ENGINEERING COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

INSTRUCTOR(S):

Deborah Tihanyi & Lydia Wilkinson

APS320: REPRESENTING SCIENCE ON STAGE

In this course, students explore representations of science and scientists on the stage through critical and theatrical examination of play texts. The focus of the course is twofold, exploring the message—scientific theory and its impact—and the medium—theatre—and how these work together to transmit meaning. Classes alternate between discussion based seminars and practical studio work. This dual approach provides opportunities for students to pursue topics of interest covered in the plays, while learning more about theatre practice and performance techniques, including acting, directing, stagecraft and dramaturgy. Students work in teams to produce three scene performances over the semester. The first of these scene performances features an original script produced by the group, allowing participants to learn about storytelling and play development as well as performance. The second and third scene performances are based on one of the plays we have studied, giving students an opportunity to closely examine one of the course texts, while also learning about the iterative scene development process.

CONCEPTS:

History of Science
Culture
Meaning Making
Creativity
Authority
Education
Storytelling
Performance
Critical Analysis
Responsibility
Audience
Accessibility
Representation
Ethics
Scientific Values
Expression
Socio-historical Context
Science and Society

ACTIVITIES:

Lectures+ | Discussion+ | Performance+ | Creative Group Activities eg.

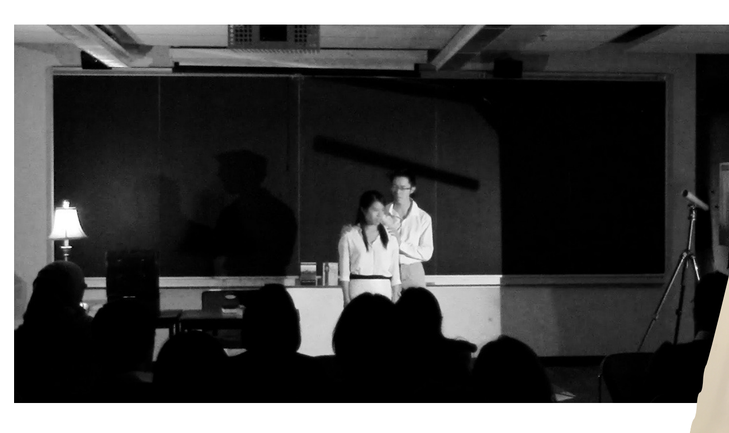
1. Table reads
2. Open rehearsals
3. Debates on science and ethics
4. Research into historical context
5. Dramaturgical analysis
6. Design labs
7. Vocal and physical techniques
8. Collective creation / group storytelling

PERFORMANCE TEXTS:

Through discussion and performance we explore plays about science including:

DELIVERABLES:

Students are evaluated on both written assignments and performance.



Pe — Analysis of the 'performing engineer': transfer between disciplines

C — Critical analysis of a live performance event

S1 — Scene performance of original work

S2 — Scene performance from one of the plays studied

S3 — Scene performance of S2 with further development

Rd — Rehearsal diary kept on progress, choices for all three scenes

FEEDBACK:

"**I gained experience in asking the question 'why' in this course**, and to try to find the reasons behind every decision because there is importance there. "

"Since the class was made up of just engineers, I felt that this was a tying factor that brought the whole class together; that **no matter how different everyone was there was some way to relate to each other**. It also made it feel as if **everyone started at an equal level**, and **progressed together throughout the course**. I actually felt that it **promoted a sense of community**."

"It was nice to be able to discuss the **non-technical aspects** of science and engineering, as we don't get much opportunity in our core curriculum. I think the landscape that science and engineering exist in—**social, political, cultural**, etc—are **all things engineers should be thinking about.** The plays we read allowed us to at least start to think about these things in the classroom."