Theatre on the Margins: Race, Gender and Empire

3 creds.,
1st semester

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Aims and Objectives

This course uses Postcolonial Theory to trace the history of performing arts in English language in the context of the 20th and 21st centuries. It includes theoretical and practical background notes on the significance of postcolonial cultures and identities in the current transnational scenario through their practices of performing arts (theatre, dance, performance, and new creative platforms/events/languages). It surveys the intrinsic and changing creative languages of specific communities and geopolitical areas to latter study the common and specific elements of postcolonial cultures through the transnational experiences of migrations and the diversity of creative/performing platforms. The module enhances an interdisciplinary understanding of Postcolonial Studies and Cultural Studies through theoretical elements that investigate the affective creativity and reception of artistic expressions of cultures. The final aim is to investigate the roles of theatre in the (un)making of tokenistic portrayals of ethnicities, gender and ever-present empires.

Course Program

1. Introduction to Theatre and Performing Arts: Theoretical instruments and terms to scrutinise contemporary postcolonial nations using English language (including *Natyasastra*, Black Theatre Movement and other performing practices)
2. Affect Theory and Performing Arts: Analytical tools to understand cultural movements and their performing arts (focusing on transnational particularities of postcolonial and diasporic cultures in English language and its performative productions)
3. New creative languages in contemporary productions (new postcolonial formats of performative creativity and performance)

Methodology

Class meetings will consist of lectures, group discussions, and oral presentations. The course will place a strong emphasis on oral discussions. Students are expected to present their own interpretations of dramatic texts. There will be opportunities for participants to share their ideas and experiences as well as implement tasks that focus on the student's own creative solutions for specific adaptations, re-writings and understanding of artistic productions.

The study of this module is keyed to the following dimensions in which any expression of performing arts must exist:

1. Historical: studying the historical realities of postcolonial national identities from different geopolitical areas . The aim is to study how empires are made, destroyed, challenged or remade throughout cultural productions or political and economic institutions.
2. Cultural: highlighting the role that performing arts play in postcolonial nations and the syncretism with old and indigenous creative languages. The objective is to study the manners performing arts engage with audience or aim to question how socio-political structures that give prominence for ethnical and gender conditions.
3. Literary-Stylistic,:pointing at how performing arts forms, themes or linguistic devices articulate postcolonial theatres. The purpose is to display the role and impact of the performing arts in postcolonial nations

Assessment

A selection of texts and performances will be specified at the beginning of the course for class discussion on given dates. Students are required to read each assigned text before class and come prepared to discuss it. In addition, each student will have to prepare an oral presentation.

Assessment on this course is based on class work, participation to discussions, oral presentations, and written qualifying assignments.

The percentages of assessment include the following activities:

a) Weekly assignments and tasks - 50% (40% oral presentation, 10% conflict-solving)
b) Final assignments (CFPs)- 40%
c) Participation in class - 10%

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Bibliography and Resources

Ahmed, Sara. *Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
Barrios, Olga, *The Black Theatre Movement in the United States and in South Africa*. Valencia: Universitat de València Publicacions, 2008.
Bharat Muni. *Natyashastra*. Calcutta: Theosophical Society, 1973.
Bial, Henry. *The Performance Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversión of Identiy.* Routledge, 1990.
Dolan, Jill. *The Feminist Spectator as Critic.* Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan Press, 1998.
Gainor, J. Ellen, ed. *Imperialism and Theatre: Essays on World Theatre, Drama and Performance*. London and New York. Routledge, 1995.
Hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: Margin to Center*. South End Press, 1984.

Schedule

The course meets once or twice a week, in the stipulated room on the MA's schedule. We will have 6 two-hour sessions, to be distributed in the first teaching period (first semester).