

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN IN PERFORMANCE / SUSTAINABLE STAGING TECHNIQUES

COURSE:

GS/THEA/THST 5111 3.00 - Sustainable Design in Performance

FA/THEA 4111 3.00 - Sustainable Staging Techniques

COURSE DIRECTOR

Ian Garrett

Rm. 328 (CFT) Centre for Film and Theatre

Email: officehours@toasterlab.com

Office Hours - I do not hold regular office hours. With electronic communications, I find they aren't necessary to schedule due to the level of access we have through slack and email, etc. If you'd like to schedule an in-person meeting, get in touch with me through my officehours@toasterlab.com email or phone.

TIME / LOCATION

CFA 312 – Monday 11:30 pm – 2:30 pm (Fall)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will prepare students to tackle issues of sustainability in theatrical and related artistic practice. Students will build their literacy in contemporary sustainable thinking, environmental/climate issues, emerging models of creation, pedagogy, and community stakeholder engagement through a combination of research, modelling and fieldwork as strategic change agents in professional settings.

Theatre artists have the goal of creating good art; all people should have the goal to do things sustainably and take every opportunity to remake the way we make for a sustainable future. The goal is to create new, more sustainable methodologies in theatre by looking at the history of theatrical practice through the lens of new techniques being embraced across design, construction and other fields. This course takes a systems-thinking, solutions-oriented approach to cross-disciplinary innovation with application and resonance in theatrical and artistic production.

The goal is to examine and create new, more sustainable methodologies in theatre by looking at the history of theatrical practice through the lens of new techniques being embraced across design, construction and other fields.

This course requires participants to make presentations to the class, engage with outside professionals, and work in teams. I will consider specific and complete proposals for alternatives submitted in a timely manner and as needed because of documented accommodations and. Ultimately, if you are not interested in these ways of working, then this course may not be for you.

Topics include systems thinking, communicating change, life cycle analysis, resource efficiency, responsible sourcing, confronting resistance, design frontiers, science/art interfaces

LEARNING GOALS

- Identify and describe complex systems Analyze and assess dimensions of impact of the arts
- Understand scientific and political issues surrounding sustainability
- Imagine and support creative potential solutions to wicked problems

EVALUTION AND GRADING POLICIES

The course will be evaluated based on four projects, and a fifth component based on communicating ideas that arise from those projects and assigned readings.

1. Research Presentation on "Sustainable Nutrients" (20%)
2. Field Research Presentation (20%)
3. Theoretical Proposition (20%)
4. Change Agency Proposal Project (20%)
5. (8) Reading Responses (20%)

PROJECTS OVERVIEW

RESEARCH PRESENTATION ON “SUSTAINABLE NUTRIENTS” - In this project, students will research a “sustainable nutrient”—a way of working, a technology, a system, etc.—and will relate it to an artist practice, either in the way the research topic impacts artistic practice, or vice versa. The goal of this project is to clearly demonstrate an understanding of the way systems of sustainability work and relate to artistic production.

This project will result in a “Pecha Kucha” style presentation to the class – presentations will include 20 auto-advancing slides, playing for 15 seconds each (a deviation from the typical 20x20 format), and an accompanying bibliography demonstrating comprehensive research.

Of 100%

25 % Bibliography

- These should include a minimum of 10 sources
- At least 2 in the form of published articles or white papers that are NOT written by the entity you’re researching.
- DO include citations for your sources in your presentation
- DO NOT include your bibliography as a slide. You will submit it as a separate document through Moodle with your slideshow.

20 % Logic/Synthesis

20 % Demonstrated understanding of Sustainable Practice(s)

20 % Style/Rhetoric

15 % Evidence of Research in the Presentation

FIELD RESEARCH/PRESENTATION - This project situates class participants as a change agent within a permeable institution that is connected to their original sustainable nutrient project. This connection can take many forms; a business that has implemented it as a practice, a manufacturer that supplies it as a product, an infrastructural solution which makes it accessible to more people. In this case “it” is your sustainable nutrient. Based on your sustainable nutrient research from the previous project you will take this a step further to research how to make a future change to a system to an existing place. You will conduct an in-person site visit, and then prepare a 5-min presentation and accompanying documentation to share your findings.

Of 100%

30 % 5-Min Presentation

20 % Demonstrated understanding of Sustainable Practice(s)

20 % Project write-up

20 % Amended Bibliography

- This is your previous bibliography with the addition of citation required for this new presentation.
- At minimum this should include two additions:
 - Your interview with an on-site representation (either in-person or virtual by email or phone, etc.)
 - Your tour of the site

10 % Professionalism with regard to your field research engagement

THEORETICAL PROPOSITION aka “MODEST PROPOSAL” or “BLUE SKY” PROJECT - In this project, students will apply their knowledge of sustainable practices in a creative position paper to propose an ambitious change for a sustainable future. This is an opportunity to employ blue-sky thinking. Based on the understanding you’ve gained of current systems and practices in the Sustainable Nutrient project, and the context provided by the Field Research project, this project asks you to consider the most extreme measures you can take for improvement. Your proposal should consider entire industries and operate on a national (if not international) scale. It should be possible for the change you’re proposing to have a clear and explainable benefit for millions of people.

In this project, creativity will be valued above practical application, although projects should be possible to execute; no magic bullets here. Most of the time, my feedback will be to go bigger!

2000 words

Of 100%

25 % Understanding of Sustainable Practice(s)

25 % Ambition

20 % Clear and convincing rhetoric

15 % Evidence of Feasibility

15 % Evidence of Research

CHANGE AGENCY PROPOSAL PROJECT & PRESENTATION – In this final project participants, working in teams, will submit and present a proposal for change within a system at York or an Off-Campus Arts Organization based on rethinking that system for sustainability. The selection of teams will be based on similarities in topics from the previous projects. We will determine the teams in the course meeting after the Field Research project presentations.

The system you collectively chose can be related to production, to administration, or to day-to-day life. You will use principles we've shared in the course and apply your previous findings to a new, shared, topic of interest.

We will discuss the building and format of the proposal in the class and conduct weekly check-ins on team progress once those teams have been determined.

Of 100%

25% Proposal

25% Presentation

10% Appropriateness

10% Research

10% Rhetoric/ Style/ Design

10% Understanding of Sustainable Practice(s)

10% Understanding of Artistic Practice(s)

GETTING WORK IN ON TIME

- Assignments are due at time specified on the course website (Moodle).
- Late submissions are not accepted.
- Extensions may be requested by email by 5:00 pm on the Friday preceding the deadline, and:
 - All requests must include a proposal for a new deadline.
 - Extensions are granted at my discretion and are not granted until you have received confirmation.
 - If you request an extension after 5:00 pm on the Friday preceding a deadline, or do not include a proposal for a new deadline, you won't get a response to the request (or an extension).
 - Don't be afraid to request extensions in a timely manner. If you've got a lot going on with school, work, or at home, request the extension. Life gets busy and hard sometimes, so if you see things piling up, request the extension before it becomes a crisis and you can't.
- In the event of a medical or personal emergency, I may consider an exception to these rules. If you do need to make a request for an exception to the requirements I've listed above—which is to say you need to request an extension after 5:00 pm on the Friday preceding the deadline—include documentation (i.e. a Doctor's note) along with you request when you make it. I will not ask for it, nor will I consider the circumstances if you don't include documentation.

SCHEDULE

SEPT 9 – INTRODUCTION

- Review Course Materials
 - IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION: The most effective ways to curb climate change might surprise you
-

SEPT 16 – SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES & ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- PRESENTATION: Establishing the Value System

- IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION:
 - Discuss Submitted Articles & Readings,
 - Input / Output Systems and the Origins of Objects OR What are Sustainable Nutrients?

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- TO LIFE!
 - Hans Haacke
- Jane Bennett – Vibrant Matter Excerpt from CSPA Quarterly 14
- Sharon Beder – Consumerism: An Historical Perspective
- Guardian – Theatreland: achieving sustainability means more than going green
- RadioLab (Podcast) - How Do You Put a Price Tag On Nature? - <https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/what-dollar-value-nature>

DUE IN CLASS:

(Response #1) - Bring in an Article about a practice, product, or system that relates to sustainability – Chart its position in a greater network of practices and products or write a short, 100-word, summary noting what is required for it to exist, and what it enables. Submit the original article and your 100-words summary.

SEPT 23 – FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- Check-in on "Sustainable Nutrient" Projects (know what you're presenting)
- PRESENTATION: Facilities Case Studies & Certification Schemes
- IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION: AMPD Lighting Overhaul

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- TO LIFE!
 - Mierle Landerman Ukeles
 - Mel Chin
- James McKernan and Marlis Schweitzer – The Burton Auditorium- A Sustainable Theatre at York University
- Andrew King – The Camrose Performing Arts Centre: A Case Study in Stylish Sustainability
- Ian Garrett – American's for the Arts: New Community Visions - Arts, the Environment, and Sustainability

DUE IN CLASS:

(Response #2) – Based on our readings, write 400 words discussing your thoughts on the intersection of sustainability and facilities. What do you think is the most important part of a facility in which to prioritize sustainability? What did you find interesting? What questions do you have about how one designs a sustainable facility? What would you like to discuss in class?

SEPT 30 – THEATRE & CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES IN CANADA

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- PRESENTATION: Digital Culture in a time of Climate Change
- GUEST PRESENTATION: Devon Hardy, Creative Earth/Climitable
- Check-in on "Sustainable Nutrient" Projects (time permitting)

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- GREENING UP OUR HOUSES
 - "Part I: Key Concepts for Going Green" from Greening up our Houses
- TO LIFE!
 - Brandon Ballengée
 - Natalie Jeremijenko
- Possible Additional Readings from Panel (Will Be Provided)

DUE IN CLASS:

(Response #3) – Based on this week’s readings, and the materials provided by our guest, what questions would you like to ask? What did you find interesting from their work or the other examples from the reading? Please be specific and cite the basis for your questions in the context of this week’s course materials. Submit four (4) questions.

OCT 7 – SUSTAINABLE NUTRIENT PECHA KUCHA

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Format:
 - Show 20 images
 - 15 seconds for each image
 - The images advance automatically
- Additional Guidelines:
 - DO NOT include your bibliography as a slide. You will submit it as a separate document through Moodle with your slideshow.
 - Marks will be reduced for:
 - More than 20 slides
 - Fewer than 20 slides
 - Going over time (past the automatic end of the slide show)
- You will do best if you rehearse your presentation... 15 seconds can feel both too quick and achingly slow if you're not prepared.

DUE IN CLASS:

Sustainable Nutrient Project - Turn in your presentation and bibliography to moodle.

(Response #4) – Based on coursework to date, please submit a 100 - 150 word abstract in which you describe what you would like to research for your Change Agency project, the resources you feel you will need, and your desired outcomes.

OCT 14 – NO CLASS – READING WEEK**OCT 21 – PRODUCTION**

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- PRESENTATION: Design Case Studies
- IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION: Introduction to Capacity Identification

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- READINGS IN PERFORMANCE AND ECOLOGY:
 - Chapter 17 – Ian Garrett - Theatrical Production's Carbon Footprint
- GREENING UP OUR HOUSES
 - PART II: What Can my Department Do?
- REVIEW - Mo'olelo Green Theater Choices Toolkit
- READ - Katie Oman - Stage lighting and the environment- Results from a year-long study
- READ - Edinburgh Fringe Guide to Sustainability

DUE IN CLASS:

(Response #5) – Based on the readings and your experience in theatre production (at York or otherwise), write 400 words on where you would start with greening a production? What do you think is the most important aspect of making theatre more sustainable? Why? How would you communicate this to an audience?

OCT 28 – HOUSES, ORGANIZATIONS & PRESENTERS

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading

- Discuss Assigned Readings
- Project Check-in
- PRESENTATION: NAC Cycle – Theatre and Climate Change
- IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION: Capacity Brainstorming Workshop

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- Mayor of London Green Theatre Report (Excerpts)
- Moving Arts Report 3: Theatre (Excerpts)
- NAC Cycle – Theatre and Climate Change Documentation

DUE IN CLASS:

(Response #6) - Based on this week's readings and any of your own experience viewing performance at various venues across Toronto, consider how you think those that program and curate art spaces can contribute to sustainable conversations and write 400 words about your thoughts. Is it important for presenters to consider the environment? What are some of the limitations that presenters and curators face with regards to showing environmentally themed work at their venue? What are unique opportunities which presenters and curators have with regards to programming environmentally themes work?

AND... Based on your thinking, identify a show, exhibition, or other arts project that you feel addresses ecological concerns and would be interesting to Toronto audiences. Write roughly 400 words that summaries the project you've identified, why you've selected it, what an idea venue would be (in Toronto) and the challenges you foresee with bringing it to Toronto.

NOV 4 – FIELD RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Field Research Presentations

DUE IN CLASS:

Field Research Presentation files with amended bibliography

NOV 11 – ARTS ECOLOGY POLICY

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION: Toronto Arts Policy Debate

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- Ian Garrett – Arts driven Sustainability, Sustainably Driven Arts (Scene)
- Julie's Bicycle – The Arts and Environmental Sustainability - DArt34b (Excerpts)
- Julie's Bicycle – World Cities Culture Forum - Culture and Climate Change (Excerpts)
- Adrienne Goehler with Jaana Prüss – Conceptual Thoughts on Establishing a Fund for Aesthetics and Sustainability Excerpts
- #ArtsVoteYYZ Archive

DUE IN CLASS:

(Response #7) - Based on our readings and your own engagement with civic policy about the arts write 400 words discussing if there is a need for government policy to prioritize or mandate ecological or sustainable policy in the arts? Why or why not? What policies would you think would be most or least effective in Toronto? How has arts policy affected you? Identify which candidate from the 2018's Mayoral Race whose arts and culture plan would most align with your ideas.

NOV 18 – ECO-ARTS ACTIVISM

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- IN CLASS PROJECT/DISCUSSION: Building the Change Agency Proposal

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- TO LIFE! Chapters
 - Reverend Billy Talen (USA) • Stop Shopping Gospel
 - SUPERFLEX (Denmark) • Toolbox for Social Justice
- READINGS IN PERFORMANCE AND ECOLOGY:
 - Chapter 12 - Sarah Standing – Earth First!’s “Crack the Dam” and the Aesthetics of EcoActivist Performance
- Review various current movements:
 - Black Lives Matters: Toronto - <https://blacklivesmatter.ca/>
 - Extinction Rebellion - <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/>
 - Idle No More - <http://www.idlenomore.ca/>
 - The REDress Project - <http://www.theredressproject.org/>

DUE IN CLASS:

Theoretical Proposition Project

(Response #8) - Based on this week’s readings write 100 words about the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of these forms of activism. Think about what makes them compelling or not? What are their goals? How could they be more effective in achieving those goals? Are there other examples you could provide which you think are effective?

AND... Now think of an ecological issue that concerns you. In 200-300 words can you describe a project that you feel would bring attention to that issue and spur change?

NOV 25 – ECODRAMA + ECOSCENOGRAPHY

- CCTA Play Selection In-Class Reading
- Discuss Assigned Readings
- PRESENTATION: Climate Change Theatre Action Artists & Design Charrette

READING FOR THIS WEEK

- Theresa J. May – Beyond Bambi- Toward a Dangerous Ecocriticism in Theatre Studies
- Tanja Beer – An Introduction to Ecological Thinking in Scenography and Performance Practice
- Tanja Beer – Scenographer as Placemaker: Co-Creating Communities through The Living Stage
- Glenn Albrecht – Solastalgia: The Distress Caused by Environmental Change

DUE IN CLASS:

Nothing Due Today

DEC 2 – CHANGE AGENCY PRESENTATIONS

DUE IN CLASS:

Change Agency Project

REQUIRED TEXTS

TO LIFE!: Eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet

By Linda Weintraub

Publisher: University of California Press (Sept. 1 2012)

ISBN: 978-0520273627

Where Is the Hope?: an Anthology of Short Climate Change Plays.

Edited by Chantal Bilodeau

Publisher: Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts, 2018.

ISBN: 978-1-77355-018-3

ADDITIONAL TEXTS

Greening up Our House

By Larry K. Fried (Author), Theresa May (Author)

Publisher: Drama Publishers (December 1995)

ISBN-13: 978-0896761322

This book is out of print and the reading will be provided.

Readings in Performance and Ecology

Edited by Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May

Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan

ISBN: 978-0-230-33728-2

More texts may be assigned over the course of the term

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, Simon. "How Do You Put a Price Tag On Nature?" *WNYC Studios*, RadioLab, 23 Dec. 2014, <https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/what-dollar-value-nature>.

Albrecht, Glenn; Gina-Maree Sartore, Linda Connor, Nick Higginbotham, Sonia Freeman, Brian Kelly, Helen Stain, Anne Tonna, and Georgia Pollard. "Solastalgia: The Distress Caused by Environmental Change". *Australas Psychiatry*. February 2007 15: S95-S98

Anable, Jillian et al: *Moving Arts: Managing the Carbon Impact of Touring, Volume 3: Theatre*. London: Julie's Bicycle, 2010.

Arons, Wendy and Theresa May ed: *Readings in Performance and Ecology*. New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2012

Beder, Sharon. "Consumerism – an Historical Perspective." *Pacific Ecologist* 9, Spring 2004, pp. 42-48.

Beer, Tanja. "A Case for Ecoscenography: Cultivating the Continuous Potential of Things in Performance Design." *Scene*, vol. 6, no. 1, Jan. 2018, pp. 81–89.

Beer, Tanja, et al. "Scenographer as Placemaker: Co-Creating Communities through The Living Stage NYC." *Theatre and Performance Design*, vol. 4, no. 4, Feb. 2018, pp. 342–363.

Bennett, Jane. "Vibrant Matter." *CSPA Quarterly*, 2014.

Bilodeau, Chantal, editor. *Where Is the Hope?: an Anthology of Short Climate Change Plays*. Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts, 2018.

Caird, Jo. "Theatreland: Achieving Sustainability Means More than Going Green." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 11 June 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/jun/11/sustainable-theatres-trust-conference-policy>.

Fried, Larry K, May, Theresa J.: *Greening Up Our Houses: A Guide to a More Ecologically Sound Theatre* , New York: Drama Publishers, 1994.

Culture & Climate Change. World Cities Cultural Forum, 2019.

D'Art Report 34b: The Arts and Environmental Sustainability: an International Overview. Vol. 34b, Julie's Bicycle, 2014.

Garrett, Ian. "Arts-Driven Sustainability and Sustainably Driven Arts." *Scene*, vol. 6, no. 1, Jan. 2018, pp. 63–79.

Garrett, Ian. *Arts, the Environment, and Sustainability*. New Community Visions Initiative. Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2015.

Goehler, Adrienne, and Prüss Jaana. *Conceptual Thoughts on Establishing a Fund for Aesthetics and Sustainability*. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2012.

Green Theatre Report - Taking Action on Climate Change. Office of the Mayor of London , 2008.

King, Andrew. "The Camrose Performing Arts Centre: A Case Study in Stylish Sustainability ." *Professional Lighting & Production*, 2014.

May, Theresa J. : *Beyond Bambi: Toward a Dangerous Ecocriticism in Theatre Studies*. *Theatre Topics*, Sep 2007, Vol. 17 Issue 2, p95-110, 16p.

McKernan, James B.; Schweitzer, Marlis: *The Burton Auditorium: A Sustainable Theatre at York University*. *Canadian Theatre Review*, Fall2010, Issue 144, p29-34, 6p.

Moving Arts Report 3: Theatre. Julie's Bicycle, 2010.

Standing, Sarah Ann. "Earth First!'s 'Crack the Dam' and the Aesthetics of Ecoactivist Performance." *Readings in Performance and Ecology*, 2012, pp. 147–155.

Web Resources:

<http://www.broadwaygreen.com/>

<http://www.sustainablepractice.org/>

<http://www.juliesbicycle.com/>
