

History of Western Theater from Antiquity until 1850 (A005638)

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 2) 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

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies	5	A
Elective Set Art Studies	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Western Theater history; Antiquity to 1850; Cultural History

Position of the course

Introductory course where students get an overview of Western performing arts from a culture historical perspective

Contents

This lecture-course examines the history of theater in the West from the origins of Western theater in Ancient Greece to 1850. It focuses on the history of performance practices in the West. Theater history is understood here as a form of cultural history, treating historical changes in acting, scenography, theater architecture or costuming from their geographic and socio-cultural contexts. Attention is paid not only to text theater (Sophocles, Shakespeare, Vondel, Racine, Goethe, ...), but equally to other genres and theatrical forms such as Roman spectacle culture, tableaux vivants and Joyous Entries in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, opera and court ballet in the seventeenth century, or new visual techniques (panorama and diorama) that will steer the theatrical experience in different directions from the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries onward. An important aspect here is how people thought about the performing arts in a given period: what were the poetic and theoretical views of what theater, dance or opera should be, and how can we interpret the changes in those views? Although the focus here is on Western theater history, it will address critical questions concerning gender, colonialism and the theatrical representation of the other.

Initial competences

Final competences

- 1 Possess advanced knowledge of the history of the performing arts in the West from antiquity to 1850.
- 2 Be able to situate the history of the performing arts within a broader art- and cultural historical perspective.
- 3 Be able to critically examine historical developments within the performing arts.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Lectures and guest lectures in relation to the course topic
- paper

Study material

None

References

Powerpoints and Obligated literature and extra literature is mentioned in the course description.

Course content-related study coaching**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

Extra information on the examination methods

Participation: mandatory presence

Calculation of the examination mark

100% end of term assessment with examen (70%) and paper (30%)