**THTR 125 Textual Analysis for Production**

**Tuesday/Thursday 9:30 – 10:50 am KAP 158**

**Dr. Melinda C. Finberg**

**Email: finberg@usc.edu** (replies within 24 hours, usually less)

**Skype:  melinda.finberg**   
**Office: MCC 212, phone: 760-3618**

**Office hours: Monday and Tuesday 11:15 -12:15 and by appointment**

**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:

* 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 Reading**

**Books Sold at Bookstore:**

* *Awake and Sing* by Clifford Odets in *Waiting for Lefty and Other Plays* (Grove Press)
* *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare (Oxford)
* *The Belle’s Stratagem* by Hannah Cowley in *Eighteenth-Century Women Dramatists* (ed. Finberg, Oxford)
* *Gem of the Ocean* by August Wilson (Theatre Communications Group)
* *Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegría Hudes (Theatre Communications Group)

**Suggested:**

* David Ball, *Backwards and Forwards* (Southern Illinois University Press)

**Assignments and Deadlines:**

Assignment 1: Close Reading of an extract (to be indicated by course leader) of *Awake and Sing.*  Due Date: Tuesday 9/13 750 words. (This assignment may be rewritten for re-evaluation with the permission of the Instructor)

Midterm: Close Reading of an extract (to be indicated by course leader) of *Twelfth Night.*  Due Date: Tuesday 10/4 750 words.

Assignment 2: How would realise a scene/script coverage (This assignment may be rewritten for re-evaluation with the permission of the Instructor)

In class exercises – quizzes and impromptu writing assignments. These cannot be made up or rewritten.

Final: Two essays from a choice of questions. Each question will require reference to two plays.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Written Assignment 1** | **15%** |
| **Midterm Assignment** | **20%** |
| **Written Assignment 2** | **20%** |
| **In Class Exercises** | **10%** |
| **Final** | **20%** |
| **Class Participation** | **15%** |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |

**Grading Policy**

Excellent: A (4) = 100-93; 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) = 73-70

* “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. If you need to be absent due to illness or emergency, please send me an email.
* **No late assignments** shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

**Academic Conduct**

**Electronic Devices**

The use of electronic devices (such as laptops, cellphones, tablets, etc.) is not permitted in the classroom. Use of these devices will result in your being asked to leave the classroom and being counted as absent for that day.

**Exception:** If you have a different learning style that requires you to use a laptop or tablet in the classroom, please provide your instructor with a letter from the Office of Disability Services and Programs and an exception will be granted to you.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of the ideas or wording of another writer. Plagiarism undermines the intellectual collaboration -- the exchange of ideas -- that should mark academic discourse because it permits the writer to avoid any genuine involvement with the concepts or opinions of others. Because the false discourse of plagiarism corrupts values to which the university community is fundamentally committed -- the pursuit of knowledge, intellectual honesty **-- plagiarism is considered a grave violation of academic integrity and the sanctions against it are correspondingly severe (sanctions recommended by the university range from a grade of "F" in the course to suspension from the university). Most simply, plagiarism can be characterized as "academic theft."**

As defined in the University Student Conduct Code (published in the current [*SCampus*](http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/scampus97/governance/gov05.html)), plagiarism includes:

* "The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form;"
* "The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style;" and
* "Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers." (§11.11)

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/>

**Sexual Harrassment & Reporting**

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/*](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.

**Course Outline**

**All readings should be completed before arriving to class on the listed day.**

**Tuesday, August 23**

Introduction

**AMERICAN CLASSIC**

**Thursday, August 25**

Begin *Awake and Sing*

**Tuesday, August 30**

Continue *Awake and Sing;* Assign Written Assignment 1

**Thursday, September 1**

Continue *Awake and Sing*

**Tuesday, September 6**

 Continue *Awake and Sing*

**Thursday, September 8**

Continue *Awake and Sing*

**Tuesday, September 13**

Continue *Awake and Sing*; Written Assignment 1 due

**Thursday, September 15**

Finish *Awake and Sing*

**SHAKESPEARE**

**Tuesday, September 20**

Begin *Twelfth Night*

**Thursday, September 22**

Continue *Twelfth Night*

**Tuesday, September 27**

Continue *Twelfth Night*

**Thursday, September 29**

Continue *Twelfth Night*

**Tuesday, October 4**

Finish *Twelfth Night* (Rosh Hashanah)

***THE BELLE’S STRATAGEM***

**Thursday, October 6**

Begin *The Belle’s Stratagem* MIDTERM

**Tuesday, October 11**

Continue *The Belle’s Stratagem* Assign Written Assignment 2

**Thursday, October 13**

Continue *The Belle’s Stratagem*

**Tuesday, October 18**

Continue *The Belle’s Stratagem*

**Thursday, October 20**

Finish *The Belle’s Stratagem*

***GEM OF THE OCEAN***

**Tuesday, October 25**

Begin *Gem of the Ocean*

**Thursday, October 27**

Continue *Gem of the Ocean*

**Tuesday, November 1**

Continue *Gem of the Ocean*

**Thursday, November 3**

Continue *Gem of the Ocean* Written Assignment 2 due

**Tuesday, November 8**

Finish *Gem of the Ocean*

***WATER BY THE SPOONFUL***

**Thursday, November 10**

Begin *Water by the Spoonful*

**Tuesday, November 15**

Continue *Water by the Spoonful*

**Thursday, November 17**

Continue *Water by the Spoonful*

**Tuesday, November 22**

 Continue *Water by the Spoonful*

**Thursday, November 23**

**Thanksgiving**  **No Class!**

**Tuesday, November 29**

Finish *Water by the Spoonful*

**Thursday, December 1**

Final Class: Review, Conclusions, etc.

**Last day to submit rewrites of papers**

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 8 11am – 1pm**