

**THTR 125: Text Studies for Production**  
**Fall 2020 Tuesday & Thursday 10 - 11:50 62640D**  
**Location:** Online

**Instructor: Paula Cizmar**

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

**Office Hours:** Available: Wed Noon - 6;  
Thurs 9 – 9:45 am; please note that office hours are by  
appointment only; please contact me via email or phone, at  
least 24 hours in advance, to set up a Zoom appointment.

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

**ITHelp:** USC Information Technology Services  
<http://itservices.usc.edu>; School of Dramatic Arts – Mr.  
Prakash Shirke. Contact Info: shirke@usc.edu; 213.740.1288.

**Course assistant: Mary Kamitaki**

**Contact Info:** mkamitak@usc.edu

### **Catalogue Description**

**THTR 125** *Focuses on the questions, artistic choices, methodologies, and approaches of an actor/director/designer in the preparation of a production score prior to rehearsal.*

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 acquiring techniques for looking deeply into 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 works as theatre. We will practice the process and methodologies actors, directors, and designers need to employ prior to rehearsal to understand the bones of a dramatic text and flesh it out into a production score. 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 their own.

### **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, stage management, directing, and tech/design. Students will:

- Attain insight into how dramatic texts work;
- Develop the ability to explore the author's intent and view how the author's text provides the material needed to create a successful production;
- Develop the ability to recognize and interpret subtext, metaphor, and imagery;
- Analyze dramatic works deeply and view them as dramatic scores/maps to a production on stage;
- Gain experience in doing the necessary research to explore the text;

- Improve mindfulness of the collaborative relationships between theatre artist, text, theatre event, and the audience.

**Prerequisites:** None

### **Course Notes**

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 meet to share teaching strategies and resources.
- The reading list comprises five plays, three of which are common to all sections of THTR 125 and two texts that vary per section.

### **Communication**

**For Fall 2020**, the class will be delivered online using Zoom and Blackboard. Office hours will also be conducted via Zoom. But that doesn't mean we won't be communicating. It is always my intention to embrace these visionary goals:

- GOING GREEN
- CONNECTING
- TRANSFORMING

*What does this mean?*

GOING GREEN means that we will save on time, energy, and paper. You will turn in your work electronically on Blackboard, and we will share your scenes, brainstorming materials, revision plans, etc. via computer. Handouts and course materials will be paperless, available online via Blackboard.

CONNECTING means that we will make contact in several ways—with each other, with the creative community, with the world at large. We'll connect with each other to form a support network so that everyone feels secure taking artistic risks; plus we'll connect via email, text message, and Zoom keep up to the minute on what's going on in class. Be sure to check your USC email daily; stay on top of changes to times and scheduling, reminders about projects and resources, etc. We'll also stay attuned to what's going on in American theatre, and we'll look at what's going on in the world—and explore how we can use art for growth and healing.

TRANSFORMING means that we will be looking at theatre as a way to effect transformation in our lives, and in the lives of others; we'll look at creating theatre from a place of empathy, from a place of heart-driven concern for humanity; we'll look at culture and trends and attempt to define and redefine theatre for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Technical Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

It is necessary for each student to become adept in the use of Blackboard and Zoom. See the links below for information on how to use this technology.

### USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

### USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please submit an application. The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- *Wedding Band* by Alice Childress
- *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare (Oxford University Press edition)
- *Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes
- *Aubergine* by Julia Cho
- *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Pts 1,2,3* by Suzan-Lori Parks

Supplementary materials for each topic to be studied will be found on Blackboard.

## Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
1. Written Assignment 1	15%
2. Midterm Assignment	15%
3. Written Assignment 2	20%
4. Final	15%
5. In class exercises & projects	20%
6. Participation	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.

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: D+ = 69 – 66; D = 65-64; D = 63 - 60 (1.3) = 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 participation.

### Grading Timeline

Please bear in mind that you earn your grade based on the timely completion of your work, plus the quality of your work. Late assignments are marked down due to missed deadline. Assignments are accepted only within one week of due date. After that, they are considered a missed assignment, which counts as zero.

### Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be presented in class and/or submitted as PDFs, depending on the assignment. **Note:** *The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING state that 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.*

### Additional Policies

Attendance and participation are key. SDA Guidelines call for no unexcused absences. Participation is essential and figures into your grade. Think of this course as a professional, artistic workshop; thus, as a member of such a workshop, your participation is necessary not only for the development of your own work, but for the development of your colleagues’ work as well. Theatre is a highly collaborative, community-oriented medium. Indeed, in this class, one of our projects depends upon collaboration. Please honor your obligation to your colleagues’ work. Absences must be for reasons of illness or emergency and must be accompanied by a written explanation; in your absence, please prepare the assigned work that is due and turn it in immediately upon return to the workshop. **[[Special note for Fall 2020: We are aware that some of you may experience difficulties with technology. The class will be recorded if you need to attend it asynchronously. An alternative exercise or assignment will be required if you miss the live session of a class and have to attend the recorded version.]]**

1. You are entering into a collaborative relationship with fellow students and, thus, it is your responsibility to be available to your colleagues for feedback, analysis, and support.
2. All class members must be treated with respect.
3. You are required to attend the class 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. Only one (1) unexcused absence is allowed. **[[Please note: As stated above, if you cannot attend the live session, you are required to keep up with the class by watching the recorded version and doing an alternative assignment.]]**
4. Absences must be for reasons of illness or emergency, and you must notify me in writing (preferably in advance). **[[Note: In Fall 2020, inability to connect to the internet counts as an**

emergency. Please contact me via text or email when you are experiencing difficulties. Communicate!]]

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 or the Zoom recording. I will not be repeating lectures or class discussion; office hours are not for the purposes of repeating lectures, but rather are for the purpose of helping you with areas in which you need guidance or where you are confused or where you are dealing with challenges. Class materials can be found on the Blackboard site for this course. The recorded session of the class will be available on your Zoom recordings in Blackboard. 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, etc. On rare occasions, it becomes necessary to make changes to class meeting details. 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. For collaborations, you may work using a number of collaborative tools, such as Slack, Google documents, 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.

## Zoom Etiquette

"Netiquette" or "internet etiquette," is important for collaborative work. Please respect the following guidelines:

- Whenever possible, please use your computer to log-in to the class rather than your phone. This will help us with the quality of visuals and audio, plus it will present fewer problems when sharing screens.
- If you have technical issues during class, please contact: USC Information Technology Services <http://itservices.usc.edu>; or School of Dramatic Arts – Mr. Prakash Shirke. Contact Info: [shirke@usc.edu](mailto:shirke@usc.edu); 213.740.1288.
- Your camera must be on at all times, unless you are requested to hide video.
- Please attempt to log-in from an environment that does not have distracting background noise, such as pets, family members, machinery, music. If you find yourself in a situation with distracting noise, please use ear buds or headphones.
- When not speaking (for example, during a reading of a scene, when you are not playing a role), please mute your microphone. During discussions feel free to leave your mic on.
- Remember that you are in class, therefore behavior appropriate to class should be followed. Please do not walk around, leave the room, read, play games, etc. during class.
- You may use your devices for research that enhances the discussion during class, but please stay attuned to what is going on while engaged in research.
- Try to take turns speaking. Remember that Zoom creates problems when voices overlap.
- The chat box will be available to you to use during class, however please don't abuse it. For example, remember that everyone can see what you type in the chat. Therefore your comments should not contain private messages to another class member—which can be read in the saved chat. Also, try to use chat to enhance the discussion, rather than interrupt it.

- Remember: The class session is being recorded. (This includes the chat.)
- Be respectful of others at all times.
- Remember: We're all in this together. Now more than ever.

### **Synchronous Session Recording notice**

Recordings of each class session will be available to class members on Blackboard.

### **Sharing of Course Materials Outside of the Learning Environment**

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

*SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

### INTRODUCTION – DIVING INTO THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

#### Week 1

8/18	Intro to Our 125 Community: Who are we? Where are we?
8/20	Relevance of our Work; Prep for <i>Wedding Band</i>

### AMERICAN CLASSIC – WEDDING BAND

#### Week 2

8/25	Begin Digging: <i>Wedding Band</i> . Assign Wrtn Assignment 1.
8/27	Character: <i>Wedding Band</i>

#### Week 3

9/1	Setting: <i>Wedding Band</i>
9/3	Discussion of Analysis/Writing Best Practices

#### Week 4

9/8	Exploring Scenes: <i>Wedding Band</i>
9/10	Wrap-Up: <i>Wedding Band</i> <b>Written Assignment 1 DUE.</b>

### SHAKESPEARE – TWELFTH NIGHT

#### Week 5

9/15	No Fear Shakespeare - Working w/the Text: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
9/17	Language of Shakespeare/Meaning: <i>Twelfth Night</i> Assign Midterm.

#### Week 6

9/22	Original Practice—and Today: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
9/24	Character, Identity, Status, Concern: <i>Twelfth Night</i>

#### Week 7

9/29	Exploring Scenes: <i>Twelfth Night</i>
10/1	Wrap-Up: <i>Twelfth Night</i> . <b>Midterm DUE.</b>

## WATER BY THE SPOONFUL

### Week 8

10/6	Dissonance - Working with the Text: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>
10/8	Theatricality: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> Assign Written Assignment 2.

### Week 9

10/13	Character: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>
10/15	Exploring Scenes & Wrap-Up: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>

## AUBERGINE

### Week 10

10/20	An Alternative Theatrical Approach: <i>Aubergine</i>
10/22	The Worlds of <i>Aubergine</i>

### Week 11

10/27	Delicacy of Language: <i>Aubergine</i>
10/29	Character and Theme: <i>Aubergine</i> <b>Written Assignment 2 DUE.</b>

## FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS, PTS 1,2,3

### Week 12

11/3	The Playwright: Significance of Suzan-Lori Parks Assign Final Project.
11/5	Poetry and Character: <i>Father Comes Home from the Wars</i>

### Week 13

11/10	Themes - Slavery, Odyssey, Identity: <i>Father Comes Home...</i>
11/12	Epic Theatricality: <i>Father Comes Home from the Wars</i>

### Final

Tuesday 11/24	<b>Final Project Summative Experience DUE</b> by 11/24/2020 by 10 AM per USC scheduled Final Exams.
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*REMINDER: Use Blackboard as a resource. Class materials, information, handouts, additional essays, source materials, etc., are posted on the class site on Blackboard.*



## Assignments and Deadlines:

*Below is a summary of the assignments and deadlines for THTR 125. Detailed information and guidelines for each of these assignments will be provided on Blackboard.*

*Assignment 1:* Character/dramaturgical preparation for *Wedding Band*. Due Date: Tuesday 9/10 by 11:59 pm Pacific time. (See Blackboard for Guidelines.)

*Midterm:* Interpretation of an extract (to be indicated by instructor) of *Twelfth Night*. Due Date: Thursday 10/1 by 11:59 pm Pacific time. (See Blackboard for Guidelines.)

*Assignment 2:* Script coverage. Provide coverage for *Water by the Spoonful* as if you were on the play selection committee of a theatre, or a play development conference, or a grants agency, using the form supplied. Due Date: Thursday 10/29 by 11:59 pm. (Word count as indicated on the form provided on Blackboard.)

*Final:* An Imagined Production. (See Blackboard for Guidelines.) Due Date: Tuesday 11/24 by 10 am Pacific time.

*In-class exercises:* For each unit you will be told in advance which exercises will contribute to this element of your grade.

**Final Examination Date: Tuesday 11/24 8 am – 10 am**

*Please note this is the final examination date as scheduled by the University. This information can be found online at USC's site for the Schedule of Classes. Our Final for this class is an exam, but rather is a final summative experience in the form of a project.*

## 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](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, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

## **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.