

Introduction to Theatre Studies (A005487)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)

Dutch

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Nellis, Steff

LW17

staff member

Van Oostveldt, Bram

LW17

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

[Bachelor of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies](#)

crdts

5

offering

A

[Micro-credential Art in Context](#)

5

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies](#)

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Theatre, performance, postdramatic theatre, methodology, performance analysis

Position of the course

Outline of the history and the various methods of theatre and performance studies.

Contents

This course is a detailed introduction to Theatre Studies and Performance studies. It starts with an overview on the history and development of both the continental orientated Theatre Studies and the Anglo-Saxon model of Performance Studies. The student will be introduced to the basics of Theatre Studies and to the its conceptual apparatuses. Here, the aim is to explore exactly what a staging is and what the possible concepts are for filling in this concept. Attention is also paid to the relationship between theatre and text: What exactly is a drama? What are the historical conditions and structural characteristics of drama and how does drama evolved into a post dramatic poetics and esthetics today? During the semester, specific theories and research models within Theatre Studies and Performance Studies will be presented. Because in the first half of the twentieth century Theatre Studies grew out of an interest in theatre history, an important section will be devoted to theatre historiography. Here we examine what theatre historiography can be, what methods can be used for this purpose. Since the second half of the twentieth century, Theatre Studies focus on the phenomenon of the performance itself, especially in relation to the experience of the viewer. With the emergence of Performance Studies in the 1970s, broader social and cultural phenomena were studied alongside the performing arts. These aspects are also discussed extensively, whereby we analyse how we can interpret a theatrical performance: What exactly does it mean to perform and to observe in a radically altered performance practice for which the performing arts in Flanders are renowned throughout the world? According to which frameworks do we analyze a theatrical performance? We will deal with semiotics and its criticism, principles of theatricality and performativity, and gender, queer and postcolonial studies. In this way, both canonical approaches and more recent models of Theatre and Performance Studies are presented. All the aforementioned theoretical models will be used to analyse running productions.

Initial competences

- Successful participation in „Geschiedenis van de podium- en mediale kunsten“, or knowledge of the taught content acquired in another way.
- Knowledge of the theatre landscape of the 20th century, the major figures involved and their manifestos.
- Elementary knowledge of the theatre landscape of the late 19th.

Final competences

- 1 Knowledge about the development and history of theatre and performance studies.
- 2 Knowledge about the research methods of performance analysis.
- 3 Knowledge about the important new approaches introduced by cultural studies since the 1960s, and their meaning for theatre studies.
- 4 The application of theoretical models to performance analysis.
- 5 The ability to critically reflect on the relation between art and science.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lecture with collective reflections on the texts in the reader and on the performances shown in class.

Study material

None

References**Course content-related study coaching**

Prof. Dr. Bram van Oostveldt and Drs. Steff Nellis
Interactive support via Ufora
During office hours: every tuesday from 14h to 16h or by appointment

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions, Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions, Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

Calculation of the examination mark

The written exam counts for 60% and the paper counts for 40%.
The student has to participate in both parts of the "periodegebonden" evaluation (exam & paper) in order to get a final exam result.

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Alternative time for feedback is possible

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy

