

Instructor: Bruce Barton

Course number: DRE422H5

Course title: Senior Seminar 1: Theatrical Devising

Course Description:

“Devising” is a sufficiently broad reference as to incorporate a wide range of very different objectives, techniques, and styles. However, in general, the term identifies an approach to theatrical creation and performance for which text is not accorded primary or “sacred” status—indeed, one in which text may be secondary in terms of its “authority” within the developmental process and secondary in terms of the order in which the performance elements may be selected and incorporated into the final production. In devised theatre the elements of visual and aural presentation, as well as the work’s engagement with narrative, equally emerge out of a set of processes that are based in movement, improvisation, physical discipline, and the set of creative instruments understood and experienced as *instinct* and *intuition*. Devised creation thus taps into intuitive skills, instinctive abilities, and reserves of intellectual and physical intelligence often not utilized within more conventional approaches to composition and performance.

This course involves the theoretical and practical exploration of theatrical devising as a mode of performance generation and production. We will consider its historical and conceptual roots in a broad range of collaborative performance generation, as well as a selection of contemporary practices and practitioners from Canada and internationally. Students will also have the opportunity to explore practical techniques of training, material generation, and performance through the creation of individual and group projects.

Required Reading: selected readings will be posted to Blackboard (when possible, in adherence to copyright restrictions) or placed on reserve at the UTM library on a weekly basis.

First Three Texts/Authors to be Studied:

Barba, Eugenio and Judy Barba. “The Deep Order Called Turbulence: The Three Faces of Dramaturgy.” *TDR* 44.4. (Winter, 2000): 56-66.

Barton, Bruce. “Devising the Creative Body.” In *Collective Creation, Collaboration and Devising. Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English* Volume 15. Series General Editor: Ric Knowles. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2008. vii – xxvii.

Etchells, Tim. *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.

Method of Instruction: seminar-style lecture and discussion; practical exercises.

Method of Evaluation: participation; written research documents (essays and casebooks); practice-based research projects.