



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

LT/AR316 – Drama: “The Word to The Action” in the Italian *Commedia dell’Arte*

Prof. LAURA BELLONI – PROF. STEFANO GUIZZI

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is ideal for those who have an all-round interest in the theatre. The programme combines the theory and practice of drama and creative development through a combination of theoretical seminars and practical workshops with Stefano Guizzi, actor of the Piccolo Teatro of Milan. The two approaches are seen not merely as complementary but as indivisible in the study of drama and theatre.

The theoretical part involves the study of drama from the printed page to the actual staging and will focus in particular on the typical Italian genre, La Commedia dell’Arte and its great influence around the world over the centuries. Students will thus explore the ways in which the changing forms of theatre and cultural shifts in Italian society have influenced the development of drama into its present diversity as well as the theoretical elements involved in the creation of performance. Students will be encouraged to build a script based on a renaissance canovaccio and oriented to the actual staging of a short play.

Parallel to the historical and theoretical course, the actor Stefano Guizzi will be teaching practical classes, introducing the students to Commedia dell’Arte and to the basic techniques of acting with masks. This part of the course will explore physical and vocal training, improvisation techniques, the use of masks on stage. We will approach the main characters of Commedia (Arlecchino, Colombina, the Magnifico, the Capitano, the Dottore...), tracing them throughout European theatre in their numerous metamorphoses. The students will practice on a “canovaccio” (scenario) from the XVIIth Century, writing and staging their own “Scene Di Commedia.”

Lectures, seminars and tutorials are complemented by scene-study workshops and field trips to milanese important theatres such as Teatro alla Scala and Piccolo Teatro.

COURSE CONTENTS

PART 1

- Course Introduction
- Contexts and contents of Commedia dell’Arte
- Arlecchino and other masks: the protagonists of the Italian theatre
- The influence of commedia dell’arte on Shakespeare, Molière, Goldoni
- Writing a Commedia dell’Arte play: the language, the humor and the system of metaphors
- Dramaturgy of a ‘canovaccio’: creative writing on the Renaissance scenario ‘The Toothpuller’
- Group Project: preparing the script



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

PART 2

Basic physical and vocal training
Masks Presentation
Acting with masks
Improvisation techniques
Acting practice (scenes from existing plays)
Acting practice ("canovacci")
Acting practice: it's your turn (texts written by the students)
Field trip to the workshops of Teatro alla Scala.
Preparation and Performance

PREREQUISITES

None

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Seminars and studio-based practical courses will encourage students to explore performance through a variety of intellectual and aesthetic processes.

Not only the course will enable students to explore the text as a medium for performance but also will permit the development of organisational, intellectual and communicative skills in relation to theatre practice.

METHOD OF TEACHING

Lectures, seminars and tutorials are complemented by scene-study workshops

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to get their credits, students will be required to:

- Attend class regularly. More than three absences will result in halving your grade for class participation.
- Keep up with the assigned readings, bring the text to class and participate in class discussion.
- Participate to a group project to be presented shortly before the mid-term exam.

Mid-term is written. Final exams is the staging of a short play.

CREDITS

6 ECTS



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

GRADING

Participation (guest-speaker and field study)	15%
Assignments (Presentation)	20%
Group Project	10%
Mid-term	25%
Final Exams	30%

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

A packet including all required readings, along with a list of suggested critical texts will be available at the beginning of the course.

INSTRUCTORS BIO

Laura Belloni received her degree in Languages and Foreign Literatures at UCSC in Milan, with a senior thesis on the English Opera, and a PhD in English Drama, with a dissertation on "The Ascent of F6 (1936) and the dramatic theatre of W. H. Auden". She attended courses in American Literature and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, UK. After working at Radio24, a national radio, and "Airone" a national magazine, she began teaching and she is currently teaching courses in Comparative Literature and Literature & Drama at the UCSC Department of International Relations. Her current research areas focus on Drama, as well as Comparative Literature. Among her recent publications is "Methods of Illusion. La mise-en-scène from Drama to Fiction and Visual Arts" (Educatt, 2010) and "L'artificio, l'inganno e la seduzione. Elementi metateatrali e illusioni nel teatro italiano tra commedia e opera buffa" (Aracne, 2013).

Stefano Guizzi Italian born, spent his high school years in the United States, where he began practicing theatre at school level. Back in Italy, he graduated from Giorgio Strehler's Scuola Di Teatro, at the Piccolo Teatro of Milan, where he had as teachers, among others, Giorgio Strehler, Carolyn Carlson, Ian McKellen, and Ferruccio Soleri, the legendary Arlecchino from the Strehler's world-famous direction of Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters*. He later worked with Strehler himself, at the Piccolo, with Robert Wilson at Berlin's Hebbel and Schaubhune theatres, with Gigi Proietti, A.R.Shammah, G.lancu, and many other directors. He was trained especially in Commedia dell'Arte, studying with Mr. Soleri and with Enrico Bonavera. He has been teaching Commedia since 2008, both as an assistant to Mr. Soleri, in the Accademia of Commedia dell'Arte, (in Moscow, Brindisi, Seoul, La Paz, Teheran) and in collaboration with Charioteer Theatre (in Glasgow, Inverness, and Edinburgh). He has been involved as an actor, in different roles, in Strehler's *Servant of Two Masters* since 1990, to this very day. The show has been travelling throughout the world, almost every year, since its very first debut in 1947. It still represents one of the most acclaimed Italian theatre performances of all time.

E-MAIL ADDRESS

laura.belloni@unicatt.it

stef.guizzi@gmail.com