

THTR 529b – Textual Studies for Performance

63240D/Units: 4

Spring 2021 — WED, FRI — 12:00-1:50

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 is a continuation of THTR 529a. We will read a selection of plays from the classical canon, examining structure, subject, and style. In tandem, we will read contemporary adaptations of the classic plays. The semester will continue on with close readings of contemporary American plays.

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. The close readings serve as a fundamental tool for rehearsal and performance.
- 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 critical methods to broaden their understanding of the play at hand. Emphasis is placed on reading the play through the actor's lens – how texts inform characterization, physical and vocal choices.

Required Readings – All materials will be distributed electronically EXCEPT titles denoted with an asterisk (*). Texts may be available via USC libraries or can be purchased online.

- Alfaro, Luis. *Mojada*
- *Barron, Clare. *Dance Nation*
- Birkenmeier, Liza. *Dr. Ride's American Beach House*
- Chekhov. *The Seagull*
- Euripides. *Medea*
- Jacobs-Jenkins, Branden. *Gloria*
- *O'Hara, Robert. *Barbecue*

- Pamatmat, A. Rey. *Edith Can Shoot Things*
- Park, Jiehae. *Peerless*
- *Posner, Aaron. *Stupid Fucking Bird*
- Shakespeare. *Macbeth*
- Spiegel, Ruby Rae. *Dry Land*

Description and Assessment of Assignments

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Table Work – 50%

Students must actively participate as readers and be prepared when ancillary materials are required for analysis. Participation is not only speaking, but listening. Students should actively employ professional decorum and empathy.

Table Work includes short research assignments on playwrights, productions, and relevant dramaturgy.

Character Analysis (2) – 15% each

Students will submit two 2-3-page responses to plays, taking a deeper dive into the characters, analyzing their specific arcs, resonance and (non-)relatability with their audiences. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

(1) – *Medea* **OR** *Macbeth* **OR** *The Seagull*

(2) – *Edith Can Shoot Things* **OR** *Dr. Ride’s American Beach House* **OR** *Gloria* **OR** *Dry Land*

Final Assignment – 20%

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	50
Character Analysis I	15
Character Analysis II	15
Final Assignment	20
TOTAL	100

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

Additional Policies

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

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>
1	<u>FRI 1/15</u>	Introductions; Euripides' <i>Medea</i>
2	<u>WED 1/20</u>	<i>Medea (cont)</i> ; Alfaro's <i>Mojada</i>
	<u>FRI 1/22</u>	<i>Mojada (cont)</i>
3	<u>WED 1/27</u>	<i>Medea/Mojada</i> debrief; Fuchs' "Visit to a Small Planet"
	<u>FRI 1/29</u>	Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i>
4	<u>WED 2/3</u>	<i>Macbeth (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 2/5</u>	<i>Macbeth (cont)</i>
5	<u>WED 2/10</u>	<i>Macbeth (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 2/12</u>	Park's <i>Peerless</i>
6	<u>WED 2/17</u>	<i>Peerless (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 2/19</u>	Chekhov's <i>Seagull</i>
7	<u>WED 2/24</u>	<i>Seagull (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 2/26</u>	<i>Seagull (cont)</i> Character Analysis 1 – DUE SAT 2/27, 11am
8	<u>WED 3/3</u>	Posner's <i>Stupid Fucking Bird</i>
	<u>FRI 3/5</u>	<i>Stupid Fucking Bird (cont)</i>
9	<u>WED 3/10</u>	<i>Stupid Fucking Bird (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 3/12</u>	WELLNESS DAY – NO CLASS
10	<u>WED 3/17</u>	Pamatmat's <i>Edith Can Shoot Things</i>
	<u>FRI 3/19</u>	<i>Edith Can Shoot Things (cont)</i>
11	<u>WED 3/24</u>	Birkenmeier's <i>Dr. Ride's American Beach House</i>
	<u>FRI 3/26</u>	<i>Dr. Ride's American Beach House (cont)</i>
12	<u>WED 3/31</u>	Jacobs-Jenkins' <i>Gloria</i>
	<u>FRI 4/2</u>	<i>Gloria (cont)</i>
13	<u>WED 4/7</u>	WELLNESS DAY – NO CLASS
	<u>FRI 4/9</u>	Spiegel's <i>Dry Land</i>
14	<u>WED 4/14</u>	<i>Dry Land (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 4/16</u>	O'Hara's <i>Barbecue</i> Character Analysis 2 – DUE SAT 4/17, 11am
15	<u>WED 4/21</u>	<i>Barbecue (cont)</i>
	<u>FRI 4/23</u>	WELLNESS DAY – NO CLASS
16	<u>WED 4/28</u>	Barron's <i>Dance Nation</i>
	<u>FRI 4/30</u>	<i>Dance Nation (cont)</i>

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE – FRI 5/7, 1pm

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. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. 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

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

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

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