Course Specifications
Valid in the academic year 2019-2020

Research Seminar: Performance Theory (A005314)

Course

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)
Credits 10.0
Study time 300 h
Contact hrs 50.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2019-2020
A (semester 1)
Dutch
self-reliant study activities
seminar 40.0 h
excursion 5.0 h

Lecturers in academic year 2019-2020
Delbecke, Jasper LW17 staff member
Driesen, Pauline LW17 staff member
Stalpaert, Christel LW17 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2019-2020 crdts offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject) 10 A
Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies
Master of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies 10 A
Exchange Programme Art Science 10 A

Teaching languages
Dutch

Keywords
Theater, Performance, Documentary Turn, Politics of Documentary, Documentary in the 21st Century, Expanded Documentary

Position of the course
The seminar elaborates on the obtained knowledge and research skills of the Bachelor in the Arts-program. The seminar will explore the ‘documentary turn’ within the field of performing arts. Students are being trained to formulate, individually and collectively, contemporary research questions and to plot out their own research trajectory around the themes of the seminar.

Contents
“When we go to theatre to see a documentary play, what do we think we are getting? How do we know it is a documentary in the first place? Does documentary promise us something distinctive? And is it able to deliver and fulfil these promises?” (Reinelt 6)

These questions, cited from performance scholar Janelle Reinelt’s text The Promise of Documentary, became pertinent with the recent arrival of a (‘new’) documentary trend within the performing arts field. The manifestation of the so-called “Theatre of the Real” (Carol Martin), “new documentary theatre (Irmer) or Verbatim-theatre we witnessed the last decade, coalesces with the “new documentary wave” (Chanan) in cinema or an increasing interest in the documentary form in contemporary visual arts. These shifts introduce new documentary forms in museums, galleries, cinemas or theatre venues. Consequently, these shifts challenge the definition of ‘documentary’, a concept that, as film scholar Bill Nichols noted, always has been a fuzzy concept.

Inspired by Reinelt’s questions, this research seminar will explore contemporary documentary forms in theatre, dance and performance. These different forms will be a point of departure for a historical and philosophical exploration of the topic. Within the seminar, the following research questions are at stake: What is the impetus of contemporary artists to make ‘documentary theatre’? What kind of status has ‘the document’ in these documentary performances? What kind of reality incites artists to develop these documentary projects? And can we expand the notion of ‘documentary’
to ‘survive’ the 21st century?
These research questions will be explored, through a close reading of theoretical texts
by Bertolt Brecht, Alain Badiou, Hito Steyerl, T.J. Demos, Rebecca Schneider and
Theodor Adorno, and a performance analysis of performances by Milo Rau, Hannes
Dereere & Silke Huysmans, Thomas Bellinck and Sachli Gholamalizad.

Initial competences
• Knowledge of the history of modern theatre and the repertoire of theatre, as obtained
in the Bachelor in Art Studies, is necessary.
• Knowledge and comprehension of the research skills in relation to art studies, and
theatre studies in particular, as obtained in the Bachelor in Art Studies, is necessary.
• Knowledge and comprehension of the available methodologies in the field of theatre
and performance studies, as obtained in the Bachelor in Art Studies, is necessary.

Final competences
1. Advanced knowledge and comprehension of in the recent developments in the
contemporary performing arts theories.
2. Advanced knowledge and comprehension of current discussions regarding the
documentary form within the field of theatre, performance, film and visual arts
studies.
3. Formulating individual research questions and issues concerning the topic of
the research seminar.
4. Selecting and applying the appropriate methodology concerning the individual
research questions and issues addressed in context of the research seminar.
5. Exploring a research topic within the field of performance and theatre studies in
collaboration with fellow students as on a individual level.
6. Being able to share the obtained knowledge, ideas and insights of the individual
research in an academic paper.

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into
consideration the conditions mentioned in ‘Starting Competences’

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods
Excursion, seminar, self-reliant study activities

Extra information on the teaching methods
A limited number of lectures to introduce the research themes.
Work seminars: guided discussions based on reading assignments and reports of these
reading assignments.
Personal work: personal research leading to a paper.
Excursions: museum visits and/or meetings with artists and/or attending a symposium
and/or seeing performances.

Learning materials and price
Syllabus and reader with publication in different languages.
Personal notes.
Handouts of presentation of lectures (via Minerva).
Additional reading material and case studies (via Minerva).
Estimated maximum price: 50 euro.

References
Germany’. *TDR/The Drama Review*, 50(3), 16-28

Course content-related study coaching
Interactive support via Minerva. Personal meetings after appointment via e-mail.

Evaluation methods
end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period
Oral examination, assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period
Oral examination, assignment

(Approved)
Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
   Participation, report
Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation
   Examination during the second examination period is not possible
Extra information on the examination methods
   - Non-periodical bound evaluation (25%): Active participation during the seminar
   - Periodical bound evaluation (75%): Paper (50%) + Oral Exam (25%)
Calculation of the examination mark
   Periodical evaluation: 75 %.
   Non-periodical evaluation: 25 %.
Facilities for Working Students
   1. Possible exemption from certain educational activities requiring student attendance
   2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
   3. Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during office hours
For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy