

Modern Polish Drama and Theatre *(for foreigners, readings in English translation)*

Unlike most of western theatre, which is usually realistic, the Polish way of playwriting and Polish performing art are mostly poetic and allegorical. Polish drama of the 20th century has achieved world-wide acclaim and counts among the acknowledged masterpieces of the European canon. The most famous names: Witkiewicz, Gombrowicz and Mrozek, among others, come to mind. Modern theatre of our time counts the names of Grotowski or Kantor to their founders.

The intension of the course is to familiarize students with major trends in Polish drama of the 20th Century. Texts and video-recorded performances of selected plays will be presented and discussed; they will be treated both as a unique phenomenon and as a typical example of some great European aesthetic movements. As the course serves for non-polish speaking students of Polish culture, comparative literature and theatre we will always try to maintain balance between “performance studies” and literary “close reading” to finish with a kind of survey. We start from general cultural context of folk performances and medieval religious theatre only to pass quickly to metaphysical “plays in verses” of Polish Romanticism. Then the most of the time we will spend on analyzing modern avant-garde plays together with their theories and manifestos to see how they are realized in theatre productions.

Required Reading (available in English):

from: Segel, Harold: *Polish Romantic Drama:*

Mickiewicz, Adam: *Forefathers Eve Part III,*

Wyspianski, Stanislaw: *The Wedding*

Witkiewicz, Stanislaw, Ignacy: *Beelzebub Sonata* or other available

Gombrowicz, Witold: *Iwona - Princess of Burgundia*

Gombrowicz, Witold: *The Marriage*

Mrozek, Slavomir: *Tango*

Rozewicz, Tadeusz: *The Card-Index*

Suggested Readings (available in English):

There is no specific text-book for the course. But chapters referring to drama from *The History of Polish Literature* by Czeslaw Milosz are recommended.

Grabowski, Artur: *Polish Theater*, in: *Western Drama Through the Ages*, ed. K. King Segeld, Harold, ed.: *Polish Romantic Drama*, 1997.

Gomori, George: *Cyprian Norwid*, 1974 (chapter 5, “mystery plays”).

Gerould, Daniel, ed.: *The Major Comedies of Aleksander Fredro*, 1969.

Terlecki, Tymon: *Wyspiański*, 1983.

Gerould, Daniel, ed.: *The Witkiewicz Reader*, 1992.

Gerould, Daniel, ed.: *Twentieth-Century Polish Avant-Garde Drama*, 1977.

Thompson, Ewa, ed.: *Witold Gombrowicz*, 1979.

Gerould, Daniel, ed.: *The Mrozek Reader*, 2004.

Filipowicz, Halina, : *The Laboratory of Impure Forms; the plays of T. Rozewicz*, 1991.

Course Requirements & Grading:

1. Attendance & activity, text's reading & self-preparation
2. Final essay (5-7 pages); the subject is the student's choice, it should be an interpretation of a Polish play by the author not discussed in class. The subjective (critical or appreciating) point of view, as well as an independent and creative analyze is expected. Due date: January 12th, 2011.