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**THTR 125 Textual Analysis for Production**

**Fall 2018 Monday/Wednesday 12:30 – 1:50**

**GFS 223**

**VKC 157**

**Dr. Melinda C. Finberg** 

**Office:** MCC 212

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Wednesday 10:30 – 11:30 am Please contact me to set up an appointment. If these times don’t work for you, let me know and I will try to work out a time for you

**Contact Info:** finberg@usc.ed

**Teaching Assistant:** Laurie Fischer.

**Contact Info:** Email, phone number (office, cell), Skype, etc.

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**Course Description and Overview**

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.

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 Readings and Supplementary Materials**

**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)
* *Backwards and Forwards* by David Ball(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 9/10 on Blackboard Turnitin under Assignments, by 11:59 pm, 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: Monday 10/15 on Blackboard Turnitin under Assignments, by 11:59 pm 750 words. Assignment may NOT be rewritten

Assignment 2: How you would realize a scene/script coverage (This assignment may be rewritten for re-evaluation with the permission of the Instructor) Due Date: Wednesday, 10/31, by 11:59 pm

In class exercises – quizzes and impromptu writing assignments. These cannot be made up or rewritten. There will also be several non-essay short assignments.

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

**Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments**

**Guidelines on Grading**

Rubrics for each assignment will be posted on Blackboard with the Assignment.

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

* **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.
* 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.

Attendance/Participation 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.

**Grading Breakdown**

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

**Electronic Devices**

The use of electronic devices (such as laptops, cellphones, tablets, etc.) is not permitted in the classroom, unless assigned for a particular class session. 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.

**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* <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. Bring texts to class.**

**Monday, August 20**

Introduction

Elinor Fuchs, “Visit to a Small Planet”

**Short Assignment Due Wednesday, August 22: Make a picture collage or a word map of Act I of *Awake and Sing.***

**AMERICAN CLASSIC**

**Wednesday, August 22**

Begin *Awake and Sing*

Look at and discuss products of first assignment

Brief lecture on Clifford Odets and the Group Theatre

Discuss Part 1 of David Ball’s *Backwards and Forwards* and begin to apply to *Awake and Sing,* Act 1

**Monday, August 27**

*Awake and Sing*

Begin discussion of what constitutes “close reading”

Apply close reading to a portion of Act 1

**Short assignment due Wednesday, August 29: a practice close reading**

**Discuss Major Assignment 1 due Friday, September 7**

**Wednesday, August 29**

*Awake and Sing*

Focus on Act II

Discuss practice close reading

Practice Ball’s structural analysis on Act II

**Short Assignment due Wednesday, September 5: Give a structural analysis of the events of Act III, backwards, as per Ball**

**Monday, September 3**

**Labor Day – No class**

**Wednesday, September 5**

*Awake and Sing*

Evaluation of text analysis thus far

Begin *Twelfth Night*

**Short assignment due Wednesday, September 12: picture map of world of *Twelfth Night***

**Extra Credit Assignment: Using techniques we discussed in class, prepare a short speech from *Twelfth Night* for class presentation**

**Friday, September 7 Written Assignment 1 due 11:59 pm on Blackboard**

**SHAKESPEARE**

**Monday, September 10**

Lecture on Shakespearean Language

**Wednesday, September 12**

*Twelfth Night*, Act I

Brief lecture on Shakespeare and the theatre of his day

Discuss word pictures

What is the stasis? What is the intrusion? How does Shakespeare use images to create his world?

Five scenes: introductions to the different plots

**Monday, September 17**

*Twelfth Night*, Act II

Different kinds of love/Different interpretations

Watch two different versions

**Wednesday, September 19**

*Twelfth Night*, Act III

Viola/Olivia scenes and structure

**Monday, September 24**

*Twelfth Night,* Act IV

Malvolio plot

In class practice close reading

Editing session on first paper

**Wednesday, September 26**

*Twelfth Night,* Act V

Performing Extra Credit passages

Watch more scenes

**Announce Midterm Close Reading Essay, due Monday, October 15**

***THE BELLE’S STRATAGEM***

**Monday, October 1 Rewrite of Odet’s Closer Reading due on Blackboard**

Begin *The Belle’s Stratagem*

Lecture on Hannah Cowley, Restoration and 18th-Century Comedy, and Women Playwrights

Look at Act I, scene 1 – stasis, intrusion, exposition, conflict

**Wednesday, October 3 Optional: Last date to submit draft of Midterm Essay**

Pictures from Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of *The Belle’s Stratagem*

*The Belle’s Stratagem* Act I Doricourt/Letitia plot

Social Commentary scenes

Presentational vs. Representational acting, Brecht

**Monday, October 8**

*The Belle’s Stratagem* Act II Touchwood Plot -- adaptation from Wycherley’s *The Country Wife*

**Short Assignment due Wednesday, October 10: Picture map of world of *Belle’s Stratagem***

**Wednesday, October 10**

*The Belle’s Stratagem,* Act III

Discuss word maps

The Bumpkin scene and drinking at Courtall’s

Analyzing Hardy’s speech

**Monday, October 15 MIDTERM Essay due 11:59 pm on Blackboard**

*The Belle’s Stratagem,* Act IV The Masquerade

Brief lecture on 18th-century masquerade

Reflections and Inversions

Kitty Willis

**Discuss Written Assignment 2: Script Coverage due Wednesday, October 31**

**Wednesday, October 17**

*The Belle’s Stratagem,* Act V

What is different about how Cowley treats the comedy of manners? How is it like or unlike today’s Rom-Coms?

Look at play from Ball’s backwards perspective. How did we arrive here?

Class conversation about understanding text analysis of historical plays

***GEM OF THE OCEAN***

**Monday, October 22**

Begin *Gem of the Ocean*

Short lecture on August Wilson and his Pittsburgh Cycle

Romare Bearden paintings

Read Prologue and Act I, scene 1 in class

**Short Assignment due Wednesday, October 24: Picture map of world of *Gem of the Ocean***

**Wednesday, October 24**

*Gem of the Ocean,*  Act I, scenes 2 – 3

Discuss picture maps

Who are these characters?

What was the stasis? What was the intrusion?

**Read Teniece Johnson article on Blackboard for Monday, October 30**

**Monday, October 29**

Continue *Gem of the Ocean,* Act 1, scenes 4-5

Elevated language

Discuss Johnson article and character of Black Mary

Watch scenes

**Wednesday, October 31 Script Coverage Assignment due on Blackboard**

Continue *Gem of the Ocean*

City of Bones

Role of Ritual and Initiation – how does it operate?

Watch scenes

**Monday, November 5**

Finish *Gem of the Ocean*

Resolutions

How did we get here?

***WATER BY THE SPOONFUL***

**Wednesday, November 7**

Begin *Water by the Spoonful*

Short lecture on Hudes and Jazz and the Elliot trilogy

Listen to music

Discuss technology – role of the internet – how to stage?

**Monday, November 12**

*Water by the Spoonful*

Discuss the world(s) of the play

Read key scenes in class

**Short Assignment: Word or picture map of *Water by the Spoonful* due Wednesday, November 14**

**Wednesday, November 14**

*Water by the Spoonful*

Discuss maps

Discuss family conflicts and relations

**Monday, November 19**

 Continue *Water by the Spoonful*

Visit from Professor Wickersheimer to discuss set she designed for Oregon Shakespeare Festival

**Wednesday, November 22**

**Thanksgiving**  **No Class!**

**Monday, November 26**

*Water by the Spoonful*

How does the language of this play compare to the others we have looked at this semester?

How does this play connect to the audience?

What different tools do you as actor, director, or designer need to bring to this play to analyze the text?

**Wednesday, November 28**

Final Class: Review, Conclusions, etc. **Deadline for Rewrites of Assignment 2**

**Final Exam: Friday, December 7 11 am – 1pm deadline**