

DAVID V. MASON

Theatre Department

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office hours: MW, 12:30PM - 2:00PM

THEATRE IN INDIA

THEA 360; TR 12:30-1:45, Fall 2009

This course is an introduction to forms of theatrical performance in India, particularly those which exist as religious or devotional practices. The course examines archaic forms of performance suggested in old liturgical and epic literature, Classical Sanskrit theory and drama, and the several living forms of *traditional* theatre which developed during the last few centuries, such as *kathakali*, *raslila*, *ccbau*, and *kutiyattam*. The course will also consider some contemporary political and artistic theatre in India, some Bollywood film, as well as recent intercultural performance fads having to do with India. Because the course is designed for students in various disciplines, it assumes no significant prior knowledge either of South Asian culture or of performance theory. Instead, the course hopes to integrate both areas to the benefit of students approaching the course from either direction.

With this in mind, the course will spend significant time in a study of the literary and religious traditions in India on which contemporary dramatic performance in India depends. An introduction to this material will be essential to the analysis of contemporary performance traditions later in the semester.

Because my own experience lies in northern India, the content of the course is weighted in this direction. There may also be an undue concentration on *Ras Lila* and religious theatre for the same reason.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Bhagavad Gita.

Several translations in Barret—Oxford Univ. Press Edition is recommended: available as an E-Book

Eck, Diana. *Darshan*. (\$20, \$10)

Course Reader: <http://www.yavanika.org/classes/india.html>

Books on Reserve in Barret.

Miller, *Theater of Memory* (includes a translation of *Shakuntala*)

Richmond, Farley, Darius Swann, and Phillip Zarrilli. *Indian Theatre: Traditions of Performance*.

P. Lal, *Great Sanskrit Plays*

((Gargi, *Theatre in India* and *Folk Theatre of India*))

initial bibliography. This first bibliography will be due on Sept. 17. It should include simple bibliographical citations for at least 30 sources related to the study of theatre in India. At least twenty of these should be journal articles. No Web sites.

annotated bibliography. The second bibliography is due Oct. 15. This bibliography should include at least ten entries, including at least seven journal articles, selected from your initial bibliography. Each entry should be accompanied by a one-page (at least) annotation indicating your analysis of the content of the source and its relevance to your semester paper topic.

final paper. The semester paper will be due on Dec 8, and is expected to be at least 12 pages. The paper must deal with some *specific* performance tradition in South Asia, and may concern one of the forms specifically addressed in class or some other form of particular interest or relevance. In any case, the paper should reflect not only your understanding of the course material, but the quality and depth of your independent research. You may submit preliminary drafts to me for evaluation prior to Nov. 26.

exams. Currently, the course does not include exams. However, if it seems that the class's investment in the course material is less self-motivated than it should be, midterm and/or final exams will materialize suddenly and with vigor.

GRADES.

Paper: 100

Initial Bibliography: 10

Annotated Bibliography: 40

Class Participation: 50

roughly speaking: 94%=A, 91%=A-, 88%=B+, 82%=B, 80%=B-, 78%=C+, 75%=C, 72%=C-, 65%=D, Below 65%=F

final note on grade: A's are extraordinary grades reserved for extraordinary work. B's are average grades which often go to work that meets the basic expectations of the syllabus.

SCHEDULE

8/27: First class. Introductions and syllabus. Theatrical imagery from Dravidian civilizations.

9/1: Vedic Theatricality; Introduction to *Mababbarata*

Reading: Selections from the *Rg Veda* (Reader); Wolpert, *A New History of India*, pp. 24-36 (Reader)

9/3: Epic Literature: *Mababbarata*

Reading: "The Dicing", pp. 106-169 (Reader)

9/8: Epic Literature: *Mababbarata (BhGita)*

Reading: *Bhagavad Gita*

9/10: Epic Literature: *Ramayana*

Reading: *Ramayana*, pp. 79-113, 141-160, 169-171; Richman, from *Many Ramayanas*, ch. 1 (Reader)

9/15: Sanskrit Drama: *Natyashastra*

Reading: NS "Books 1 and 36", "Book 6", and "Selections" (Reader); *Indian Theatre*, pp. 33-85

9/17: Sanskrit Drama: *Shakuntala*

Reading: *Shakuntala* (on reserve in Barret and also various copies on the shelves)

DUE: Initial Bibliography

9/22: Sanskrit Drama: More NS/*Shakuntala*

Reading: Deutsch, "Reflections on Some Aspects of the Theory of *Rasa*" (Reader); Gerow, "Sanskrit Dramatic Theory and Kalidasa's Plays" (Reader)

9/24: Sanskrit Drama, pt. 4

Reading: *Urubhangam*; Gerow, "Bhâsa's Ūrubhanga and Indian Poetics" (Reader)

9/29: Sri Vaishnavism (*Bhakti*)

Reading: Murthy, "Bhakti in Life and Literature" (Reader); Eck, *Darshan*.

10/1: Krishna Bhakti

Reading: *Bhagavata Purana* (Reader); Mohammed, "Jesus and Krishna" (Reader)

10/6: *Ras Lila*

Reading: Case, *Seeing Krishna*, 111-150 (Reader)

10/8: *Ras Lila* Video

Reading: Hawley, *The Theft of the Flute* (Reader)

10/13: *Ram Lila*

Reading: Chandola, *Ramayana Performance* (Reader); Hein, "The Ram Lila" (Reader)

10/15: *Kutiyattam*

Reading: *Indian Theatre*, pp. 87-117

DUE: Annotated Bibliography

10/20: **FALL RECESS**

10/22: NO CLASS

10/27: *Kathakali*

Reading: *Indian Theatre*, pp. 315-357

10/29: *Kathakali at Rhodes* (Video)

11/3: *Cbbau, Ankiya Nat*

Reading: *Indian Theatre*, pp. 359-383

11/5: Parsi Theatre, *Nautanki*, and *Bhavai*

Reading: *Indian Theatre*, pp. 249-274

11/10: Bollywood, pt. 1

Reading: Nayar, "The Values of Fantasy" (Reader); Mooij, "The New Bollywood" (Reader)

11/12: NO CLASS

11/17: Bollywood, pt. 2

Screening: *Sri 420, Sholay**, *Dilwale*, *Maqbool*, *Water*, *Black*, etc.

Evening Screening (6PM?): *Salaam-i-Ishq* (entire film)

11/19: Theatre of Independence

Reading: Richmond, "The Political Role of Theatre in India" (Reader); Mitra, *Nil Darpana* (Reader)

11/24: Modern (Western) Theatre (Communism/IPTA)

Reading: Tendulkar, *Silence, the Court Is in Session!*;

11/26: THANKSGIVING BREAK

12/1: Modern (Western) Theatre: Directors and Playwrights (Tanvir, Alkazi, Dutt)

Reading: Panikkar, *Aramba Chekkan*; Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain*. (Reader); Dattani, *Tara* (Reader)

12/3: India in Intercultural Theatre: Brook's *Mahabharata*

Reading: Hildebeitel, Banu, Chaitanya, Shevstova, Cody, Henderson, Miller, Williams, Loney, Cott (Reader)

12/8: More Interculturalism

Reading: Awasthi, "The Intercultural Experience and the Kathakali 'King Lear'" (Reader); Zarrilli, "For Whom Is the King a King?" (Reader)

DUE: FINAL PAPER