In our post-truth era, theatre artists are creating work in which part of the subject is theatre’s very ability to represent and interpret events. Their aim not only is to change political convictions but also legal determinations. Artists are making works that raise questions about the relationship between our aesthetic preferences and our ethical choices. Like the proscenium within the proscenium in Paula Vogel’s *Indecent*, a play about a real-life play, some of the best theatre today is reflexive: showing its own ability to reflect upon complex representations of challenging subjects. Similar to Hamlet’s plan for Claudius to see himself in "The Mouse Trap," a fictional play-within-a-play that cites the real, the plays and performances in this course incriminate today's violence, politics, despair and hope by provocative analyses of both the events represented and the very act of representation. Can theatre about real events during this time of “fake news” help us understand the collapse of the distinctions between the real, the simulated, and the virtual?

Theatre of the Real includes theatre that uses verbatim court testimony, interviews, letters, photographs, film, YouTube, and lots more -- the raw data of the "real." In this course, we will study plays and essays about some of the most important issues of our time: mass shootings, terrorism, the Holocaust, racial clashes, the environment, corruption in the Catholic Church regarding pedophilia, the murder of Mathew Sheppard, Lebanese suicide bombers, the murder of anti-Klan demonstrators in Greensboro, the cover up of industrial accidents in Poland, honor killings in Holland. Authors include Moises Kaufman, Peter Weiss, Stephen Karam and PJ Paparelli, Emily Mann, Lisa Kron, Michael Murphy, and Doug Wright among others. Questions asked in the course include: Can theatre effectively critique both social and ethical questions? What are the limits of "fiction" and "nonfiction" when examining what's true and what's fake?
Site-specific performances, mixes of biography, autobiography, and documentary, fiction and nonfiction, film, dance, theatre, and performance art are merging. As the born-digitally increasingly becomes the means of documenting what's going on, documentaries become much more than recordings of events. Understanding the process of generating "the real" and making art of and about it, even when absolute conclusions cannot be had, is itself a generative act.

To Apply send the following the instructor of the course:

- Name
- Student ID number
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- An essay you’ve written for another class