

THTR 125: Text Studies for Production
Fall Semester 2016 Tues, Thursday 12.30 – 1.50
Location: Kaprelian 145

Instructor: Dr Louise Peacock

Office: Jefferson 202

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10 - 11. Please email for face to face appointments or skype appointments outside these times.

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Teaching Assistant or Assistant Instructor:

Contact Info:

Catalogue Description

This course encourages students to take initiative and develop independent, analytical thinking about dramatic texts through close and careful reading. This course will focus on learning techniques for taking a script and transforming it into a stage production. Using a range of plays as source material we will explore how to take a play apart to understand how it is put together and works as theatre. We will practice the dramaturgical methodologies actors, directors, and designers need to employ prior to rehearsal to understand the bones of a dramatic text and flesh it out into a production score. By the time we conclude, students should feel confident that they can approach any dramatic text they encounter and know how to begin exploring it on its own terms.

Course Overview

The course is structured as a seminar in which student discussion and analysis are primary.

- Students are encouraged to engage not only with peers in their respective sections but also with those in other sections.
- The course is taught by faculty from various areas within SDA, who meet to share teaching strategies and resources.
- The reading list comprises 5 plays, three of which are common to all sections of THTR 125 and two texts which vary per section.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed to equip students with basic analytical tools and interpretive perspectives that will enhance learning in all future SDA courses including acting, dramatic writing, directing, and tech/design. Our goals are:

- To offer students an in depth study of how dramatic texts work.

- To develop their ability to discover how the author provides them with the material they need to create a successful production
- To hone their ability to read and analyze these dramatic works deeply and to see them as dramatic scores.
- To improve their mindfulness of the collaborative relationships between actor, text, theatre event, and the audience as expressed in a dramatic text.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- *Awake and Sing* by Clifford Odets in *Waiting for Lefty and Other Plays* (Grove Press)
- *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare (Oxford World Classics)
- *Our Country's Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker
- *Water By the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes
- *Clybourne Park* by Bruce Norris

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Assignment	% of Grade
1. Written Assignment 1	15%
2. Midterm Assignment	20%
3. Written Assignment 2	20%
4. Final	20%
5. In class exercises	10%
6. Participation	15%
TOTAL:	100%

Grading Scale for SDA: **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

Grading Breakdown

Excellent: A (4) = 100-94; A- (3.7) = 93-90
 Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86; B (3) = 85-84; B- (2.7) = 83-80
 Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; C (2) = 75-74; C- (1.7) = 73-70
 Poor: the D range (1.3-0) = 60s; F (0) = 59 and below

“Excellent” indicates that the student couples clear understanding of the class material with original and creative insight; “Good” means that the student demonstrates a clear understanding of the material; “Average” indicates that the student demonstrates a general understanding of the material but with some gaps; “Poor” indicates that there are identifiable gaps in the student’s understanding of the class material; “Failure” is the result of the student not having completed his or her assignments coupled with poor understanding of the material.

- 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 have been good, and will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING:

- There shall be 3 graded assignments and a final examination as scheduled by USC.
- Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.
- There shall be no unexcused absences.
- **No late assignments** shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

WEEK 1	Class 1	INTRODUCTION
AMERICAN CLASSIC		
	Class 2	Begin <i>Awake and Sing</i>
WEEK 2	Class 3	Working with the text/the importance of research
	Class 4	Character: <i>Awake and Sing</i> ; Assign Written Assignment 1
WEEK 3	Class 5	Setting: <i>Awake and Sing</i>
	Class 6	Exploring Scenes: <i>Awake and Sing</i>
	9/8	<i>Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund</i>
WEEK 4	Class 7	Exploring Scenes: <i>Awake and Sing</i> ; <u>Written Assignment 1 due</u>
	Class 8	Finish <i>Awake and Sing</i>
SHAKESPEARE		
WEEK 5	Class 9	Working with the Text: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
	Class 10	Delivering the Lines: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
WEEK 6	Class 11	Character: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
	Class 12	Setting: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
WEEK 7	Class 13	Exploring Scenes: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
Play Three		
WEEK 8	Class 14	Intro to <i>Our Country's Good</i> <u>MIDTERM</u>
	Class 15	Working with the Text/Reading the narrative: <i>Our Country's Good</i> Assign Written Assignment 2
	Class 16	The three worlds of <i>Our Country's Good</i>
WEEK 9	Class 17	Character and Setting: <i>Our Country's Good</i>
	Class 18	Exploring scenes: <i>Our Country's Good</i> .
Play Four		
WEEK 10	Class 19	Begin <i>Water By the Spoonful</i>
	Class 20	Working With the Text: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>

WEEK 11	Class 21	Character and casting: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>
	Class 22	Setting: <i>Water By the Spoonful</i> Written Assignment 2 due
WEEK 12	Class 23	Exploring Scenes: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>
Play Five		
	Class 24	Begin Clybourne Park
	11/10	<i>Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W"</i>
WEEK 13	Class 25	Working with the text The two times of <i>Clybourne Park</i>
	Class 26	Character and multi-roling: <i>Clybourne Park</i>
WEEK 14	Class 27	Setting: <i>Clybourne Park</i>
	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING
WEEK 15	Class 28	Exploring Scenes: Clybourne Park
	Class 29	Final review. Class conclusions.

Assignments and deadlines:

Assignment 1: Close Reading of an extract (to be indicated by course leader) of *Awake and Sing*. Due Date: Tuesday 9/12 750 words

Midterm: Close Reading of an extract (to be indicated by course leader) of *Twelfth Night*. Due Date: Thursday 10/5 750 words.

Assignment 2: Script coverage. Provide "coverage" for Play 3 as if you were on the play selection committee of a theatre, play development conference, or grants agency, using the form supplied. Due Date: Friday 11/3 Word count as indicated on assignment form.

Final: A 1500 essay in response to a topic that you select from options provided by the course leader. Due Date: To be confirmed

In class exercises – for each unit you will be told in advance which exercises will contribute to this element of your grade.

Final Examination Date: To be confirmed.

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/>.

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* <https://dps.usc.edu/contact/report/>. 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. *Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP)* <http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage 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.