COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Offers students an introduction to the devising of original theatre in a collaborative setting. Through classroom exercises and the creation, rehearsal and presentation of devised and interpreted performance projects, the participants will explore the essential questions and investigative tools of the theatre practitioner. Practical studio course. Prerequisites: FA/THEA 1010 3.0, FA/THEA 1100 3.0, and FA/THEA 1200 6.0, and/or permission of the Theatre Department. Open to Theatre majors only.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
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<td>Levin, Laura</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / F</td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

YORK UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, MEDIA, PERFORMANCE AND DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE COURSE OUTLINE

THEA 2050: Introduction to Devised Theatre Fall 2017

Course Calendar Description:

Offers students an introduction to the devising of original theatre in a collaborative setting. Through classroom exercises and the creation, rehearsal and presentation of devised and interpreted performance projects, the participants will explore the essential questions and investigative tools of the theatre practitioner. Practical studio course. Prerequisites: FA/THEA 1010 3.0, FA/THEA 1100 3.0, and FA/THEA 1200 6.0, and/or permission of the Theatre Department. Open to Theatre majors only.

Time and Location:

STDO (lab) W 11:30 am-2:30 pm ACE 207/ACE 209 STDO (lecture) F 11:30 am-2:30 pm CFA 207/ACE 209
**Instructor/Format/Term/Contact Info:**

Laura Levin  
317 Centre for Film and Theatre levin@yorku.ca  
Office hours: Friday 2:30-3:30

**Teaching Assistant:** Sean Robertson-Palmer srptittus@gmail.com

**Special Features**

**Expanded Course Description**

THEA 2050 3.0 Introduction to Devised Theatre I offers students an introduction to the devising of original theatre in a collaborative setting. Through classroom exercises and the creation, rehearsal, and presentation of devised and interpreted performance projects, the participants will explore the essential questions and investigative tools of the theatre practitioner. Collaboration, commitment, curiosity, and effective communication are the foundations of this rigorous curriculum. The course also introduces key genres and histories of devised and experimental theatre, and students engage in critical discussions of the aesthetics and ethics of these forms.

**Organization of the course:**

The course is structured around several devising modules, each focusing on a different tradition of devised theatre. The module will begin with readings, a lecture, and discussion of this tradition. It will be followed by a devising project in which students will compose a performance piece in that particular medium. Classroom instruction, supervised rehearsal, and scheduled showings will primarily take place on Fridays (lecture days). Here, students will develop performance techniques, investigate compositional aspects of their projects, receive feedback on generating, sequencing, and performing devised material. A mandatory rehearsal lab is scheduled for Wednesday each week to provide students with a structured time and space to plan, rehearse, and devise. (Students will not normally receive formal instruction on Wednesdays.) Full participation in classes and rehearsals is an integral component of this course. Although we have scheduled a lab to assist with the playmaking projects, the devising assignments will require several hours of rehearsal outside of lecture and lab times. By signing up for the class, students are agreeing to regularly schedule and be present at all of these outside rehearsals.

**Important information for students admitted to the Devised Theatre Sequence:**

Maintaining your status: Admission into each subsequent Devised Theatre class is on the basis of a ‘B’ grade standing in the pre-requisite class. Any student who leaves the DT series of courses, for whatever reason, even if in good academic standing, is not guaranteed a spot in subsequent terms, and will be expected to re-audition to re-enter.

Original coursework: Class work in all Devised Theatre courses must be distinct and separate from THEA 3290 6.0 Playwriting and New Play Dramaturgy I, THEA 4290 6.0 Playwriting and New Play Dramaturgy II, and playGround presentations.
Other courses in second year: Students are required to take THEA 2200 6.0 Theatrical Worlds in Transition and THEA 2210 3.0 Ideas of Theatre. Highly recommended courses include THEA 2410 6.0 History of Visual Sources and THEA 2141 3.0 Introduction to Design for Theatre. It is also strongly recommended that students in Devised Theatre take courses that fulfill their in-out requirements in 2nd year. In particular, students should consider taking non-theatre courses that will enhance their understanding of performance creation (see course listings in other departments in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance, and Design).

This sequence also requires immersion in the history and theory of devising, and this grounding is provided through readings and assignments on collaborative playmaking and contemporary experimental theatre. Students in the DT sequence are strongly advised to take specified courses in theatre production and design, as well as theatre history and theory courses in order to gain the interdisciplinary knowledge that is essential for devised theatre makers. AMPD and non-AMPD courses are required for degree completion and will enable students to develop breadth and interdisciplinary skills. Working within the requirements of the Specialized Honours BA degree, students are free to pursue a particular focus in third year or continue to learn about all areas of theatre. Students may apply to assistant direct an unmounted department production in third year: THEA 3070 3.0 Performance Practicum I for the fall term or THEA 3071 3.0 Performance Practicum II for the winter term. Applications will be made available to prospective third year students at the end of the winter term.

### Topics and Concepts

**Course Text / Readings:**

1. Course Kit (abbreviated CK in schedule) – available for purchase in class, or at Northview Print & Copy, 2700 Steeles Ave West, Unit 1; Tel 905-738-5353

Additional readings may be assigned during the course.

**Schedule: Fall Semester**

**Students are expected to be present on all Wednesdays for rehearsal lab from 11:30am-2:30pm unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.**

**Unit 1: The Art of Devising**

Fri. Sept. 8    Introduction to the Course, Improv and Ensemble Building

Fri. Sept. 15   Improv and Ensemble Building, What is Devised Theatre?

Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, “Introduction” (CK)

*DT Rodeo takes place this weekend on Sat. Sept. 16*

Fri. Sept. 22   Making Form and Content Friends / Thinking Compositionally
**Reading:** Anne Bogart, “Content” (CK)
Junction Avenue Theatre Company, *Tooth and Nail* (CK)

Fri. Sept. 29   Thinking Compositionally / Communicating as an Ensemble Tooth and Nail composition presentations

**Unit 2: Deconstructing Texts**

Wed. Oct. 4   Physical Theatre (Lecture-Demo) *note: lecture on Wednesday this week*

**Reading:** Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, “Contemporary Devising and Physical Performance” (CK)

Physical Theatre (Performance Techniques, Supervised Project Rehearsals) Fri. Oct. 20
Physical Theatre (First pass, Critiques)

*See Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools* at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre (Oct. 24/25); this production will be discussed in class

Fri. Oct. 27   **Fall Reading Days**

Fri. Nov. 3   Physical Theatre (Second pass) ** Note that final performance is on Wednesday, and you are expected to rehearse in lab on the previous Wednesday (Oct. 26)

Fri. Nov. 10  Intermedial Theatre (Lecture-Demo)

**Reading:** Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, “Contemporary Devising and Postmodern Performance” (CK)

*Due: Reflection Paper and Rehearsal Log*

Fri. Nov. 17  Intermedial Collage (Performance Techniques, Supervised Project Rehearsals) Fri. Nov. 24
Intermedial Collage (First Pass, Critiques)
Fri. Dec. 1   Intermedial Collage (Second Pass, Critiques)

*Due: Response Paper and Rehearsal Log*

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The specific objectives of the course are that the students will be able to:
- identify and critically engage with major traditions of devised/experimental theatre
- articulate the artistic and sociopolitical goals of their devising work
- apply basic techniques of devising theatre to creating their original pieces
- apply improvisation techniques to enhance communication and spontaneity
- enhance their conceptual and performance skills in their assigned theatre projects
- gain a deeper understanding of “process” and its centrality to devised theatre
- develop confidence in their communication and collaboration skills in a group setting
- develop their ability to offer and receive effective critical feedback about their own work and that of their classmates

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**
Evaluation:

1. Class Participation 30%
   - interest, commitment, effort; risk-taking, initiative; collaboration, cooperation, respect; engagement with course readings and contribution to class discussions; Tooth & Nail compositions, application of devising fundamentals in class exercises; growth

1. Devising Projects
   - Physical Theatre Project 35%
   - Intermedial Collage Project 35%

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Attendance Policy:

Students are reminded that Department of Theatre rules require attendance at all classes. There is no differentiation between excused and unexcused absences - an absence is an absence and will affect your chances of success in this course. All classes and outside rehearsals with classmates and are mandatory. Failure to attend all classes and outside rehearsals will result in either academic penalty or a request that the student withdraw from the class.

Any student who is absent without prior arrangement with the instructor may have 2% deducted from the final grade for each absence. (Two late arrivals is the equivalent of one absence.) Three absences (excused or not) will result in course failure. If a student is going to be considerably late or miss a class for any reason, the student must contact the course director prior to the beginning of that class. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused late or absence.

Part-time jobs or outside employment in theatre-related endeavors do not count as excused absences. The only exception is crew call for a matinee performance of a department production, and the instructor must be informed well in advance about the conflict.

Class Presentations: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Absences have a profound effect on scene partners and group members. Accordingly, class presentations for this course must be performed on the due dates specified for the assignment, as indicated in the class schedule.

Missed Class Presentation Penalty: Missed class presentations on the due date will be penalized with a grade of zero for the absent student. Exceptions to the missed class presentation penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be considered but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). The instructor will attempt to reschedule the missed class presentation to facilitate group members affected by an excused absence. Due to the collaborative nature of this studio course, make-up assignments will not be scheduled.
**Assignment Submission**: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments must be handed in during class time. Email attachments will not be accepted. Late assignments should be date stamped by a department staff or faculty member and handed in to the drop-box marked Levin on the 3rd floor of CFT.

**Late Assignment Penalty**: Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 3% per day (including weekends), unless you have arranged for an extension. **Assignments that are more than one week late will not be accepted unless special permission has been granted.** If you anticipate having difficulty completing an assignment on time, please contact the course instructor for an extension (although don’t expect to receive one if you e-mail them the night before an assignment is due). Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter).

**Dress Requirement**: Comfortable clothes and shoes – come to class in clothing and shoes in which you can move freely.

**Medical Emergency**: In case of medical emergency, call Department of Security Services at 416-736-5333 or extension 33333.

**Studio Booking Policy**: The studio booking considerations of a department as large as ours with classes for majors and non-majors, mounted and unmounted productions in rehearsal, and the needs of your colleagues in second, third, fourth year, and the two graduate programs place a considerable demand on the availability of studios for rehearsals outside of class time. The unfortunate fact is that the rehearsal demands of all theatre students cannot always be accommodated. As challenging as it is to find nooks and crannies to rehearse your assignments, it is a peculiar rite of passage that exists not only at our university, but also in theatre programs across the country. Thank you for your understanding and for creative search for rehearsal spaces. We have booked lab time for you to assist you with your rehearsal process. **Please use this lab time wisely.**

Helpful hints:
Adopt professional standards by agreeing on a rehearsal schedule in advance with group members and by appointing one group member to do the arranging of the space with the class’s Studio Booking Liaison. All studios must be neutralized before leaving the space, with all door flats, rehearsal blocks, chairs, and tables moved to the sides of the room. All garbage must be removed. Please ensure that the floors and walls are clean. Students and faculty are not allowed to rehearse past 10:00 p.m. without special permission from the Production Manager.

**Attending Theatre Production**: Students will be expected to attend one performance outside of class time, and are responsible for covering the cost of the ticket. The instructor will arrange tickets at a group rate for the students.

**Challenging Material**: One of the central educational goals of the Theatre Department is to produce socially conscious artists — artists who are aware and capable of participating in challenging dialogues about social injustice and inequality. This means that our courses, public events, and productions often grapple with difficult subject matter, including sex, violence, terror, and illness (among other topics). While these presentations will no doubt provoke strong emotions and cause discomfort, we feel that the diverse experiences they bring about are also essential to the development of our students’ critical faculties, empathy, and understanding of the world. Rather than warning our students in advance about every potentially uncomfortable topic that they might encounter in the course of their studies, we instead encourage students to meet them head on in the
classroom, in rehearsals, and performances, and to engage in civil and compassionate debate about the possibilities and effects of staging difficult knowledge.

**Course Drop Deadlines:**

Last date to drop a fall term (F) course without receiving a grade: **November 10, 2017**
Last date to drop a winter term (W) course without receiving a grade: **March 9, 2018**
Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade: **February 9, 2018**

**Academic Policies / Information:**

The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:

- Access/Disability
- Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
- Religious Observance Accommodation
- Student Code of Conduct

See: [http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf](http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf)

**York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure:**

York's Senate Academic Honesty Policy affirms and clarifies the general obligation for all members of the University to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. In particular, the policy:

- Recognizes the general responsibility of all faculty members to foster acceptable standards of academic conduct and of students to be mindful of and abide by such standards;
- Defines the types of conduct that are regarded as offences against the standards of academic honesty, including plagiarism, cheating, impersonation, and other forms of academic misconduct;
- Defines the penalties that can be imposed on a student who is found to have committed plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct;
- Outlines the procedures for dealing with students who are accused of violating the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty.

**Note:** A lack of familiarity with the Senate Policy cannot be used as a defence by those accused of academic misconduct.

Range of Penalties for Plagiarism: When verified, violations of academic honesty may lead to the following penalties – imposed singly or in combination depending on the severity of the offence: Written disciplinary warning or reprimand; Required completion of an academic honesty assignment; Make-up assignment, examination or rewriting a work, subject to a lowered grade; Lower grade on the assignment, examination or work; Lower grade in the course; Failure in the course; Permanent grade of record; Notation on transcript; Suspension from the University; Expulsion from the University; Withholding or rescinding a York degree, diploma or certificate.

If the offence is a second or subsequent one for the student, or is in combination with another offence, the Senate Policy recommends consideration of a severe penalty. For further information on the penalties for academic misconduct, please see York's Policy on Academic Honesty and Academic Integrity Web site.

**Additional information:**

- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling
- Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy: The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final
withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

- Important University Sessional Dates (you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, and more.
  http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm
- Manage my Academic Record
- “20% Rule”: No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms.
- Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University