

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

**THTR 225 Theatre Across History and Cultures  
62773D**  
**Spring 2019 Tuesday/Thursday 12 – 1:50 pm**  
**Location:** KAP 158

**Instructor: Paula Cizmar**

**Office:** JEF 201, 950 W. Jefferson, Los Angeles 90089

**Office Hours:** Available: Tues 2:30 – 4 pm ; Wed 11 am – 1 pm;  
Thurs 10:30 - 11:30 am; please note that office hours are by  
appointment only; contact me via email or phone, at least 24 hours in  
advance. For appointments outside these hours, I am available by  
videoconference on Skype.

**Contact Info:** cizmar@usc.edu; 323.376.1216 mobile;  
[www.paulacizmar.com](http://www.paulacizmar.com)

**Teaching Assistant: Ryan McRee**

**Office:** MCC

**Office Hours:** TBD – contact for an appointment

**Contact Info:** rmcree@usc.edu 925.719.4734

**ITHelp:** USC Information Technology Services

<http://itservices.usc.edu>; School of Dramatic Arts – Mr. Prakash

## Course Description

*Catalogue description: THTR 225. The analysis of a range of plays from different times and cultures with a consideration of the roles of actor, director, dramaturg, and designer. This course satisfies the university's general education requirement.*

## Course Overview

This course explores seven to eight touchstone theatre texts for the purpose of honing students' skills in critical and artistic analysis. While the plays selected may vary year to year or section to section, they will always include at least one work from ancient Greece and one from the Restoration/18th century. They will also always include a range of writers including Chekhov as well as a minimum of two plays by women and at least two plays by artists of color. (There may be overlap in these categories.) Students will make connections across cultures and historic periods through close textual reading and investigation of how a text functions as performance. Student will engage with the texts both as scholars and as potential actors, directors, dramaturgs, and designers.

## Learning Objectives

- To build knowledge and appreciation of the ideas and controversies addressed by the selected texts in their cultural, historical, and theatrical contexts. (GE Context)
- To handle a range of analytical, research, and practical methodologies in critical studies. (GE Analysis)

- To analyze a range of texts from different periods of history and different cultures through close and careful reading. (GE Analysis)
- To make connections and contrasts between works of different historic periods and cultures. (GE Connectivity)
- To expand the student's knowledge about the creative process, as exemplified by specific works studied, by the student's making creative work in response. (GE Making)
- To write clearly and cogently in pursuit of a thesis, using appropriate textual and critical evidence. (GE Analysis and Context)

**Prerequisite(s):** none

**Co-Requisite (s):** none

**Concurrent Enrollment:** none

**Recommended Preparation:** THTR 125

### **Course Notes**

Grading type: Letter grade.

**Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required** n/a

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

This course will be delivered in sections. In each section, students encounter plays from the following categories: Greek theatre, Restoration/18<sup>th</sup> century theatre, and a play by Chekhov. The remaining plays may be chosen from any culture or period but all students must be exposed to writers of all genders and from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds.

### **Primary Texts for Section 62773D (studied in this order)**

Sophocles. *Antigone* (Anne Carson translation; published by Oberon Classics)

Susanna Centlivre. *The Busybody*. (available in the anthology *18<sup>th</sup>-Century Women Dramatists* or as a Google e-book)

Anton Chekhov. *The Cherry Orchard* (Sharon Carnicke translation; Hackett Classics)

Tanya Saracho. *El Nogalar*.

Alice Childress. *Trouble in Mind*. (available via the USC library ARES program)

August Wilson. *Radio Golf*.

Paula Vogel. *Indecent*.

## Secondary Texts

Peter Brooks. *The Empty Space*. (excerpt provided; entire book highly recommended)

Anne Enright. "Antigone in Galway," *London Review of Books*, Vol. 37 No. 24 (17 December 2015), pp 11-14. (link provided)

Susan Jonas. "The Other Canon – 10 Centuries of Plays by Women," *Gender DisParity, American Theatre* (October 2015). (link provided)

"The Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Stages," Melinda Finberg, in *18<sup>th</sup>-Century Women Dramatists*. (excerpt provided)

Stuart Young. "A Blind Spot – Chekhov's Deepest Horizons," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* (Spring 2007). (excerpt provided)

Lenora Inez Brown. *The Art of Active Dramaturgy: Transforming Critical Thought into Dramatic Action*. (excerpt provided)

Hilton Als. "Black and Blue – A New Look at Alice Childress," *New Yorker*. (link provided)

Joyce Hope Scott. "'The Emancipated Century': Remapping History, Reclaiming Memory in August Wilson's Dramatic Landscapes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," in *August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Sandra G. Shannon. (excerpt provided)

Susan Reimer-Torn. "The Brothel Owner and the Milkman," *Jewish Currents* (April 2017).

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

In addition to the mid-term and the final, there will be two written assignments and one creative assignment. See details below grading breakdown.

## Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of grade
1. Critical Analysis Responses (set of 7)	100	20
Midterm – Critical Paper (Topic options provided)		15
2. Annotated Bibliography and Writing Plan for Critical Paper	100	15
3. Advanced Critical Paper with Bibliography (Topic: Writer's choice)	100	20
Final – Creative Assignment	100	15
Participation	100	15
<b>Total</b>	(weighted)	100

**Detailed Description of Assignments:**

**Assignment 1: Critical Analysis Responses.** (Ultimately, there will be a total of seven of these responses, one for each play. Taken together, they will make up 20 percent of the grade.) The critical analysis response is a brief assessment of what you have read. You will write a critical analysis response for each play, DUE AT EACH CLASS MEETING where we begin to discuss the play. (These are due *even if you are absent*.) Each critical analysis response includes a discussion topic that you create.

The response should be ½ page, single-spaced, typed, using bullets. Address each of the following:

1. Action (This is one sentence that captures the action of the play. Succinct. Not a summary.)
2. Conflict
3. Social context (For the world of the play and the world of the playwright)
4. Theatricality (Either the specific stage conventions relative to the play, the play's period, or the potential for imaginative staging, spectacle, etc.)
5. Images/Symbols
6. Playwright's intention
7. Plot structure (This is the type of plot, not a re-hash of the plot)
8. Discussion topic

Note: For the first play, *Antigone*, address only points 1, 2, 3, and 8. In addition, for the first play, please bring two copies of the CAR, due at the beginning of class, and also submit it via Turnitin. For subsequent plays, if we become proficient using the IT in the classroom, the CARs may be submitted electronically via Turnitin—but must be time-stamped before class begins, and you must have access to them during the class.

**Midterm: Critical Paper.** Students will be offered a choice of questions. Responses must draw on either text #1, #2, or #3 and will be expected to offer a detailed analysis of the chosen play presented in a clearly argued thesis. (4 – 5 pages) Please note: All papers must be labeled with your name and class number; type this paper double-spaced with a 12-point font. Please give your paper a title. Submit it via Turnitin. (Guidelines will be available on Blackboard.)

**Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography and Writing Plan for Advanced Critical Paper.** Students will be given topic suggestions for the Advanced Critical Paper (or will have the option of proposing their own topic) and will produce an annotated bibliography that details the research they are carrying out as part of their preparation for writing the paper. Students will be expected to include both primary texts and at least six secondary sources (chapters, articles, books) that relate to the topic they have chosen. For each

secondary resource entry students will write 4 – 5 sentences explaining why the chosen source is relevant to their selected topic. (Total 2 – 3 pages). In addition, students will create a proposed thesis sentence, and will write a brief description of how they intend to write the paper. This could be an outline, or a bulleted list of proposed arguments to be made, or a set of notes on the process and relevance of the topic. Total, including the annotated bibliography and the writing plan = approximately 4 pages.

**Assignment 3: Advanced Critical Paper with Bibliography.** Students will write a critical paper that compares and contrasts at least two plays studied in the course. Please ensure that the plays discussed in the advanced critical paper include at least one of the plays studied later in the course. (These will be specified by the course instructor.) Questions/topics will be suggested in the guidelines for this paper with the intention of encouraging students to develop a clear thesis in response to the question chosen. (6 – 7 pages)

**Final: Creative Assignment.** Using text #6 or #7, students choose one of the following options and respond to the task with reference to the whole play:

- ❖ Design: Students choosing to focus on design should submit annotated sketches for either set, lighting, or projection design. The annotations should indicate how the design choices made were influenced by the text. Additionally, students should submit a 2-page reflection that assesses the effectiveness of their designs. (Annotated sketches plus 2- page reflection)
- ❖ Director’s Notes: Students should create director’s notes for one or two scenes. These notes should indicate the directorial vision for the particular scene(s). The notes should also place these scenes in the context of the whole play to demonstrate how the scenes illustrate the characters, narrative, theme, imagery, and theatricality of the play. (3 – 4 pages).
- ❖ Dramaturgical Notes: Imagining that they are fulfilling the role of production dramaturg, students should carry out the necessary research to present key information (historical, theatrical, cultural, societal) which the director, actors, and designers would need to be aware of in order to realize the play effectively. Research notes should be annotated to indicate the ways in which the research is relevant to the play. (3 – 4 pages).
- ❖ Program Notes: Students create a set of program notes to introduce the audience members to the author of the play, the historical period in which the play was

written, the narrative and thematic concerns of the play, and its production history. (3 – 4 pages).

### **Assignment Submission Policy**

All assignments should be submitted via Turnitin on Blackboard following the Guidelines for each specific assignment under Assignments.

### **Grading Policy**

**Grading Scale for SDA:** **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of acceptable quality; **D** of poor quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work/failure.

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

Acceptable: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; C (2) = 75-74; C- (1.7) = 73-70

Poor: D+ (1.3) = 69 – 66; D = 65-64 (1); D = 63 - 60 (0.7) = 60s;

F (0) = 59 and below

- “Excellent” indicates that the student couples clear understanding of the class material with original and creative insight, as demonstrated by their work; “Good” means that the student demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and has done the work well; “Acceptable” 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.

### **Additional Policies**

**Note: The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING state that:**

- There shall be no unexcused absences.
- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur. Under such exceptional circumstances, no late penalties will accrue.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of 100 percent of the material covered in class. No absence or tardiness is allowed. Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.

### How is participation determined?

Participation includes: presentations; in-class exercises; discussion; turning in your assignments on time; etc. The participation grade is determined as follows: For each class session, you get a check mark for showing up (which constitutes a B); you get a check mark with a plus sign (+) if you participate actively and diligently (which constitutes an A); you get a check mark with a negative sign (-) if your participation is less than adequate (which constitutes a C). If you are not present, you get a zero. Multiple zeros will trigger the lowering of your participation grade.

### **Additional Policies**

Participation is essential and figures into your grade. Your participation is necessary not only for the development of your own work, but for the development of your colleagues' work as well. Please honor your obligation to your colleagues' work and contribute to the discussion.

1. You are entering into a collaborative relationship with fellow students and, thus, it is your responsibility to be available to your workshop colleagues for feedback, analysis, and support.
2. All class members must be treated with respect.
3. You are required to attend the workshop and to be on time. Tardiness is defined as being 15 minutes late or more. Excessive tardiness will affect your ongoing writing and participation grade.
4. Though SDA's policy states that there are no unexcused absences, please note that I will excuse absences for certain specific reasons. Absences that may be excused include those that are for reasons of illness or emergency, and you must notify me in writing (preferably in advance). For the most part, if you are doing your work diligently and if you communicate with me, I will excuse a legitimate absence.
5. All assignments, written and/or otherwise, must be prepared on time and turned in (or presented) on the deadline date. Late assignments will be marked down due to the missed deadline. Assignments not turned in within a week of deadline count as missed assignments (zero credit).
6. IF YOU MISS CLASS: It is your responsibility—and SOLELY YOUR RESPONSIBILITY—to make up work you have missed and to obtain information about missed class discussions or missed assignments from your classmates or Blackboard, **not from me**. I will not be repeating lectures or class discussion; you will need to make arrangements to do independent research on whatever topics you have missed to keep up with the workshop. You will also need to keep in contact with your classmates to obtain notes and/or information re: what you missed. Again: Do not request notes or information from me. Course materials can be found on the Blackboard site for this course. For your syllabus, handouts, etc., go to Blackboard.
7. Please check your e-mail regularly to see if there are any changes in class meeting place, etc. On rare occasions, it becomes necessary to schedule a new location for class meeting. If I am unable to provide you with this information in the preceding class, I will send you the information via e-mail and/or text message.

8. We're going green in this classroom, so you will be turning in your assignments on Blackboard and you will be doing your presentations by **projecting your documents onto the screen in the classroom from your computer**, thus eliminating the need for paper. Instructions on how to do this will be provided. For collaborations, you may work on Google documents that may be team-edited via Google Drive.
9. If you desire an appointment with me, you are required to contact me via e-mail or text message at least 24 hours in advance, otherwise there is no guarantee I will receive your message with sufficient time to make arrangements to meet with you. Please note that I have included multiple ways to contact me on the front page of this syllabus.

**Course Schedule:**

	<b>Topics/Daily Activities</b>	<b>Readings and Homework</b>	<b>Deliverable/ Due Dates</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 8 & Jan 10	<u>General Intro and Text 1</u> 1. Introduction to Critical Analysis Response terms and elements of a play. 2. Historical Context; Textual reading	<u>Text 1</u> <i>Sophocles' Antigone</i>	<b>Beginning of Written Assignment 1: Critical Analysis Response – <i>Antigone</i></b>
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 15 & Jan 17	<u>Text 1 continued</u> 1. Structure, meter, poetics in Greek theatre. 2. Theatre and social justice - -Classical themes in a contemporary world	<u>Text 1 continued</u> Anne Enright, "Antigone in Galway," <i>London Review of Books</i> , Vol. 37 No. 24 (17 December 2015), pp 11-14. (link provided)	

<p><b>Week 3</b> Jan 22 &amp; Jan 24</p>	<p><u>Text 1 continued</u> 1. Purpose of Antigone 2. Purpose of Theatre</p> <p><u>Text 2</u> 1. Textual Reading 2. Cultural Context</p>	<p><u>Text 2</u> Susanna Centlivre's <i>The Busybody</i></p>	<p><b>Written Assignment 1, pt 2: Critical Analysis Response – <i>The Busybody</i></b></p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Jan 29 &amp; Jan 31</p>	<p><u>Text 2 continued</u> 1. Comedy in 18<sup>th</sup>-century theatre 2. Characters and contradictions</p>	<p><u>Text 2 continued</u> Susan Jonas. "The Other Canon – 10 Centuries of Plays by Women," <i>Gender DisParity, American Theatre</i> (Oct 2015).</p> <p>Melinda Finberg, "The Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Stages," in <i>18<sup>th</sup>-Century Women Dramatists</i>.</p>	<p><b>Assign Midterm: Critical Paper. Guidelines provided on Blackboard. Due February 12.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Feb 5 &amp; Feb 7</p>	<p><u>Text 3</u> 1. Historical Context 2. Textual reading</p>	<p><u>Text 3</u> Chekhov's <i>The Cherry Orchard</i></p>	<p><b>Written Assignment 1, pt 3: Critical Analysis Response – <i>The Cherry Orchard</i></b></p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> Feb 12 &amp; Feb 14</p>	<p><u>Text 3 continued</u> 1. Comedy or drama in performing Chekhov</p>	<p><u>Text 3 continued</u> Stuart Young, "A Blind Spot – Chekhov's Deepest Horizons," <i>Journal of Dramatic Theory and</i></p>	<p><b>Midterm due February 12.</b></p>

	2. Characters and subtext	<i>Criticism</i> (Spring 2007).	
<b>Week 7</b> Feb 19 & Feb 21	<u>Text 4</u> 1. Historical context 2. Saracho in conversation with Chekhov + How to prepare an annotated bibliography.	<u>Text 4</u> Tanya Saracho's <i>El Nogalar</i>	<b>Written Assignment 1, pt 4: Critical Analysis Response – <i>El Nogalar</i></b>  <b>Assign Written Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography and Writing Plan for Advanced Critical Paper. Due March 7.</b>
<b>Week 8</b> Feb 26 & Feb 28	<u>Texts 3 &amp; 4 continued</u> 1. Adaptation and transposition 2. Text and Theatricality	<u>Texts 3 &amp; 4 continued</u> Lenora Inez Brown, <i>The Art of Active Dramaturgy: Transforming Critical Thought into Dramatic Action.</i> (excerpt provided)	
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 5 & Mar 7	<u>Text 5</u> 1. Historical and cultural context 2. Textual reading	<u>Text 5</u> Alice Childress' <i>Trouble in Mind</i>  <b>NO CLASS MARCH 12 and MARCH 14 – SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>Written Assignment 1, pt 5: Critical Analysis Response – <i>Trouble in Mind</i></b>  <b>Written Assignment 2 due March 7.</b>
<b>Week 10</b> Mar 19 & Mar 21	<u>Text 5 continued</u> 1. Race and diversity in the American theatre	<u>Text 5 continued</u> Hilton Als, "Black and Blue – A New Look at Alice Childress," <i>New</i>	<b>Assign Written Assignment 3: Advanced Critical Paper. Due April 4.</b>

	2. Character analysis	<i>Yorker</i> . (link provided)	
<b>Week 11</b> Mar 26 & Mar 28	<u>Text 6</u> 1. Wilson and the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century 2. Poetry and music in creating text	<u>Text 6</u> <i>Wilson's Radio Golf</i>	<b>Written Assignment 1, pt 6: Critical Analysis Response – <i>Radio Golf</i></b>
<b>Week 12</b> Apr 2 & Apr 4	<u>Text 6 continued</u> 1. Closer look at characters 2. Production history and influences	<u>Text 6 continued.</u> “The Emancipated Century’: Remapping History, Reclaiming Memory in August Wilson’s Dramatic Landscapes of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century,” Joyce Hope Scott, in <i>August Wilson’s Pittsburgh Cycle: Critical Perspectives</i> , ed. Sandra G. Shannon.	<b>Written Assignment 3 due April 4.</b>
<b>Week 13</b> Apr 9 & Apr 11	<u>Text 7</u> 1. Historical Context 2. LGBTQ themes in dramatic literature	<u>Text 7</u> Paula Vogel’s <i>Indecent</i>	<b>Written Assignment 1, pt 7: Critical Analysis Response – <i>Indecent</i></b>
<b>Week 14</b> Apr 16 & Apr 18	<u>Text 7 continued</u> 1. Indecency and censorship in art 2. Closer look at characters	<u>Text 7 continued</u> Susan Reimer-Torn, “The Brothel Owner and the Milkman,” <i>Jewish Currents</i> (April 2017).	<b>Assign Final Paper – Creative Assignment. Due May 8 by 4 pm.</b>

<b>Week 15</b> Apr 23 & Apr 25	<u>Wrap-up</u> 1. Casting 2. Conclusions		
<b>FINAL</b> May 8  2-4 pm			<b>Final – Creative Assignment. Due May 8 by 4 pm.</b> To confirm the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC <i>Schedule of Classes</i> at <a href="http://www.usc.edu/soc">www.usc.edu/soc</a> .

### 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/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>.

#### Support Systems:

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>*

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

Note: 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.