

**THTR 529b – Textual Studies for Performance**

63240D/Units: 4

Spring 2019 — WED, FRI — 12:00-1:50

Location: KAP 113

**Instructor: Boni B. Alvarez**

**Office:** MCC 214

**Office Hours:** WED, FRI - by appointment

**Contact Info:** [bbalvare@usc.edu](mailto:bbalvare@usc.edu)

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

**Course Description**

This course is a continuation of THTR 529a. This semester focuses on contemporary American plays, examining their subjects, structures, and styles. These close readings of dramatic texts will serve as a fundamental tool for rehearsal and performance.

**Learning Objectives**

The course will mirror a professional rehearsal room. Students will approach texts as performers' first days of rehearsals, breaking down the plays via critical table work. This course cultivates the students' abilities for dramatic analysis and literacy.

Key points of investigation: the world of the play; the author's intentions – in the overall writing of the play and with each individual scene; what is the play attempting to accomplish and what is its overall impact?

Students will identify their biases when approaching texts and develop tools and methods to broaden their understanding of the play at hand. For this semester, emphasis is placed on reading the play through the actor's lens – given circumstances of the play; playwrights' clues for performance; how story and text inform physical and vocal choices.

**Required Readings** – All materials will be distributed electronically or as hard copies EXCEPT titles denoted with an asterisk (\*). Texts can be purchased at the Samuel French Bookstore or online.

- DeLappe, Sarah, *The Wolves*
- Deen, Mashuq Mushtaq, *Draw the Circle*
- Fornes, Maria Irene, *Mud*
- Guirgis, Stephen Adly, *Our Lady of 121<sup>st</sup> Street*
- Jacobs-Jenkins, Branden, *Neighbors*
- \*Joseph, Rajiv. *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*. Dramatists Play Service, 2013
- \*Lindsay-Abaire, David, *Fuddy Meers*. Dramatists Play Service, 2000
- Nguyen, Qui, *Vietgone*

- \*Orlandersmith, Dael. *Yellowman*. Dramatists Play Service, 2003
- \*Rivera, Jose, *Cloud Tectonics*. Broadway Play Publishing, 2017
- Vogel, Paula, *Baltimore Waltz*

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

### Table Work – 15%

Students must actively participate as readers and be prepared when ancillary materials are required for analysis. Many ideas and opinions will be formed and shared; students should be respectful and professional in the ensuing dialogue.

### Play Responses (2) – 25% each, 50% total

Written play responses require a combination of analytical and creative lenses in the exploration of plays. Students will consider styles/genre and specific characters in how they make choices for performance. More specific prompts will be distributed for each set of responses.

### Midterm – 20%

A creative and performative writing assignment focusing on Fornes' *Mud* and Nguyen's *Vietgone* to further explore character intentions, motivations, and arcs. Students will share their original writing with the class and field questions on their presentations. A more specific prompt will be distributed.

### Final Assignment – 15%

A written assignment in which students survey the plays studied over the semester and evaluate how they might factor into the theatrical landscape. A more specific prompt will be distributed.

## Grading Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Table Work	15
Play Responses I	25
Play Responses II	25
Midterm	20
Final	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 (failing grade for graduate credit)
D+: 69-67	D: 66-64	D-: 63-60

**Assignment Submission Policy**

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

**Additional Policies**

Attendance is compulsory. More than 1 unexcused absence will affect your grade adversely – if you are not in class, you are not contributing to the table work. If you are absent on a day with a group exercise, you will receive a 0 for the exercise. There will be no make-up assignments.

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

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

WK	DATE		
1	WED 1/9	Fornes' <i>Mud</i>	
	<u>FRI 1/11</u>	<u>Fornes' <i>Mud</i></u>	
2	WED 1/16	Vogel's <i>Baltimore Waltz</i>	
	<u>FRI 1/18</u>	<u>Vogel's <i>Baltimore Waltz</i></u>	
3	WED 1/23	Vogel's <i>Baltimore Waltz</i>	
	<u>FRI 1/25</u>	<u>Rivera's <i>Cloud Tectonics</i></u>	
4	WED 1/30	Rivera's <i>Cloud Tectonics</i>	
	<u>FRI 2/1</u>	<u>Jacobs-Jenkins' <i>Neighbors</i></u>	
5	WED 2/6	Jacobs-Jenkins' <i>Neighbors</i>	
	<u>FRI 2/8</u>	<u>Jacobs-Jenkins' <i>Neighbors</i></u>	
6	WED 2/13	Nguyen's <i>Vietgone</i>	
	<u>FRI 2/15</u>	<u>Nguyen's <i>Vietgone</i></u>	<b>Character Assignment DUE</b>
7	WED 2/20	Deen's <i>Draw the Circle</i>	
	<u>FRI 2/22</u>	<u>Deen's <i>Draw the Circle</i></u>	
8	WED 2/27	Orlandersmith's <i>Yellowman</i>	
	<u>FRI 3/21</u>	<u>Orlandersmith's <i>Yellowman</i></u>	
9	WED 3/6	<b>MIDTERM presentations</b>	
	<u>FRI 3/8</u>	<u><b>MIDTERM presentations</b></u>	
SB	WED 3/13	Spring Break	
	<u>FRI 3/15</u>	<u>Spring Break</u>	
10	WED 3/20	Joseph's <i>Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo</i>	
	<u>FRI 3/22</u>	<u>Joseph's <i>Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo</i></u>	
11	WED 3/27	Joseph's <i>Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo</i>	
	<u>FRI 3/29</u>	<u>DeLappe's <i>The Wolves</i></u>	
12	WED 4/3	DeLappe's <i>The Wolves</i>	
	<u>FRI 4/5</u>	<u>TBD</u>	
13	WED 4/10	Guirgis' <i>Our Lady of 121<sup>st</sup> Street</i>	
	<u>FRI 4/12</u>	<u>Guirgis' <i>Our Lady of 121<sup>st</sup> Street</i></u>	<b>Character Assignment DUE</b>
14	WED 4/17	Guirgis' <i>Our Lady of 121<sup>st</sup> Street</i>	
	<u>FRI 4/19</u>	<u>Lindsay-Abaire's <i>Fuddy Meers</i></u>	
15	WED 4/24	Lindsay-Abaire's <i>Fuddy Meers</i>	
	<u>FRI 4/26</u>	<u>Lindsay-Abaire's <i>Fuddy Meers</i></u>	<b>FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE</b>

## 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” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://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>.

### 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 for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### 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. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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### 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. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://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. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and 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. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://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: [sarc.usc.edu](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. [equity.usc.edu](http://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. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

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

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)