

THTR 125 Textual Analysis for Production
Section 62644D
Units: 4
Fall 2021—Tuesday/Thursday—Time: 12:00 – 1:50pm
Location: MHP 102

Instructor: Laurie Fisher, Ph.D.
Office: Virtual Appointments on Zoom
Link to virtual office:
<https://usc.zoom.us/j/8278187355>
Office Hours: Tuesday 4:00-6:00pm, Thursday 10:00-11:00am,
and by appointment
Contact Info: ldfisher@usc.edu

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Contact Info: consult@usc.edu; 24-hr phone help: 213-740-5555

Welcome to THTR 125: Textual Analysis for Production!

Course Description

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 works as theatre. We will practice the dramaturgical 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 its own terms.

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 5 plays, three of which are common to all sections of THTR 125 and two texts which 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:

- 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 to create a successful production
- 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.

Course Notes

This course will be taught in person. However, there is a chance that one or more students will need to access the class online for one or more sessions. In that case, we will consider recording the class sessions. Also, we are living in unusual times, so please know that I will work with you regarding any hardships that arise. We are all in this together, and together we will make the class a positive, safe learning environment.

Please check Blackboard daily for any class announcements or updates on assignments. PowerPoint lecture slides will occasionally be used, and they will be posted on Blackboard after the class session. We will be viewing videos throughout the semester, and I will provide links for you to access any media.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Desktop or laptop with up-to-date version of Zoom is required for all students.

USC Technology Support Links:

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials (all materials available at USC Bookstore, on Amazon, or through USC Libraries)

Wedding Band by Alice Childress (PDF on Blackboard)

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare (Folger edition: ISBN 978-0-7434-8277-6)

Water by the Spoonful by Quiara Alegría Hudes (Theater Communications Group)

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee (ISBN 978-0451158710)

Wonderland by Chay Yew (in the collection *The Hyphenated American*)

Various handouts (posted on Blackboard)

Description of Assignments

Assignment 1: Close Reading of an excerpt of *Wedding Band*. Due on Blackboard Turnitin under Assignments, by 11:59 pm on date specified, 750 words. (This assignment may be rewritten for re-evaluation with the permission of the Instructor.)

Midterm: Close Reading of an excerpt of *Twelfth Night*. Due on Blackboard Turnitin under Assignments, by 11:59 pm on date specified, 750 words. Assignment may NOT be rewritten.

Assignment 2: Creative assignment. You will provide a design for a production (with explanatory notes), an actor's journal, an essay that focuses on historical background, or write-up of a different dramaturgical concern. I will offer detailed suggestions in class. Due on Blackboard Turnitin under Assignments, by 11:59 pm on date specified.

In-class exercises and homework– quizzes, outlines, and other short writing assignments. These assignments must be turned in on time and cannot be made up or rewritten.

Final Exam: Comparative essay exploring specific thematic and dramaturgical considerations from different works studied. 1,500 words. Due on Blackboard Turnitin under Assignments, on the date scheduled for the final exam.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment /Assessment Breakdown	% of Grade
Writing Assignment 1	15%
Midterm	20%
Writing Assignment 2	20%
Final	20%
Class Exercises	10%
Participation	15%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

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	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69

D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

“Excellent” means that clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original and creative insight; “good” means that the class material has been understood clearly; “average” means that the class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding remain; “poor” means that there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material; “failure” means that gaps in the completion of work is coupled with poor understanding of class material.

When the mathematical GPA 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 excellent or good and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics will be posted on Blackboard with each assignment.

Assignment Submission Policy

As a general rule, no late work will be accepted. However, if illness or emergency interferes with the completion of an assignment, please contact me at least 24 hours prior to the due date, and I will try to work something out with you.

Grading Timeline

Grading and feedback on formal assignments will generally be given within two weeks of turn-in date. For shorter assignments, turnaround will be within a week.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy 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 evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

Additional Policies and Expectations

This class is being taught live, in person. However, as the semester progresses, we might find the need to go online for a class session or for a more extended period of time. In that case, please use the following rules for Zoom:

Zoom Etiquette:

Please do the following in order for the class to run as smoothly as possible:

- Keep your camera view on unless I instruct you to do otherwise. PLEASE NOTE: if you are having connectivity issues, you may turn off your camera, or call in to the session without video. Please ask me if you need any assistance.
- Keep your mic muted unless you are speaking
- Use the “raise hand” function when you want to speak, unless we are reading scenes aloud or in breakout groups
- Feel free to also use the group chat function to add comments or ask questions
- Refrain from texting or using private chats during the class session
- Please note that all sessions will be recorded. This will benefit you in two ways: 1) you will have the recordings available if you want to review information, and 2) for those students who are unable to attend the synchronous class, you will be able to view the lecture to make up for the class time you missed.

Communication policies: PLEASE NOTE: These policies are for in-person classes and for online sessions:

Please send me an email, in advance, if you are prevented from attending a class. Also, while time constraints make it impossible for me to review full essay drafts by email, I am happy to respond to specific questions about an assignment. I will usually respond within 24 hours, depending upon when the request is sent and how much grading I happen to be facing at that point of time. Please note: I will not answer questions regarding a formal assignment less than one day before the assignment is due. In addition, if you email me after 6pm during the week, I probably won't respond until the following day, and if you email me on a weekend, I might not respond until Monday morning—again, depending on my workload. Please check all relevant handouts and emails before emailing me a question. I'm happy to help however I can, provided that you do not already have the answers at your disposal.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

PLEASE NOTE—IMPORTANT DAY COMING IN SEPTEMBER:

EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.

Following is a general outline of how the course will unfold. Please note that the schedule is subject to change according to the specific needs of the class.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/24	8/24 Course Introduction; Intro to Theatrical Analysis 8/26 Elinor Fuchs, "Visit to a Small Planet"; <i>Wedding Band</i> , Act 1	DUE 8/26: Student info sheet (email to me at ldfisher@usc.edu); Elinor Fuchs "Visit to a Small Planet"; <i>Wedding Band</i> Act 1	
Week 2 8/31	8/31 <i>Wedding Band</i> Background and World of the Play 9/2 <i>Wedding Band</i> Characters and thematic concerns	<i>Wedding Band</i> : Finish reading play; Compose a "map of the world" for <i>Wedding Band</i> and upload it to the discussion board Read Uta Hagen handout and write up a characterization (details in class)	
Week 3 9/7	9/7 <i>Wedding Band</i> Act 2 Writing Assignment 1: Close Reading guidelines; Intro to Writing Assignment 1. 9/9 Introduction to Shakespeare; Intro to <i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i> : read introduction in the Folger edition	
Week 4 9/14	9/14 <i>Twelfth Night</i> Staging; Language Writing Assignment 1: principles of academic writing WEDNESDAY, 9/15 EDI@USC	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (read entire play and be prepared to discuss Act I)	

	9/16 <i>Twelfth Night</i> ; Writing Assignment 1 Rough Draft editing	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Act II) Rough draft of Writing Assignment 1 due	Writing Assignment 1 due 9/19
Week 5 9/21	9/21 Action; Adaptation	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Act III)	
	9/23 Midterm Discussion and Guidelines	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (Act IV and V)	
Week 6 9/28	Intro to Theater of the Absurd and its legacy; Background on Edward Albee; Setting the stage	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>	
Week 7 10/5	Scene exploration: creating characters	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>	Midterm essay due 10/10
Week 8 10/12	Production history; dramaturgical concerns MID-SEMESTER RECESS: NO CLASS ON 10/14	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>	
Week 9 10/19	Historical background and considerations; cultural influence; social concerns; the world of the play; Assignment 2 guidelines and discussion	<i>Wonderland</i>	
Week 10 10/26	Scene explorations	<i>Wonderland</i>	
Week 11 11/2	Staging Intro to Hudes and to <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	<i>Wonderland</i>	
Week 12 11/9	The world of the play; stage and set design;	<i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	Writing Assignment 2 due

Week 13 11/16	History, time, and music	<i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	
Week 14 11/23		<i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	
Week 15 11/30	Semester review: making connections	<i>Final Review</i>	
FINAL	Final essay due at the scheduled time for the final exam		Date: For the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC <i>Schedule of Classes</i> at classes.usc.edu .

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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 Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (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.

Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have

symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (<https://osas.usc.edu/>).

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

Support Systems:

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

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

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, 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

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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

<https://osas.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

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

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, 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

Non-emergency assistance or information.