**USC**School of Dramatic Arts

**THTR 125 – Text Studies for Production**

**Fall—2019—M/W 2:00pm – 3:20pm**

**Section: 62645**

**Units: 4 Units**

**Location: GFS 220**

**Instructor: Laura Flanagan**

**Office:** JEFF 200

**Office Hours:** M/W from 10:00 – noon or by appointment.

**Contact Info:** [lgoldsch@usc.edu](mailto:lgoldsch@usc.edu); will respond within 24 hours to emailed responses.

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**Course Description: (from the USC Catalogue)**

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 how it works as theatre. 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 all meet to share teaching strategies and resources.
* The reading list comprises five plays, three of which are common to all section of THTR 125 and two texts that 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: Goals are:

* 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 for their work on the play.
* 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.

**Prerequisite(s):** none

**Concurrent Enrollment:** 120a, 140a

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

* *Awake and Sing* by Clifford Odets
* *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare
* *Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes
* *Father Comes Home from the Wars* by Suzanne Lori Parks
* *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov

Supplementary Materials will be provided on Blackboard or announced throughout the class as they become relevant.

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

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| Assignment | % of Grade |
| 1. Writing Assignment 1 | 15% |
| 2. Midterm Assignment | 20% |
| 3. Writing Assignment 2 | 15% |
| 4. Final | 20% |
| 5. In Class Exercise | 15% |
| 6. Participation | 15% |
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All papers and assignments will be graded on the following: a. clarity of thought and argument. 2. Grammar and punctuation.

***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.

**Grading Breakdown**

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

* “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
* **The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING:** 
  1. There shall be 3 graded assignments and a final examination as scheduled by USC.
  2. Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.
  3. All Assignments will be returned with grades up to but not exceeding 2 weeks from their due date.
  4. There shall be no unexcused absences. 
* **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

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| Week 1  8/26-8/28 | Introduction Begin *Awake and Sing* | Supplementary material: Elinor Fuchs |
| Week 2 9/4 – LABOR DAY OFF | *Awake and Sing* – | Supplementary Material: “Backwards and Forwards” by David Ball |
| Week 3  9/9-9/11 | *Awake and Sing* | Supplementary Material:  “On Directing” by Harold Clurman |
| Week 4 9/16- 9/18 | *Awake and Sing* |  |
| Week 5  9/23-9/25 | Shakespeare *– Twelfth Night* | Supplementary Material: “Playing Shakespeare” - John Barton |
| Week 6 9/20 – 10/2 | Shakespeare – *Twelfth Night* |  |
| Week 7 10/7 – 10/9 | *Twelfth Night* |  |
| Week 8 10/14 – 10/16 | Midterm *Water By the Spoonful* |  |
| Week 9  10/21 – 10/23 | *Water By the Spoonful* |  |
| Week 9  10/28-10/30 | *Water By the Spoonful* |  |
| Week 10 11/4- 11/6 | *Father Comes Home From the Wars* | “To Be Young Gifted and Black” by Lorraine Hansberry |
| Week 11 11/11- 11/13 | *Father Comes Home From the Wars* |  |
| Week 12  11/18 – 11/20 | *The Seagull* |  |
| Week 13 11/25 - THANKSGIVING | *The Seagull* |  |
| Week 14 12/2- 12/4 | *The Seagull* |  |
| FINAL Friday December 13th 2-4pm. |  |  |

Assignments and Deadlines: Assignment 1: Due 9/16 – Writing on *Awake and Sing* – to be assigned.

Midterm: 10/14 Writing on *Twelfth Night.*

Assignment 2: Thursday 11/12 Writing on *Water by the Spoonful* Script Analysis and essay along with two minute performance;

Assignment 3: 12/4: Writing on *The Seagull*

Final Exam: Combination of writing and performance.

**Overview of Philosophy of the Course:**

Actors have to be good readers. The text is a blueprint for a building that’s never been built, a new civilization with it’s own rules, a new mythology that might save the world. Actors have to be careful readers, interpretive readers, and readers who understand the difference between fact and opinion, event and action, between what the text demands we do to tell it’s story, and what the text leaves out. Actors must read on and between the lines to find the clues to their part of the creation.

Ultimately, the actor is a creator. We bring flesh to the word, and so we must ourselves understand the words and the worlds we are creating. They must become a part of us, and change us as we change them. And as we do, we discover that we are a part of a long line of creators. Just as the Greeks stood on their stages thousands of years ago, so too do we. But even more than Greeks, humans have always told stories to make sense of themselves and the world. Good storytellers are crucial to the health and survival of a community. They make us laugh, cry, inspire us to hope and thrill us with fear and longing. Your task is no less important: to embody the story of our own humanity - how we live, die, fight, love and find our way together. The actor’s task is to bring the text to life.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIbg7oiXECE

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS**

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

**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](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.

**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.

**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](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. [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](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: [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](https://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](https://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](https://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/)