

**THTR 312 – LGBTQ Theatre**

63874R/Units: 4

Fall 2020 — TUES THURS — 8:00-9:50am

**Location: ONLINE**

**Instructor: Boni B. Alvarez**

**Office Hours:** by appointment via Zoom

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

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

**Course Description**

This course explores the range and genealogy of LGBTQ theatre and performance across political, historical, and theatrical contexts. Plays surveyed are from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries of American theatre with specific attention paid to the tropes of 'coming out' plays, plays dealing with the AIDS crisis and intersectional 'identity' plays.

**Learning Objectives**

- Students will broaden their dramatic literacy with a specific appreciation for LGBTQ playwrights and plays.
- This course cultivates the students' abilities for dramatic analysis and critical thinking via class discussion and through writing essays on close readings of the texts.
- Students will develop a knowledge of plays written during and dealing with the AIDS crisis.
- Students will learn to identify queer tropes in dramatic narratives and how to apply them to heteronormative canonical texts through an adaptation assignment.
- Through the readings of LGBTQ texts, students will learn how playwrights shape queerness for presentation and performance.

**Required Readings**

Texts marked with an asterisk (\*) have been ordered through the USC Bookstore and can be purchased at usctext.com. All other texts will be distributed via Blackboard.

- Birkenmier, Liza. *Dr. Ride's American Beach House*
- Christopher, J. Julian. *Julio Down By The Schoolyard*
- Deen, Mashuq Mushtaq. *Draw the Circle*
- Euripides. *Medea*
- \*Hunter, Samuel D. *The Whale*
- Jackson, Michael R. *Strange Loop*
- Kaufman, MJ. *Masculinity Max*
- \*Kramer, Larry. *The Normal Heart*
- \*Kron, Lisa & Tesori, Jeanine. *Fun Home*
- \*O'Hara, Robert. *Boyt candy*
- Silverman, Jen. *Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Boops*

## Additional Readings

These texts will be distributed electronically.

- Drake, David. *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*
- Sanchez, Edwin. *Trafficking in Broken Hearts*
- Vogel, Paula. *Baltimore Waltz*
- Yew, Chay. *A Language of Their Own*

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

### Participation – 15%

Students must actively participate in the discussion topics, demonstrate preparedness of the assigned readings, and practice active listening & engagement. Many ideas, questions, and opinions will arise; students should be respectful and employ empathy in the ensuing discussions.

### Close Reading Paper – 20%

This paper will deal with a close reading of a scene from *Fun Home*, *Boytocandy* OR *Draw the Circle*. This paper will examine a particular scene/song/monologue. Papers must have a thesis and include textual evidence. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### Midterm - Group Presentation – 25%

Students will be divided into groups for this assignment. Each group will be assigned a contemporary play which grapples with the AIDS epidemic. Groups will present on the play's dramaturgical relation to Kramer's *The Normal Heart*. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### Adaptation Assignment – 25%

Students will conceptualize a pitch for a queer adaptation of Euripides' *Medea*. This is a creative assignment which will require a synopsis, character breakdown, visual aids/designs/renderings and/or a dialogue sample. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### Final Paper – 15%

A final paper surveying the texts studied over the course of the semester, evaluating what essentials a play requires to fall under the umbrella of LGBTQ Theatre. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

## Grading Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Participation	15
Close Reading Paper	20
Midterm - Group Presentation	25
Adaptation Presentation	25

Final Paper	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
D+: 69-67	D: 66-64	D-: 63-60
F: 59-0		

When a student’s mathematical GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted towards the higher end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been excellent or good and toward the lower end for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

**Additional Policies**

**Attendance** is compulsory. Unexcused absences will affect your grade adversely – if you are not in class, you are not participating.

**Technology**

**Camera Policy**

This course has a “camera-on” policy. Class dynamics are substantially compromised without the ability to see the people in class. For privacy concerns, students may use virtual backgrounds. If there are other challenges and concerns, please contact the professor regarding other accommodations.

**Time Zone Accommodations**

USC considers the hours from **7:00am to 10:00pm**, in the local time zone for each student, as reasonable times for students to attend synchronous sessions. Students facing obstacles to their learning as a result of time zone differences should contact the professor.

**Recording Online Classes**

USC policy requires that all classes conducted online be recorded. ITS has set up Zoom to automatically record and transcribe class sessions, which are then made available in Blackboard. Students should review their responsibilities towards the appropriate use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). Students are not permitted to create their own

class recordings. Violations of these policies will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction. Zoom recordings will be retained in the cloud until the end of the semester, at which point they will be deleted.

<u>WK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>WEEKLY SCHEDULE</u>
<b>1 LGBTQ THEATRE – Introductions</b>		
	TUES 8/18	What is LGBTQ Theatre? Play excerpts: Fornes' <i>Mud</i> ; Son's <i>Stop Kiss</i>
	THURS 8/20	What is LGBTQ Theatre? (cont) - Play excerpts: Brittain's <i>Rotterdam</i> ; Williams' <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i>
<b>2 COMING OUT (-OF-AGE)</b>		
	TUES 8/25	Kron & Tesori's <i>Fun Home</i>
	<u>THURS 8/27</u>	<u><i>Fun Home</i> (cont)</u>
3	TUES 9/1	O'Hara's <i>Bootycandy</i>
	<u>THURS 9/3</u>	<u><i>Bootycandy</i> (cont)</u>
4	TUES 9/8	Deen's <i>Draw the Circle</i>
	<u>THURS 9/10</u>	<u><i>Draw the Circle</i> (cont)</u> <b>CLOSE READING DUE – SAT 9/12, 11am</b>
<b>5 AIDS</b>		
	TUES 9/15	Kramer's <i>The Normal Heart</i>
	<u>THURS 9/17</u>	<u><i>The Normal Heart</i> (cont)</u>
6	TUES 9/22	Dolan's <u>Theatre &amp; Sexuality</u> - (Miller's foreward); MIDTERM PREP
	<u>THURS 9/24</u>	<b><u>MIDTERM - GROUP PRESENTATIONS</u></b>
<b>7 ADAPTATION</b>		
	TUES 9/29	Euripides' <i>Medea</i>
	<u>THURS 10/1</u>	<u>Livingston's <i>Paris Is Burning</i></u>
<b>8 CONTEMPORARY IDENTITIES &amp; INTERSECTIONALITIES</b>		
	TUES 10/6	Christopher's <i>Julio Down By The Schoolyard</i>
	<u>THURS 10/8</u>	<u><i>Julio Down By The Schoolyard</i> (cont)</u>
9	TUES 10/13	Birkenmeier's <i>Dr. Ride's American Beach House</i>
	<u>THURS 10/15</u>	<u><i>Dr. Ride's American Beach House</i> (cont)</u>
10	TUES 10/20	Silverman's <i>Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Boops</i>
	<u>THURS 10/22</u>	<u><i>Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Boops</i> (cont)</u>
11	TUES 10/27	Hunter's <i>The Whale</i>
	<u>THURS 10/29</u>	<u><i>The Whale</i> (cont)</u> <b>ADAPTATION DUE – SAT 10/31, 11am</b>
12	TUES 11/3	Jackson's <i>Strange Loop</i>
	<u>THURS 11/5</u>	<u><i>Strange Loop</i> (cont)</u>
13	TUES 11/10	Kaufman's <i>Masculinity Max</i>
	<u>THURS 11/12</u>	<u><i>Masculinity Max</i> (cont)</u>
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>TUES 11/17</b>	<b>8:00-10:00am FINAL PAPER 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)