

THTR 395m – Drama as Human Relations

62990R/Units: 4

Fall 2021 — TUES, THURS — 2:00-3:50pm

Location: VHE 206

Instructor: Boni B. Alvarez

Office Hours: by appt: TUES, THURS 10am-1pm

Office: MCC 214

Contact Info: bbalvare@usc.edu

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

Course Assistant: Marisa Caddick

Contact Info: mcaddick@usc.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course explores intercultural diversity and the dynamics of human relations through contemporary dramatic works. We will read plays that address various aspects of perceived human differences, including those based on race, ethnicity, class, level of education, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, political affiliation, and national origin. We will consider how these differences create tensions, cause despairs, stir up conflicts, as well as generate hopes and deliver redemptions among dramatic characters striving to survive and thrive in a multiethnic environment. Inspired by the etymological roots of “drama” as “to do, to act, and to perform,” our curriculum will also include analysis of films and television shows that attempt a move towards social change. The course encourages its participants to appreciate the challenge and pleasure of experiencing diversity in interpersonal encounters across various boundaries.

This course fulfills the diversity requirement for undergraduate general education.

Learning Objectives

- This course broadens students’ dramatic literacy of contemporary American plays and playwrights through reading dramatic texts and group presentations on working playwrights.
- This course cultivates the students' abilities for dramatic analysis and critical thinking via class discussion and through short essays on close readings of the texts.
- Through analysis and embodied encounters of dramatic artworks, students may appreciate how theater and performance artists intervene in contemporary cultures to promote social change toward more diverse, equitable, and inclusive societies.
- Through group assignments, students will sharpen ensemble-building and presentational skills, expanding awareness of interpersonal dynamics in collaborative situations.

Required Readings

Texts marked with an asterisk (*) have been ordered through the USC Bookstore. All other texts will be distributed via Blackboard.

- Alfaro, Luis. *Mojada*
- *Barron, Clare. *Dance Nation*
- Cale, David. *Harry Clarke*
- DeLappe, Sarah. *The Wolves*
- Fornes, Maria Irene. *Mud*
- Jenkins, Barry. *Moonlight*
- *Lew, Michael. *Teenage Dick*
- *Nottage, Lynn. *Sweat*
- Park, Jiehae. *Peerless*
- Speigel, Ruby Rae. *Dry Land*

Description and Assessment of Assignments

The quality of work in this class is largely determined by the thoroughness of your effort, the ongoing process, and the imagination/critical thought displayed.

Participation – 15%

Students must actively participate in the discussion topics and in-class readings. Students will be evaluated on eagerness to be involved in class activities, and the quality of contributions to discussion. Many ideas, positions, and opinions will arise; students should be respectful in the ensuing dialogue, practicing active listening & engagement, and employing empathy.

Weekly Intro – 15%

Students will be divided into groups to present a 15 minute introductory profile on one of the playwrights whose work is being studied. Elements that should be explored include biographical information, career and artistic goals & accomplishments, themes & topics in the playwright's body of work. Groups may also include a brief overview of the specific play being studied.

Character Analysis (2) – 15% each

Students will submit two 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) – Lew's *Teenage Dick* **OR** Park's *Peerless*

(2) – Jenkins' *Moonlight*, Spiegel's *Dry Land*, Alfaro's *Mojada* **OR** Barron's *Dance Nation*

Play Review – 15%

This 3-page paper will review the SDA production of *The Wolves*. Production and performance elements will be evaluated in relation to the reading and analysis of the written text. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Students must acquire tickets. This is a limited run, so plan accordingly. Performances are September 30 – October 3.

Final Paper – 15%

A final written assignment surveying the works studied over the course of the semester, evaluating overall effectiveness and audience impact. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

Grading Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Participation	15
Weekly Intro	15
Play Review	15
Character Analysis – 1	20
Character Analysis – 2	20
Final Paper	15
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
- 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.

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.

Additional Policies (should the course move to an online platform)

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 Introduction		
	TUES 8/24	Introductions; <i>Amazing Race</i>
	<u>THURS 8/26</u>	<u><i>Amazing Race</i></u>
2 Do We Ever Graduate From High School?		
	TUES 8/31	Lew's <i>Teenage Dick</i>
	<u>THURS 9/2</u>	<u><i>Teenage Dick (cont)</i></u>
3	TUES 9/7	<i>Teenage Dick (cont)</i>
	<u>THURS 9/9</u>	<u>Park's <i>Peerless</i></u>
4	TUES 9/14	<i>Peerless (cont)</i>
	WED 9/15	EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training All SDA students are welcome to join an interactive community building experience that explores how we integrate core values of equity, diversity, and inclusion into our educational and artistic journey at SDA. Competencies that will be covered will include, but not limited to, Anti-Racism as Everyday Practice; Equity-Mindedness (w/colleagues from USC Race & Equity Center); and Theatrical Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent. More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort. We encourage all to participate.
	<u>THURS 9/16</u>	<u><i>Peerless (cont)</i></u>
*CHARACTER ANALYSIS 1 DUE – MON, 9/20 - 10am		
5	TUES 9/21	DeLappe's <i>The Wolves</i>
	<u>THURS 9/23</u>	<u><i>The Wolves (cont)</i></u> (Sept 30 – Oct 3)
6 Queer Relations		
	TUES 9/28	Jenkins' MOONLIGHT
	<u>THURS 9/30</u>	<u>MOONLIGHT (cont)</u>
7	TUES 10/5	Cale's <i>Harry Clarke</i>
	<u>THURS 10/7</u>	<u><i>Harry Clarke (cont)</i></u>
8	TUES 10/12	<i>Amazing Race</i>
*<i>The Wolves</i> PLAY REVIEW DUE – in-class, TUES 10/12		
	<u>THURS 10/14</u>	<u>FALL RECESS – NO CLASS</u>
9 Oh, To Be a Woman		
	MON 10/19	Spiegel's <i>Dry Land</i>
	<u>WED 10/21</u>	<u><i>Dry Land (cont)</i></u>
10	TUES 10/26	Alfaro's <i>Mojada</i>
	<u>THURS 10/28</u>	<u><i>Mojada (cont)</i></u>
11	TUES 11/2	Barron's <i>Dance Nation</i>
	<u>THURS 11/4</u>	<u><i>Dance Nation (cont)</i></u>

12 Enlightenment & American Dreams

TUES 11/9 *Dance Nation (cont)*

THURS 11/11 *Amazing Race*

***CHARACTER ANALYSIS 2 DUE – MON, 11/15 - 10am**

13 TUES 11/16 *Nottage's Sweat*

THURS 11/18 *Sweat (cont)*

14 TUES 11/23 *Sweat (cont)*

THURS 11/25 **THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

15 TUES 11/30 *Fornes' Mud*

THURS 12/2 *Mud (cont)*

FINAL THURS 12/9 2:00-4:00pm FINAL

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.

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.symplcity.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.