric will be provided to you.

## **RESERVE LIBRARY LIST**

AUTHOR: Phillip Zarrilli, Bruce McConachie, Gary Jay Williams and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei  
TITLE: Theatre Histories: an Introduction  
PUBLISHER: Routledge  
ISBN #: 978-0-415-46224-2  
DATE/EDITION: 2010/2nd

AUTHOR: Blumenthal, Eileen  
TITLE: Puppetry: A World History  
PUBLISHER: Harry N. Abrams  
ISBN #: 0-8109-5587-3  
DATE/EDITION: 2005, 1st

AUTHOR: Bell, John  
TITLE: Strings, Hands, Shadows: A Modern Puppet History  
PUBLISHER: Detroit Institute of Arts  
ISBN #: 978-0895581563  
DATE/EDITION: 2000

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

AUTHOR: Bell, John  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Chapter 1: "Playing with Stuff: The Material World in Performance"  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: American Puppet Modernism  
VOLUME:  
DATE: 2008  
PAGES: 1-16

AUTHOR: Phillip Zarrilli, Bruce McConachie, Gary Jay Williams and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Chapter 13, "Interculturalism, hybridity, tourism"  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Theatre Histories: an Introduction  
VOLUME:  
DATE: 2010  
PAGES: 551-564

AUTHOR: Blumenthal, Eileen  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Chapter 2, "Show Breeds"  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Puppetry: A World History  
VOLUME:  
DATE: 2005  
PAGES: 37-69

AUTHOR: Freund, Philip  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: short section from Chapter 4: Japan  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Oriental Theatre

VOLUME:  
DATE: 2005  
PAGES: 212-225

AUTHOR: Foley, Kathy  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Vietnamese Water Puppetry as a Representation of Modern Vietnam  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: TDR: The Drama Review  
VOLUME: 45.4  
DATE: 2001  
PAGES: 129-141

AUTHOR: Osnes, Beth  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Short section from Chapter 1: The Shadow Puppet Theatre in Southeast Asia, and short section from Chapter 4: Five Scripts  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: The Shadow Puppet Theatre of Malaysia  
VOLUME:  
DATE: 2010  
PAGES: 13-26, 94-103

AUTHOR: Foley, Kathy  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Burmese Marionettes: Yokthe Thay in Transition  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Asian Theatre Journal  
VOLUME: 18.1  
DATE: 2001  
PAGES: 69-80

AUTHOR: Condee, William  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Three bodies, one soul: Tradition and Burmese puppetry  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Studies in Theatre & Performance  
VOLUME: 31: 3  
DATE: 2011  
PAGES: 259-274

AUTHOR: Singh, Salil  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: If Gandhi Could Fly...: Dilemmas and Directions in Shadow Puppetry of India  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: TDR: The Drama Review  
VOLUME: 43.3  
DATE: 1999  
PAGES: 154-168

AUTHOR: Kruger, Marie  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Social Dynamics in African Puppetry  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Contemporary Theatre Review  
VOLUME: 20.3

DATE: 2010  
PAGES: 316-328

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Videos of world puppet forms will be shown in class.

### **HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."