THTR 572 Global Dramatic Writing

Units: 4, Section 63267D
Spring 2015—Monday—Time: 12:00-2:50 pm PST

Location: McClintock Building (MCC) 109
Instructor:
Office: Massman Drama Center (DRC), greentea@usc.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 9:30-11:30 by appointment only; 24-hour business day (M-F) cancellation required
Contact Info: greentea@usc.edu
IT Help: USC Information Technology Services, http://itservices.usc.edu

Course Description
"Tour" of non-European and non-European American cultures with regard to their dramatic subject matter and traditions toward the creation of a full-length play or instructor-approved dramatic writing project. This is not a class that will teach you about the depth and breadth of cultural artifacts; this is a writing course. You are absorbing the culture as part of your creative process, but the course remains focused on the art and craft of dramatic writing and the ways that cultural study can influence, inspire, and/or enrich it. The class will seek to engage the student in at least three dimensions of a given culture selected from these categories, but the expectation is that the student will seek other resources on his or her own from critical arenas such as art, religion, society, literature, and cuisine investigating the avenues utilized in the course. You are expected to learn how to mine life toward the development of character and story.

As the world gets smaller via heightened global access and the local and global are intertwined into the "glocal," the dramatic writer has a greater terrain to explore in the human laboratory as a point of departure for his or her work. As a traveler the dramatic writer can enrich her or his writing with cultural narratives and perspectives beyond the United States and Europe, narratives already entrenched in our academic perspectives.

In a limited fashion focused on mining and not total absorption, students will “tour” non-central European and non-central European American cultures with regard to their dramatic subject matter and traditions. Discoveries will be used to provoke new thoughts in theme and/or form, culminating in the writing of a full-length play or instructor-approved dramatic writing project that is informed by the journey taken. The "tour" will be taken via Internet exploration, primary research as available, articles, prose and poetry, plays, films, visual art, cuisine, guest experts, performance, and field trips. Please note that the word “tour” is used because that is our objective; not a permanent residency, but a tour.

This course is for the advanced dramatic writer as well as advanced writers from other genres that have completed at least one full-length dramatic writing work. This course is appropriate for students that wish to write a full-length play or other instructor-approved dramatic writing project, but through the added lens of cultural influences. Exposure to the cultural influences are part of the pre-writing and writing processes. Students who only wish to write a play or other dramatic writing project, period, should not take this course unless it is required. If it is required, the student should read this paragraph with care so that he or she understands the scope of the course.

Learning Objectives
The student is expected to learn certain aspects of a specified global culture, not fully as in an anthropological or sociopolitical or historical manner but in a manner that allows the student to be inspired by an element or several elements of that culture. That inspiration is to be mined by the student toward
the writing of a full-length play or an instructor-approved dramatic writing project. These goals fit with the Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing’s desires that students mine their literary potential, and that they engage meaningfully in global society and the profession.

The spring semester 2015 will focus on global mixed race culture, looking at its existence in the United States but also with regard to its flow internationally in Asia, Zambia, Trinidad, Mexico, Brazil, Germany, the United Kingdom, and other countries. Exposure to the dimensions of a culture are part of the pre-writing process. The development of the writing project will occur along with exposure. As always, discipline is required.

Prerequisite(s): 567a, 567b, 529a, 486. If not in Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing program, a writing sample and instructor approval.

Recommended Preparation: Advisable, but not mandatory, preparation is for the student to expose himself or herself to any live or documented events, experiences, and/or readings that investigated the mixed race experience, i.e. the Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies (http://criticalmixedracestudies.org/wordpress/journal/) or any of the recommended books/artifacts below.

Course Notes
Students must check email and Blackboard regularly, which means at least once every 24 hours for email and at least once a week for Blackboard or when directed by the instructor.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
Rising Soul, A Film by Monique Yamaguchi, Lillemor Mallau, and Velina Hasu Houston, Directed by Jon Dunham, www.risingsoulfilm.com (To be provided by instructor)

Hafu: The Mixed-Race Experience of Japan (http://hafufilm.com/en) by Megumi Nishikura and Lara Perez Takagi. (To be provided by instructor)

Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams, Director, Shinso ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture, http://dornsife.usc.edu/cjrc/ (Guest)


*The American Women, HOTHOUSE @ The Pasadena Playhouse, Directed by Seema Sueko, 1/14, 8 pm, 39 S. El Molino Avenue, Pasadena. Field trip: colorism, mixed race during U.S. historical slavery era.

One Drop of Love, Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni, Performance (TBD) http://www.onedropoflove.org (Guest)

**A Spot of Bother, The Road Theatre Company, 3/30, 8 pm, The Road Theatre Company at the NoHo Senior Arts Colony, 10747 Magnolia Blvd., North Hollywood. The Word @ The Road. Field trip: global mixed race, India/England.

Recommended Reading and Recommended Supplementary Materials

The Black Irish Onscreen: Representing Black and Mixed-Race Identities on Irish Film and Television by Zelie Asava, Published by Peter Lang AG, info@peterlang.com, www.peterlang.com


One Big Hapa Family, A Film by Jeff Chiba Stearns, www.onebighapafamily.com


The Harimaya Bridge, A Film Directed by Aaron Woolfolk (http://www.theharimayabridge.com)

DOUBLES: Japan and America's Intercultural Children, A Film by Regge Life, http://globalfilmnetwork.net/doubles.html

Struggle and Success the African American Experience in Japan, A Film by Regge Life, http://globalfilmnetwork.net/struggle.html

Part-Asian, 100% Hapa, A Book by Kip Fulbeck, http://www.amazon.com/Paperback-Author-Fulbeck-Spickard-Lennon/dp/B00F0H9UQ/ref=sr_1_10?ie=UTF8&qid=1415906174&sr=8-10&keywords=kip+fulbeck+books


Visibly Different: Face, Place and Race in Australia, Edited by Maureen Perkins, Published by Peter Lang AG, http://www.amazon.com/Visibly-Different-Australia-Studies-Asia-Pacific/dp/303911332/6&keywords=books+on+mixed+race


Description and Assessment of Assignments

Academic integrity is important to the University. The student is urged to remember that professors do not “give” grades; students earn grades. Thus, a final grade is entirely up to the student with regards to the effort he or she chooses to expend to meet course requirements. Please note that late work is given a ten percent (20%) penalty and is accepted only within one week of its due date (see “Grading Breakdown”). The only exception is illness or personal crisis. Here are USC’s definitions of grades: “A” for work of excellent quality, “B” for work of good quality, “C” for work of fair quality for undergraduate credit and minimum passing for graduate credit, “C-“ as a failing grade for graduate credit, “D-“ for work of minimum passing quality for undergraduate credit, “F” for failure, “IN” for incomplete work, student-initiated after 12th week and only awarded under exceptional circumstances. There will be three categories of grading:

25% - Weekly Grade. This evaluates your engagement in reading and writing assignments, writing exercises, and evaluative discussions in class. This grade will include your cultural analyses, which at a minimum must be five pages of writing. This also includes your progress in your Tour Journal. Students will maintain a Tour Journal, a research journal comprised of text and images gathered on the “tour,” and scenes written from knowledge gained on the “tour.” The objective is to enrich artistic expression and expand artistic perspective by looking beyond one’s own cultural geography, and then using this absorbed knowledge to enrich the writing process.

25% - Professional Development and Constructive Criticism. This evaluates professional behavior as a writer in class including behavior toward peers as well as the quality of your giving/receiving of constructive criticism.

50% - Completed Project/Final Exam. Your final project will be a full-length play or otherwise instructor-approved dramatic writing project typed in standard manuscript format (for plays, consult the current Dramatists’ Guild Resource Directory or Samuel French: http://www.samuelfrench.com/content/files/upload/General%20SFi%20Formatting%20Guidelines%20Complete.pdf). Suggested lengths: 45-85 pages for a play (max. 85), 90 for a screenplay, 50-60 for other. The manuscript will be professionally presented with card stock covers and genuine brass brads or silver rings. Note that lack of adherence to these guidelines will lower your grade, as they are professional standards to learn for professional development. Please do not plagiarize. [Many of you have trouble locating professional brass brads. Here is a link: http://www.amazon.com/Solid-Brass-Fasteners-Capacity-A7071505/dp/B00006IBK1; you will need ¼ inch or ⅛ inch depending on the thickness of your manuscript.] If your project falls apart due to poor presentation, it cannot be evaluated. Be mindful of the fact that if this happened in a professional setting, your work probably would not be considered.

Grading is determined on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96-100=A</td>
<td>88-90=B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-91=A-</td>
<td>85-87=B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-84=B-</td>
<td>78-80=C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-77=C</td>
<td>71-74=C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-70=D+</td>
<td>66-64=D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-63=D-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Failing Grade for Graduate Credit = C-]

When the average falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class has been good, but will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

The final project grade is evaluated on a percentage scale with the grade breaking down as follows: 25% Quality of structure/through-line/plotting, 25% Quality of character development, 25% Quality of dialogue development, 25% Quality of overall creative achievement and professionalism (i.e. editing, presentation, length, etc.).
**Grading Breakdown**

25% Weekly Grade (cultural analysis writing exercises, journal, etc.)
25% Writing Workshops and Project Cultivation, Professional Development and Constructive Criticism
50% Final Project

In keeping with SDA guidelines on grading:

- There shall be no unexcused absences.
- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercised shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

Assignments are to be submitted in class for weekly assignments and in hard copy, professional format as noted above, for the final projects.

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

1/12 Part I: Introduction and overview. Discussion of syllabus, plays, HOTHOUSE. Provide HOTHOUSE play. Interweaving of cultural elements and writing. What is mixed race culture? Observations, personal histories. Cultural Analysis Writing Exercise: two monologues, historical (pre 1950s) and contemporary views. Part II: 1/14, 8 pm, field trip: colorism, mixed race during U.S. historical slavery era. See above*.
1/19 – Holiday. No class. (Martin Luther King, Jr., Day)
1/26 – Hafu. Discussion. Cultural analysis writing exercise.
2/16 – Holiday. No class. (Presidents’ Day)
3/2 – Writing workshop, project cultivation, readings, peer and mentor dramaturgy, 20 pages due.
3/9 – Writing workshop, project cultivation, readings, peer and mentor dramaturgy, 30 pages due. Submit Tour Journal for review.
3/16 – Holiday. No class. (Spring Break)
3/23 – Writing workshop, project cultivation, first drafts due.
3/30 – Field trip: global mixed race, India/England. See above**.
4/6 – Writing workshop, exercises.
4/13 – Guest artist/speaker. Interactive discussion and analysis.
4/20 – Guest artist/speaker. Interactive discussion and analysis.
4/27 – Writing workshop. Last day of class. Final projects and Tour Journal due by noon on 5/1 in instructor’s box. No projects accepted after deadline.
5/8 – 11 am- 1 pm, FINAL EXAMINATION DATE. Please note that the Final Exam is mandatory on a day and time set by the University. Site TBD.

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand
and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus or http://scampus.usc.edu]) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/]. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the [Office of Equity and Diversity](http://equity.usc.edu/) or to the [Department of Public Safety](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us). This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The [Center for Women and Men](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the [American Language Institute](http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The [Office of Disability Services and Programs](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, [USC Emergency Information](http://emergency.usc.edu/) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.