

ENGL 363: Contemporary Drama: Classics of the American Stage
Professor David Román

This course will focus on some of the most celebrated works of American theatre during the past 50 years. We will study plays and musicals performed on and off Broadway as well as throughout the United States---works by figures such as Stephen Sondheim and August Wilson, for example, as well as other playwrights and composers who have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama during this period. We will consider the role of the theatre in contemporary American culture---how might the theatre contribute to our understanding of the key social issues of the contemporary moment? We will address theatre as a form of public entertainment and as a means of cultural critique. Students will be exposed to some of the most dynamic and relevant plays and musicals of our time. We will also address the status of the theatre given the coronavirus pandemic, and study the unfolding online response by theatre practitioners and other performing artists. Each week we will also invite a leading theatre artist to our class to guide our discussion and share with us their experience.

Requirements:

- 1) an interview with a theatre artist to be conducted through email or phone
- 2) a portfolio of student responses to the texts
- 3) a portfolio of the critical reviews of a specific production

Students will be required to participate in class discussion, there will be no exams

Texts:

Stephen Sondheim, *Sunday in the Park with George*

Marsha Norman, *Night Mother*

August Wilson, *Fences*

John Guare, *Six Degrees of Separation*

Jonathan Larson, *Rent*

John Cameron Mitchell, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*

Josefina Lopez, *Real Women Have Curves*

Paula Vogel, *How I Learned to Drive*

Stephen Adley Guirgis, *Between Riverside and Crazy*

Lynn Nottage, *Sweat*

Dominique Morrisseau, *Pipeline*

David Román, professor of English and American Studies, is an internationally acclaimed scholar of American theatre. He has published several award-winning books on the topic, and lectures widely on the performing arts throughout the United States and abroad.