

THEATRE 1000: Theatre in Society

Study in Portugal, summer 2024

Professor Joan Herrington, Director

Western Michigan University

School of Theatre and Dance

Students will explore theatre's impact on contemporary culture, learn how theatre works, and discover why theatre matters. Students will attend theatre performances, tour theatres and engage with performance artists in Lisbon. This course satisfies WMU Essential Studies Level 1: Foundations – Inquiry and Engagement: Critical Thinking in the Arts and Humanities Category.

At the conclusion of this class you will be able to:

- Identify what makes theatre distinct from other performing arts and/or media.
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the key concepts related to theatre production, stage spaces, acting, directing, producing, designing, musical theatre, audience expectations, and global theatre movements.
- Observe, analyze, and discuss theatrical performances with a greater understanding and appreciation for the process of contemporary theatrical production.
- Understand the role of theatre as a reflection of the society in which it exists, as a catalyst for important discussion, and advocacy for social change.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: The Art of Theatre

First week study will focus on the traditional elements of the theatre: playwriting, theatre design and architecture, and acting. Material will include an overview of the contemporary theatre scene in Portugal.

Lisbon experiences to include:

- Backstage tour of two theatres – one tradition proscenium, one non-traditional space
- Conversations with local theatre producers, designers and actors
- Attendance at one professional production

Week 2 Practicing theatre

This second week will be focused on the active art of theatre with students engaged in the process of creating performance.

Lisbon experiences to include:

- Workshop with local theatre artists from the professional theatre and local academic institutions.
- Attendance at one professional production

Week 3 Theatre embedded in society/Theatre and community

This week will focus on theatre and its relationship to the community in which it is made, exploring both theatre as a reflection of that society and as a motivator to impact that community

Lisbon experiences to include:

- Engagement with the program in Theatre and Community at the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema
- Attendance at professional production
- Attendance at street festival performance

Week 4: Theatre and social change

This week of study will be focused on theatre artists who are committed to changing the world through theatre. Study will include both American and Portuguese theatre companies whose work is focused on theatre and social change

Lisbon experiences to include:

- Guest artists from theatres such as GTO LX or Geracao Soma
- Attendance at professional production at a theatre committed to social change

Theatre Texts (no purchase required)

1. *Experiencing Theatre*, by Anne Fletcher and Scott Irelan - readings are posted in E-Learning

2. *The Theatre Experience*, by Edwin Wilson. Published by McGraw-Hill Education, 2015. - readings are posted in E-Learning and available through the Course Reserves

3. We will also read 6-8 plays which shall be selected in coordination with the live theatre offerings in Lisbon during our visit.

3. Other short readings will also be posted on E-Learning.