Course Description
This course is a transhistorical study of changing ideas about representation, explored through the lens of early modern and twentieth-century plays that foreground theatrical form. Every play frames time and space and in the process singles out a portion of life for consideration. The plays we’ll consider this term call conspicuous attention to the frame itself, to the materials and capacities of theater. What happens when plays comment on their own activity? Why might they do so? Why has theatrical self-consciousness emerged more strongly in particular historical periods? What might such plays teach us about the nature of art, and about the nature of life? To what extent can we distinguish between art and life? We’ll explore these and other questions through plays by Marlowe, Kyd, Shakespeare, Pirandello, Beckett, Genet, Stoppard, Handke, Levine, Nwandu, and Young Jean Lee; and through theoretical work by Puchner, Hornby, Sofer, Fuchs, and others.

Course Objectives
(in no particular order)
1. To gain familiarity with metatheatricality as a transhistorical concept
2. To question the possibilities and limits of the theater as a genre and as a set of social practices
3. To develop critical writing and research skills

Policies can be summed up quite simply: show up on time, every time, and be prepared to make the class everything you want it to be. Significant absences or lateness will impact your grade. If you are having difficulties that are affecting your performance in the course or your ability to keep up, please be sure to speak with me and/or your adviser. As class discussion will function as a vital opportunity to think through, organize and complicate our ideas about the texts we’re reading, please come to class prepared to participate. Writing down observations and questions as you’re reading assignments for class is a good way to ensure that you’ll be ready to contribute.

Please ensure that all cell phones and devices are turned off during class. If you bring your computer, please limit computer activity to note-taking.

Required texts. Available at the Seminary Co-op. All other readings will be available in the Course Reader on UChicago Box, at this address: http://bit.ly/2FTF7Ao

Jonathan Ball, Clockfire, Coach House, 1552452360
Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus, New Mermaids, 9780713673760
Shakespeare, The Tempest, Pelican, 9780143128632 [or any edition]
Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, New Mermaids, 1408114216
Pirandello, Naked Masks, Plume, 0452010829
Genet, The Balcony, Grove, 802150349
Handke, Kasper and Other Plays, Hill and Wang, 0809015463
Beckett, Waiting for Godot, 0802130348.
Stoppard, The Real Inspector Hound, Grove 9780802135612
Lee, The Shipment, TCG 9781559363563
Content Notice
Some of this quarter’s material deals with charged issues, including bigotry and racism, class, gender and sexuality, and both physical and emotional violence. Please feel free to contact me to discuss this further, or to request more specific information about content. As critics and students of culture, we cannot always shy away from challenging material. Please understand that such material may generate a wide variety of reactions and opinions among our colleagues in the classroom. I urge you to remain aware of and sympathetic to the reactions and opinions of our classmates. Respect and sensitivity will produce a stronger learning environment and generate better and more nuanced discussions.

Accessibility and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can contact Student Disability Services to determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you provide. Please let me know if you have suggestions about how I might better facilitate your success in the classroom.

Names/Pronouns
We will respect each other’s names and preferred personal pronouns in this class. If your preferred pronouns change at any point in the term, please feel free to let me know how you’d like to handle things in the classroom.

Assignments and Evaluation
I will determine your grade by evaluating the following:

- **Reaction paper**: 2-page close-reading exercise
- **Short Paper/Playwriting Assignment**: 5 pages. Details TBA. You will have the option to write a critical paper, to compose your own reflexive drama and submit an explication of it, or to describe and justify your plan to stage one of the pieces we’ve read.
- **Final Project**: A paper of 8-10 pages
- **Quality of class attendance and participation**: This will be evaluated based on 1) attendance, 2) lively participation in section, especially careful and active engagement with the readings, and, 3) performance on occasional email responses and/or unannounced short quizzes.

Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Theater and Other Magic</th>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Mar 27 Ball, <em>Clockfire</em> (selections, distributed in class)</td>
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<td>Beckett, <em>Act with Words I</em></td>
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<td>Fuchs, “EF’s Visit to a Small Planet”</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>Mar 29 Marlowe, <em>Doctor Faustus</em></td>
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<td>Sofer, “How to Do Things with Demons: Conjuring Performatives in <em>Doctor Faustus</em>”</td>
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| Week 2 | |
|--------| |
| T      | Apr 3 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* |
| Th     | Apr 5 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* |
Plato, Allegory of the Cave, from Poetics Book VII.

Sun Apr 8 Close reading assignment due, 5pm

Week 3

Tragedy, Revenge, and Danger

T Apr 10 Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy

Th Apr 12 Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, cont
Ball, Cell (27-28), Clockfire (31), The Drama of the Locked Door (39), Hostages (47-8), Isolation (55), Oedipus (65), Seven Generations (79), Outnumbered (68), Exit the Theater (98), Wormwood (97)
Optional: Colon Semenza, “The Spanish Tragedy and Metatheatre”

Week 4

Modern Metatheater

T Apr 17 Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of An Author

Th Apr 19 Six Characters, continued

Sun Apr 22 1st assignment due, noon

Week 5

Farce as Metatheater

T Apr 24 Stoppard, The Real Inspector Hound
The Play That Goes Wrong (Royal Variety Performance 2015) link in Modules

W Apr 25 Last day to see The Dopplegänger, Steppenwolf

Th Apr 26 Discuss The Dopplegänger

Week 6

Theater is Waiting

T May 1 Beckett, Waiting for Godot

Waiting for Racial Justice

W Screen Nwandu, Pass Over before Thursday (on Amazon Prime). The script is available in the Course reader.

Th May 3 Discuss Nwandu, Pass Over (Course reader)

Week 7

Roleplaying and Revolution

T May 8 Genet, The Balcony

Th May 10 Genet, The Balcony (con’t)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Dissolving Boundaries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T May 15</td>
<td>Handke, <em>Offending the Audience</em></td>
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<td>Th May 17</td>
<td>Moss, <em>A Play Viewed from a Distance</em></td>
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<td>Articles on David Levine’s <em>Actors at Work, Bauerntheater, Habit, Character Analysis</em></td>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>The Theater of Race</th>
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<tr>
<td>T May 22</td>
<td>Lee, <em>The Shipment</em></td>
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<td>W May 23</td>
<td>Screening of <em>The Shipment</em></td>
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<td>Th May 24</td>
<td>Lee, <em>The Shipment</em></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Endings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T May 29</td>
<td>Wrap up / Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th May 31</td>
<td>Reading period: No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun June 3</td>
<td>Final projects due end of day</td>
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