

NYU Paris

Experimental theater workshop

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- FREN-UA 9807

Experimental theater workshop

Conducted in English.

This course allows students to discover **Eugene Ionesco** (1909 – 1994), a Romanian-French playwright who wrote mostly in French, and one of the foremost figures of the French Avant-garde theatre. Beyond ridiculing the most banal situations, Ionesco's plays depict the solitude and insignificance of human existence in a tangible way.

He is a leading figure in the theater of Absurd, a drama form that pushes theater to extremes, and which asks probing questions about what reality (and unreality) really looks like.

A style of theatre that refuses realism, characters and plot, where time itself is rendered absurd.

- Students interested in theater.
- Monday 4 pm – 6 pm
- Auditorium

Course Overview and Goals

-Through a study of Eugene Ionesco plays and their contexts, to gain an appreciation of a style of theatre that would prove - so wrote Esslin in 1961 - “to provide a new language, new ideas, new points of view and an entirely new and invigorated philosophy, that would transform the modes of thought and sentiments of the wider public.”

- understand the meaning of “the absurd” of Ionesco through performance and analysis.

- inhabit a style of theatre where the backdrop of the action is often satire of the bourgeoisie, of its rigid language and its small worldview.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Students will study and perform excerpts from selected works with a focus on the absurdity of situations, de-structuring language, and corporal expression. The approach of the course is intellectual, creative and physical.

Assignment 1

Active participation to discussions in class, and active, creative contribution to final performance (rehearsals with partners outside the class).

Conferences and performances in the theater de la Huchette (dates to be confirmed)

Assignment 2

Montage and memorization of excerpts acted out from plays studied to be performed at end of semester.

Tests & Quizzes

Reviews of a plays by Ionesco to be seen in the theater La Huchette

Assigned Readings

- The Bald Prima Donna
- The Lesson
- Jack or the Submission

(Ionesco's earliest theatrical works, considered to be his most innovative, were one-act plays or extended sketches: *La Cantatrice chauve* translated as *The Bald Soprano* or *The Bald Prima Donna* (1948), *Jacques ou la soumission* translated as *Jack, or The Submission* (1950), *La Leçon* translated as *The Lesson* (1950)) . All three performed for the first time in the theatre de la Huchette.)

- Exit the King (1957)

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Active participation	30%
Scenes acted out and memorized	40%
Written exercises	10%
Montage and final presentation	20%

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points	Description
A	16-20	Outstanding
A-	15	Excellent
B+	14	Very Good
B	13	Good

Letter Grade	Points	Description
B-	12	Satisfactory
C+	11	Above Average
C	10	Average
C-	9	Below Average
D+	8	Unsatisfactory
D	7	Low Pass
D-	6	Low Pass
F	5	Fail

Course Schedule (The schedule of readings might be modified according to the schedule of the performances to be seen at the theatre de la Huchette)

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
02/03	General presentation/ Absurd theatre characterized by its complete rupture from classical genres such as drama or comedy.	Notes and counter-notes by Eugene Ionesco. Excerpts of plays	
02/10	Scenes acted out	The Bald Prima Donna	
02/17	Analyze of the speaking in cliché.		Scenes worked to be acted out

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
	Scenes acted out/ Satire of the bourgeoisie		
02/21 (Make up date)	The language: how it gains a certain phonetic, rhythmical, musical quality, opening up a wide range of comedic playfulness. Scenes acted out	The Lesson	Scenes worked to be acted out
02/ 24	Focus on human beings trapped in an in comprehensible world subject to any occurrence, no matter how illogical.	Jack or the submission	Written work on a Performance to be seen in theater/ and Scenes worked to be acted out
03/02	Absence,emptiness, nothingness, and unresolved mysteries of life/	Exit the King	Scenes worked to be acted out
03/ 09	Discussions about the theater de la Huchette (performances and visits)/ scenes acted out	View links for Exit the King: Preview Exit the King https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI66pyXs2io Theater Talk about Exit the King with Geoffrey Rush https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhQ0LowDkc0 Review in London at the National theater https://oneminutetheatreviews.co.uk/tag/national-theatre/	Written work on a Performance to be seen /Scenes worked to be acted out
03/16	Selected scenes by students discussed and acted out.		Students prepare a written montage of the excerpts

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
			they want to perform
03/23	Discussions on the way to direct the scenes. Scenes acted out and memorized.		Memorization and rehearsal
03/30	Scenes acted out/ Characters appear as automatons stuck in routines		Memorization and rehearsal
04/20	Scenes acted out. Silence in the scenes.		Memorization and rehearsal
04/27	Scenes acted out		Memorization and rehearsal
05/04	Scenes acted out		Memorization and rehearsal
05/11 and Public presentation on the 15th of may/ Rehearsal in the morning 05/18	General rehearsal Discussions about the performance		All lines memorized for the final presentation

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

Plays will have to be bought at Eyrolles by the students

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](http://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](http://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)

- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](http://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](http://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

- Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.
- Unexcused absences affect students' grades: unexcused absences will be penalized with a 2% deduction from the students' final course grade.
- Absences are excused only for illness, religious observance, and emergencies.

Illness: For a single absence, students may be required to provide a doctor's note, at the discretion of the Associate Director of Academics. In the case of two consecutive absences, students must provide a doctor's note. Exams, quizzes, and presentations will not be made up without a doctor's note.

Religious Observance: Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Academic Office in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If exams, quizzes, and presentations are scheduled on a holiday a student will observe, the Associate Director, in coordination with the instructor, will reschedule them.

Please note: if you are unable to attend class, you are required to email your professors directly to notify them.

Late Assignment

Late submission or work will be accepted only with justifiable reasons of health or family emergency.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

Plagiarism: *presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one's own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:*

- *a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks*

- *an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work*
- *the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one's own*
- *submitting evaluations of group members' work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member*
- *altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.*

For further information, students are encouraged to check www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio

Cécile Cotté +33 6 13 63 85 / cecilecotte72@gmail.com / site : cecilecotte.fr

Education

Theatre studies at the University of Censier in Paris. Student of Daniel Mesguich (director of the National Conservatory of Drama) Graduate student of the International Theater School Jacques Lecoq

Playwright

L'eau est un corps qui brûle, play published by Editions Comp'Act.

Le Piéton, play. Staged readings : Temps des Livres, quinzaine des auteurs in Montluçon, Petit Odéon (National Theater), National Center of Contemporary Plays - Avignon - Chartreuse (Contemporaines 2000).

L'homme en coulisses, play. (2002) Staged reading at l'Atelier du Plateau (Paris).

Fossoyeurs, play. (2004) Staged readings : directed by the author and produced by the Beaumarchais Foundation at the Maison des Auteurs in Paris, directed by Philippe Minyana at the Dijon Festival Frictions (2004).

Fossoyeurs is also a radio play broadcast on France Culture in 2006.

Guest author at the Theatre Library of Saint-Herblain (2002).

Guest author at the Dijon Festival Frictions (2003).

Screenplay adapted from *La cicatrice* de Bruce Lowery. Lambart Production.

Director

1994 - 1995 Plays by Koltès, Botho Strauss, Copi, at the University René Descartes in Malakoff. Theatre 71.

1997 *Happy end* by Kossi Efoui .Théâtre Paris Villette for the Maison du Geste et de l' Image in Paris

1999 Founded the *io* Compagny

1999 - 2000 *Les Litanies Romantiques* by Honoré de Balzac. Salle des mariages de la mairie du XVI^{ème} arr. in Paris.

1999 - 2000 *Théorie de la démarche* by Honoré de Balzac. Museum Boucher-de-Perthes in Abbeville, Landowski Center in Boulogne-Billancourt.

2000 - 2001 *Corps et voix, paroles rhizomes* by Koulsy Lamko. Kigali, Butare (Rwanda), Francophonies Festival in Limoges, Hambourg Festival, The "Nord -Theater " in Lille, the Wallonie-Bruxelles Center in Paris.

2004 – 2012 *Poésies en jeux* conceived and performed by Cécile Cotté. Theater Firmin Gémier in Antony and on tour in France.

2006-2007 *Purgatoire*, adaptation of Samuel Beckett's work conceived by Cécile Cotté . New York University in Paris (Beckett Festival) and Maison Française in New York.

2007-2008 *Simone de Beauvoir*, adaptation of Simone de Beauvoir' s work conceive by Cécile Cotté . American Embassy in Paris and Maison Française in New York.

2008-2009 *Requiem pour Ionesco*, adaptation of Eugène Ionesco's work conceived by Cécile Cotté. American Embassy in Paris and Maison Française in New York.

2009-2010 *Parade Funèbre*, adaptation of Jean Genet's work, conceived by Cécile Cotté. Cité Universitaire in Paris and Wasserman Center in New York.

2010-2011 *L'œil qui voit*, Cubist-dada cabaret conceived by Cécile Cotté. Cité Universitaire in Paris and Kimmel Center in New York.

2011-2012 *Haïti, un tableau vivant (montage of texts by several different Haïtian writers)* conceived by Cécile Cotté. Cité Universitaire in Paris.

2012-2013 *Les dix mots préférés d'Albert Camus (The ten favorite words of Albert Camus)* conceived by Cécile Cotté. Cité Universitaire (Résidence Lucien Paye) in Paris.

2013-2014 *Bestiola* adaptation of Jean-Henri Fabre works conceived by Cécile Cotté. La Madelène/ Vaucluse in France and on tour.

2015-2017 *Bamako-Paris* by Ian Soliane. Théâtre du Rond Point in Paris, Festival Terres de Paroles in Rouen.

2018-2019 *Bamako-Paris* produced in l'Anis Gras , and at the Théâtre de Chelles

2019 *Histoire d'une mouette et du chat qui lui apprend à voler* by Luis Sepulveda directed by Cotté at the Theatre de la Huchette

Workshop Director

1995 Commissioned by the " Action Française d' Action Artistique " in Singapour, directed with Philippe Minyana.

1995 - 1998 Taught theatre workshops in public schools (Maison du Geste et de l'Image in Paris).

1998 Taught Directing Workshops for teachers. Play: *La tête sous l'aisselle* by Koulsy Lamko.

1998 - 2004 Conducted writing workshops sponsored by the " Maison des Ecrivains "and Vieux Pont College in Boulogne-Billancourt./ Writing workshops at the Atelier du Plateau (Paris).

2000 Taught theatre workshops at the University of Arts of Butare (Rwanda National University).

2000 -2002 Taught theatre workshops at the Descartes University in Malakoff (in collaboration with the Theater 71 and in the Pierre de Nohac college in Versailles (sponsored by the Guimet Museum).

2006 Taught theatre workshop in Vienna (Austria) and in Malta (EDERED/ International theater meeting for children and teenagers)

2002 - 2017 Taught workshops at New York University of Paris

2010-2017 Taught workshops for Goucher College (Baltimore)

Actress

THEATER

Contretemps written and directed by Judith Gershman. TEP, American center, tour in Poland.

Del tango written and directed by Carlos Wittig. ATEM (Georges Aperghis 's direction).

Top girls by Caryl Churchill. Directed by Isabelle Famchon. Theater La Bruyère in Paris.

Images de Mussolini en hiver by Armando Llamas. Directed by Stéphanie Loik. Théâtre Ouvert.

Fin d'été à Baccarat by Philippe Minyana. Directed by Carlos Wittig. Athénée Theater in Paris.

L'homme aux farfadets by B.de Terre Neuve du Thym. Directed by F. Réverrend. Les Bouffes du Nord in Paris.

Travelling Bordeaux, Musical directed by Carlos Wittig. Théâtre 14 in Paris.

La Princesse juive written and directed by Armando Llamas. Alès Festival.

Confusion written and directed by Pierre Byland. On tour in Germany.

Les lettres de la vie written and directed by Judith Gershman. Theater 14 in Paris.

Cyrano de Bergerac by E. Rostand. Directed by Robert Hossein, with the participation of J-P Belmondo for the main part. Marigny Theater in Paris.

Théâtre en chantier Directed by Philippe Minyana. Théâtre Ouvert.

Si vous êtes des hommes by Serge Valletti. Directed by Michel Cerda. Théâtre Ouvert.

J'étais dans ma maison et j'attendais que la pluie vienne by Jean-Luc Lagarce. Directed by Robert Cantarella. Théâtre Ouvert.

Le chant du héron cendré by Vincent Woods. Staged reading directed by L. Marchal. Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris

Le Puits by Jean-Luc Raharimanana, directed by Cécile Cotté, on tour in France.

Poésies en jeux directed by Cécile Cotté, on tour in France.

Bestiola directed by Cécile Cotté, on tour in France

CINEMA / TELEVISION

The daily life of the Lukwangos. Directed by John-Paul Davidson. BBC.

Le beau Robert. Directed by Hans Jurgen Tôgel. German series. Sudwestfunk.

Tous en selle. Directed by Christine Kabish. German series. Sudwestfunk.

Les routiers. Directed by Walter Bannert. German series. Bavaria.

The french. Directed by Celia Lowenstein. BBC.

Barracuda. Directed by Philippe Haïm. French movie.

Elle avait... Directed by Nicole Roux. Short film. France.

RADIO

Acted in many radio plays: directed by J. Taroni, M. Sidoroff, J-M Zahnd, G. Peyrou, G. Gravier...

Since 1995, performs poetry readings for the the France Culture program *Poésie sur parole* directed by J-B Para and A. Velter.

Professor

Cécile Cotté is professor at New York University in France since 2002, (Acting French and Experimental french theater workshop) .She has created plays with the students which have been performed in Paris (Cité Universitaire, United States Embassy, Théâtre Adyar) and in New York (Maison Française, Wasserman Center, Kimmel Center). She has also been a professor at the École supérieure des sciences économiques et commerciales (ESSEC) since 2009, giving a course called *Behaving in Public, A training* and in Stanford University in Paris in 2014 and 2015.