

# **STUDIES IN DRAMATIC ANALYSIS**

**#512**

**Section 63173**

**Fall 2014**

**DAVID BRIDEL**

2nd Floor DRC

323.791.6495

[bridel@usc.edu](mailto:bridel@usc.edu)

## **Office Hours**

Available by appointment. Call or email as above. Mentorship is an essential element of the instructional technique in the MFA program; make it a point to make an appointment.

## **Course Goals**

"The aim of art is not to represent the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance."

*Aristotle*

The goal of the course is to identify the major genres in western drama and, through ensemble collaboration, to use the knowledge of these genres as a springboard for original theatrical creation based on current research and interests.

## **Course Overview**

Dramatic structure is profoundly influenced by many genres that have evolved, through the ages, in response to currents of thought and current events, including;

- Tragedy
- Common tragedy
- High Comedy
- Comedies of Manners, Situation, & Character
- Satire
- Farce
- Tragi-comedy
- Realism
- Melodrama

Each of these genres offers up parameters that continue to shape the creative urges of artists of the theatre. This course aims, through the ensemble collaboration of participants, to investigate genre as a motivating and containing premise that informs and inspires new work.

During the initial weeks of the class, students will be grouped together in small units and asked to locate two stories of interest that are drawn from current world events. At the same time, plays that represent each of the genres above will be discussed in class, with particular attention paid to the genre-specific elements in the story, plot, theme, characterizations, and dialogue of the chosen works. Groups will then be asked to create a “storyboard” that *connects* the stories they have chosen to explore with one of the dramatic genres under discussion.

In the heart of the course, groups will be guided towards selecting one of their two initial stories as the foundation for an *original theatrical creation* of approximately 15 minutes in length. As they deepen in their understanding of the “genre territory” these stories inhabit, they will provide further examples of existing plays (and other fictional forms such as films or novels) that fit the genre within which they are working, and that help to inform and incite their evolving work. Discussions, once again, will revolve around story, plot, theme, characterizations, and dialogue.

In the final section of the course, the original work will be refined and developed until it is ready for presentation.

### **Supporting Materials**

Students will be asked to draw their original materials from current events. Recommended reading includes, but is not limited to, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Guardian, The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly, Harpers Bazaar, Huffington Post.

A wide range of authors, plays, books & films will be discussed throughout the course, and some of these plays will become important reference points as new work materializes. Students should have a working familiarity with several of the following authors and creators: Sophocles, Arthur Miller, Moliere, Marivaux, Jane Austen, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Feydeau, Lorca, Beckett, Caryl Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, Woody Allen, Pedro Almodovar, John Cassavetes, Jane Campion.

### **Class Meetings**

Th 3.30 – 5.50PM  
Location MCC 111

### **Final Exam**

TBA

## **Grading Policy**

- A work of excellent quality
- B work of fair quality
- C work of substandard quality
- D work of dire quality

## **Your grade is assessed according to**

Class Work – 50%

Midterm – 25%

Final – 25%

## **Attendance, Tardiness, Absences**

No absences are permitted except in case of illness or emergency.

No lateness permitted.

Violation of these requirements will result in grade deductions.

## **Course Assignments & Class Schedule**

- Text in **bold** indicates **assignment requiring preparation**.

### **WEEK**

- 1 Introduction, overview, initial exercise, and division of groups  
*Definitions of story • Story elements • Different ways to tell a story*
- 2 **Presentation of First Stories**  
*Research and source materials • Story structure • Dramatizing real life*
- 3 Genres: reading and discussion  
*Overview of genre • examples of Tragedy, Common tragedy, melodrama*
- 4 **Presentation of Second Stories**  
*Research and source materials • Story structure • Dramatizing real life*
- 5 Genres: reading and discussion  
*Continued overview of genre • examples of Comedy, Farce, Realism*
- 6 **Storyboard of First Stories**  
*Linking story with genre*

- 7           **Storyboard of Second Stories**  
*Linking story with genre*
- 8           **“Related works”**  
*Case studies of existing plays/films/novels that inspire*
- 9           **“Related works”**  
*Case studies of existing plays/films/novels that inspire*
- 10          Final choice of story to take to completion
- 11          **Workthru of projects groups 1,2,3**
- 12          **Workthru of projects groups 4,5**
- 13          **Workthru of projects - all**
- 14          No class - Thanksgiving
- 15          **Final readings and/or presentations**

**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](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](mailto: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](http://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.

