



THTR 312 – LGBTQ Theatre

62874R/Units: 4

Fall 2018 — TUES, THURS — 8:00-9:50am

Location: KDC 241

Instructor: Boni B. Alvarez

Office: MCC 214

Office Hours: TUES, THURS - by appointment

Contact Info: bbalvare@usc.edu

(I will reply as soon as I can, but please allow 36 hours for a response.)

Course Description

This course explores the range and genealogy of LGBTQ theatre and performance across political, historical, and theatrical contexts. Plays surveyed are from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries of American theatre with specific attention paid to the tropes of 'coming out' plays, plays dealing with the AIDS crisis and 'identity' plays. We will also investigate contemporary plays dealing with the dramatization of queer identities and sexuality in historical contexts.

Learning Objectives

- Students will broaden their dramatic literacy with a specific appreciation for LGBTQ theatre and performance.
- This course cultivates the students' abilities for dramatic analysis and critical thinking via class discussion and through writing essays on close readings of the texts.
- Develop a knowledge of queer narratives and creative readings of canonical texts through an adaptation assignment.
- Analyze intersectional identities in LGBTQ plays, playwrights, and performance.

Required Readings – Texts marked with an asterisk (*) have been ordered through the USC Bookstore. All other texts will be distributed electronically or as hard copies.

- Alvarez, Boni B. *Fixed*
- *Deen, Mashuq Mushtaq. *Draw the Circle*
- Dolan, Jill. *Theatre & Sexuality*
- *Greenberg, Richard. *Take Me Out*
- Jolly, Donald. *bonded*
- Kaufman, MJ. *Masculinity Max*
- *Kramer, Larry. *The Normal Heart*
- Kron, Lisa & Tesori, Jeanine. *Fun Home*
- Moraga, Cherie. *Giving Up the Ghost*
- *Vogel, Paula. *Indecent*

Additional Readings – These texts will be distributed as needed, via hard copy or electronically.

- Drake, David. *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*
- Rabe, David. *A Question of Mercy*
- Sanchez, Edwin. *Trafficking in Broken Hearts*
- Yew, Chay. *A Language of Their Own*

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Participation – 15%

Students must participate in the discussion topics, demonstrate preparedness of the assigned readings, and practice active listening. Many ideas, questions, and opinions will arise; students should be respectful in the ensuing dialogue.

Close Reading Paper – 10%

This paper will deal with a close reading of a scene from *Fun Home* or *Take Me Out*. This paper will examine a particular scene or song. Papers must have a thesis and include textual evidence. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Analysis Paper – 20%

This paper will deal with the idea of the queer body as dramatized in *bonded* or *Indecent* or *Draw the Circle*. Papers must have a thesis and include textual evidence. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Midterm - Group Presentation – 20%

Students will be divided into groups for this assignment. Each group will be assigned a contemporary play by the instructor which grapples with the AIDS epidemic. Groups will present on the play's dramaturgical relation to Kramer's *The Normal Heart*. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Adaptation Presentation – 20%

Students will choose a play from the theatrical canon and present a pitch for a queer adaptation of the play to the class. This is a creative assignment which will require a synopsis, character breakdown, visual aids, and a dialogue sample. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Final Paper – 15%

A final paper surveying the texts studied over the course of the semester, evaluating what essentials a play requires to fall under the LGBTQ Theatre umbrella. Looking at the current trends of contemporary plays, where is the field headed or in what ways it may be behind. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Grading Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Participation	15
Close Reading Paper	10
Analysis Paper	20
Midterm - Group Presentation	20
Adaptation Presentation	20
Final Paper	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.

A+: 100-98	A: 97-94	A-: 93-90
B+: 89-87	B: 86-84	B-: 83-80
C+: 79-77	C: 76-74	C-: 73-70
D+: 69-67	D: 66-64	D-: 63-60
F: 59-0		

When a student's mathematical GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted towards the higher end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been excellent or good and toward the lower end for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

Assignment Submission Policy

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Additional Policies

Attendance is compulsory. Unexcused absences will affect your grade adversely – if you are not in class, you are not participating in the class discussion. It is your responsibility to secure class notes from your classmates. If you are absent on a day you are scheduled to give a presentation, you will receive a 0 for the assignment. There will be no make-up assignments.

Technology - Please be respectful of the class and your colleagues - CELL PHONE USE IS PROHIBITED. NO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ON LAPTOPS/TABLETS, ETC.

WK	DATE	WEEKLY SCHEDULE
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1 LGBTQ THEATRE – Introductions

TUES 8/21	What qualifies as LGBTQ? Play excerpts: Brittain's <i>Rotterdam</i> ; Fornes' <i>Mud</i> ; Son's <i>Stop Kiss</i> ; Williams' <i>Streetcar Named Desire</i>
THURS 8/23	Dolan's <i>Theatre & Sexuality</i> (foreward, p 1-5, 13-15); Savran's <i>The Playwright's Voice</i> (McNally chapter)

2 COMING OUT (-OF-AGE)

TUES 8/28	Kron & Tesori's <i>Fun Home</i>
THURS 8/30	<i>Theatre & Sexuality</i> (p 35-38)
3 TUES 9/4	<i>Fun Home</i> (cont)
THURS 9/6	Greenberg's <i>Take Me Out</i>
4 TUES 9/11	<i>Take Me Out</i> (cont)
THURS 9/13	CLOSE READING PAPER DUE (by 11:59pm)

5 HISTORY – Inclusion, Documentation & Revision

TUES 9/18	Jolly's <i>bonded</i>
THURS 9/20	
6 TUES 9/25	TBA
THURS 9/27	Vogel's <i>Indecent</i>
7 TUES 10/2	<i>Indecent</i> (cont); <i>The Playwright's Voice</i> (Vogel chapter)
THURS 10/4	

8 AIDS

TUES 10/9	Kramer's <i>The Normal Heart</i>
THURS 10/11	<i>Theatre & Sexuality</i> (p 9-11)
9 TUES 10/16	<i>The Normal Heart</i> (cont)
THURS 10/18	MIDTERM - GROUP PRESENTATIONS

10 CONTEMPORARY IDENTITIES & INTERSECTIONALITIES

TUES 10/23	Deen's <i>Draw the Circle</i>
THURS 10/25	<i>Theatre & Sexuality</i> (p 43-48)
11 TUES 10/30	Moraga's <i>Giving Up the Ghost</i>
THURS 11/1	ANALYSIS PAPER DUE (by 11:59pm)
12 TUES 11/6	Kaufman's <i>Masculinity Max</i>
THURS 11/8	
13 TUES 11/13	<i>Masculinity Max</i> (cont)
THURS 11/15	Alvarez's <i>Fixed</i>
14 TUES 11/20	<i>Fixed</i> (cont)
THURS 11/22	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
15 TUES 11/27	ADAPTATION PRESENTATIONS
THURS 11/29	ADAPTATION PRESENTATIONS

FINAL	TUES 12/11	4:30-6:30
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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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. 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, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

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://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://dsp.usc.edu> 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.