

**THTR 309 Dramaturgy****Units: 4****Spring 2022 Mondays and Wednesday 10 am - 11:50 am****Location:** TBA**Instructor: Melinda C. Finberg****Office:** MCC 212**Office Hours:** by appointment**Contact Info:** finberg@usc.edu responses will be within 48 hours**Course Description**

Introduction to basic dramatic theories and applications so that students are able to analyze the structure of a play and become familiar with all the phases of preparing a script from first reading to being able to collaborate with literary managers, directors, designers, actors, and audiences in the process of developing a production and bringing it to theatrical performance.

Learning Objectives

Students will take their understanding of text analysis from THTR 125 and THTR 225 and develop it so they can act as production dramaturgs for student and professional productions.

- To discover many different roles a dramaturg can play and the collaboration necessary to perform them
- To develop different strategies for analyzing plays and their components based on different theories of dramatic structure.
- To explore multicultural theories of theatre and to apply them to plays of different cultures
- To perform deep dramaturgical research in service to the production of a given play
- To write performance histories, production reviews, and script coverages for literary agents, literary managers, and artistic directors.
- To learn protocols for working with artistic directors, literary managers, directors, designers and audiences
- To prepare educational tools to encourage audience involvement with productions

Recommended Preparation: THTR 125, THTR 225, one writing course**Course Notes**

I am also providing as many printed source materials as possible online to limit student expenses. There will also be required film clips to watch online. Any Powerpoints I show will also be made available on Blackboard.

It is my considered opinion that the best plays are often triggering. They often deal with distressing material and occasionally use language and imagery that might cause upset. They are pieces of their time and moment, as are yours now. We will analyze why the drama takes plays to dangerous places, and we will do so responsibly and with sensitivity.

I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus in order to accommodate the needs of the class or changing situations due to the pandemic.

Synchronous session recording notice

Synchronous class sessions will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously.

Communication

Our primary form of out-of-class communication will be email. I will create a class directory so that students can contact each other as well as me. I will also post general class information on the Announcements page of Blackboard.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

A WiFi connection is required, preferably with video. Class will be offered online. It will be available via Zoom if you can't be in class for legitimate reasons. This class is based on active discussion. If you have to attend a class on Zoom, please use a computer rather than a phone for a better connection.. See: [Zoom information for students](#) The class's primary source of sharing online information is Blackboard, which you can access with your USC account. See: [Zoom information for students](#) USC also has software available to students. See: [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.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Since this course is being offered virtually, a WiFi connection is necessary. Using a laptop or iPad is preferred, but a phone with WiFi and video capabilities can be managed. Please contact professor if access to technology is difficult for you.

Required Readings

- Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. Southern Illinois Press, 1983.
- Chemers, Michael Mark. *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgs*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2010. (Available online through library)
- Cram, Cusi. *Fuenteovejuna, a Disloyal Adaptation* (on Blackboard)
- Jonas, Susan, Proehl, Geoffrey, and Lupu, Michael. *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book*. Harcourt Brace, 1997. (DiAT) Available through Abe Books (Prices at Amazon are astronomical!) (Chapters available on Blackboard)
- Lope de Vega, *Fuenteovejuna*, Stanley Appelbaum, editor and translator (preferred edition) (available on Amazon, used or new)

Supplementary Materials (Selections from these will be available on Blackboard or on ARES)

Banham, Martin, ed. *A History of Theatre in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Bly, Mark. *The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process*. Vols. 1 and 2 1995. Theatre Communications Group, 2001.
- Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Kodansha, 2005.
- Fuchs, Elinor. *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theatre after Modernism*. Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Heyman Ronald. *How to Read a Play*. Grove, 1977.
- Johnston, David, ed. *Stages of Translation: Translators on Translating for the Stage*. Oberon, 1996.
- Lal, Ananda. *The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre*. Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Leiter, Samuel. *A History of Asian American Theatre*. Greenwood, 2006.
- *Romanska, Magda. *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. Routledge, 2015.
Chapters from this book are on ARES
- Schanke, Robert, and Kimberly Bell Marra, eds. *Staging Desire: Queer Readings of American Theatre History*. University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Senelick, Laurence, ed. *Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts*. University Press of New England, 1992.
- Straub, Kristina. *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology*. Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Grossman, Rachel. "Ilana Brownstein: Dramaturg's Dramaturg." *American Theatre*, July 11, 2018. <https://www.americantheatre.org/2018/07/11/ilana-m-brownstein-dramaturgs-dramaturg/>
- Deb Margolin, "A Performer's Notes on Parody" *Theater Topics*, 13.2 (2003) 247-252.
<file:///C:/Users/Melinda%20Finberg/OneDrive%20-%20University%20of%20Southern%20California/Academic%20Documents/2020%20US%20Dramaturgy/Project%20MUSE%20-%20A%20Performer's%20Notes%20on%20Parody%20by%20Deb%20Margolin.html>

Additional Notes: This class requires viewing of videos and films outside of class time for discussion in class.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Non-western historical dramaturgical essay

Assignment on non-western dramaturgy: choose a Noh play or an Indian play (Kalidasa, *The Recognition of Shakuntala* or *Mrichchhakatika* [**The Little Clay Cart**] by Śūdraka) Read play and discuss how it follows the traditional dramaturgy of its country and period. 500 words

Adaptations of Hamlet: chose 1

Read *Hamlet* and then choose one adaptation to read/view. Write a 750-word essay on if/how *Hamlet* fits into any particular school of dramaturgy and how your chosen adaptation approaches the play from a different school, style, and/or theoretical perspective. Make sure you support your ideas with critical materials and that you cite all of them responsibly and in correct MLA 8 internal citations and bibliographic formatting (find this online in OwlPurdue.)

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Coin and Ghost, *Bad Hamlet*, directed by Rob Adler

Irene Mecchi, Jonathan Roberts, Linda Woolverton, *The Lion King* (if you choose this, make sure you dig deeper than the obvious)

Paul Rudner, *I Hate Hamlet*

Susan Coyne, Bob Martin, Mark McKinney, *Slings and Arrows*, season 1

Deb Margolin's performance piece:

"At sometime in your life you must have wondered: Yo! What's with Hamlet"

Also Miss Tennessee doing the To Be or Not to Be Speech

Deb Margolin, "A Performer's Notes on Parody" *Theater Topics*, 13.2 (2003) 247-252.

<file:///C:/Users/Melinda%20Finberg/OneDrive%20-%20University%20of%20Southern%20California/Academic%20Documents/2020%20USC/Dramaturgy/Project%20MUSE%20-%20A%20Performer's%20Notes%20on%20Parody%20by%20Deb%20Margolin.html>

Script Coverage

A one-page assessment of a script that you would write to recommend a script to an agent or literary manager. I will provide a template. 1000 words maximum.

Production Review

This is a review that you might write for the theatre you are working for about a production you have seen. You will discuss dramaturgical issues, what you expected, how differed from what you had expected, what were the play's and the productions strengths and weaknesses. 500 words or less.

Play-reading Journal

Starting week 3, you will write 5 reports on plays you have read -- each from a different historical period. There is a full description on Blackboard. Each report is one page and I will provide a template. These are reports, not essays.

Final Project

Choose one of the plays you have read this semester and write program copy, and education packet, or create a lobby display to capture the interest of the audience and provide them with helpful information on the author, the historical period, and/or a particular issue important to understanding the play. Be creative! 1000 words maximum plus visuals.

Grading Breakdown

Essay on non-western historical play	10%
<i>Hamlet</i> project	15%
Script Coverage	10%
Production Review	10%
Play-reading Journal	20%
Final Project	20%
Class Participation	15%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	94-100
A-	90-93
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

Assignment Rubrics

Since each assignment is different in form, each will have its own rubric that will be posted with the assignment on Blackboard. All will focus on content and style – with the emphasis on content. Some are formal essays, others are forms of copywriting, and the journal may be in note form. I will supply a Journal template and you will fill it in for each play.

Assignment Submission Policy

All papers will be turned in to Turnitin on Blackboard. Be sure to get a confirmation receipt in case of glitches. You may email a backup copy to me, but I will be looking at the time stamp on Blackboard. All assignments are due at the start of class on the day listed. No late work will be accepted.

Grading Timeline

All papers will be graded and available two weeks after the due date. You will have access to them, your grades, and my comments.

Additional Policies

Due to this class having to take place online, we all need to be mindful of the nuances of the situation and to take them into account. Some of you may have difficulties with access to technology or places to work. Others may be in different time zones making synchronous learning more complicated. Please let me know what needs or differences you have so that I understand what is required for you to succeed.

Additionally, I want to set up some ground rules for our “classroom.” In our meetings:

- Listen actively and attentively.
- Respect each other's views
- Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own.
- Ask questions when you do not understand; do not assume you know what others are thinking.
- It's OK to ask a question that you think may be unsophisticated or uninformed
- If you are offended by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately.
- If you think something is missing from the conversation, don't wait for someone else to say it; say it yourself
- Refer to the text to support your ideas.
- Support good ideas that other people have, even if they are different from your own.
- Recognize and/or remember that we have different backgrounds.
- We all make mistakes at times. You may correct someone (including me) as long as you do so respectfully.
- Trust that people are always doing the best they can.

Other class policies:

- Attendance and Participation are important components of your grade. If you are having issues with either, please write to me or arrange a private Zoom meeting so that we can work out an accommodation.
- Assignments are expected to be turned in as directed by the due date and time. Again, if you are having problems relating to submitting, please contact me before the time the assignment is due so that we can make other arrangements.
- Ideally, we should all have working technology and access to it during synchronous class time and when doing your work. Unfortunately, the situation is not ideal and people will have different situations that make technological connections difficult or, at times, impossible. Please let me know either on the questionnaire or if your situation changes, so that we can figure out alternatives.
- Please refrain from using technology during class for anything other than classwork.
- We will be taking a short break in the middle of class. That time is not only a "bio" break but a time to relax and check in with each other informally.
- When in class, if possible, please turn on your video so that we can see each others' faces.
- Remember, our primary goal is to learn from each other and creating a learning community relies on consistent commitment from each of us.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 M Jan 10	Roles of the Dramaturg Introduction: I am a dramaturg; I ask questions. What is dramaturgy? What does a dramaturg do? What roles can a	For 1/10 Have read Chemers, <i>Ghostlight</i> , chapter 1 "What #\$/@ is a Dramaturg?"	

	dramaturg play? How can I apply dramaturgy to my particular field of interest?		Discuss Play-reading Journal
W Jan 12	Different approaches to contemporary dramaturgy	<i>Dramaturgy in America:</i> Oscar Brockett, "Dramaturgy in Education: Introduction" and Mark Bly, "Bristling with Possibilities"	
Week 2 Jan 17	MLK Birthday No class		
Jan 19	Begin historical background: Greek and Roman theories Does <i>Othello</i> fit Aristotelian theory?	Read Chemers, Chapter 2 "Historicizing Dramaturgy" Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>	Assign Non-Western Historical Dramaturgy Essay Due: 2/7
Week 3 Jan 24	Begin discussing multicultural historical dramaturgy	Focus on Chemers's descriptions of ancient Egyptian, Indian, and Japanese dramaturgy	First Journal entry due
Jan 26	Continue discussion of historical/multicultural dramaturgy. Divide into groups to work on non-Aristotelian historical dramaturgs/playwrights	Read Ketaki Datta, "Dramaturgy in Indian Theatre: A Closer View" in Romanska , on Blackboard	
Week 4 Jan 31	Present Group projects Begin discussion of different theories of ideas and interpretations: Critical Theory Overview pt.1: Hegel, Historical Criticism, Structuralism, Marxism, Brecht	Read Chemers, Chapter 3, "Power Plays"	

Feb 2	<p>Critical Theory Overview Pt.2: Psychoanalytic; Feminism, Gender Theory, Queer Theory; Reader Response and Reception; Poststructuralism and Post Modernism; Postcolonialism</p> <p>Class exercise: Divide into groups. Each group take one type of theory and try to apply it to <i>Othello</i> or <i>Romeo and Juliet</i></p>		
Week 5 Feb 7	<p>Beginning of Script Analysis</p> <p>Discuss Chemers and Ball in relation to <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>.</p>	<p>Read Chemers, Ch. 4 “12-Step Program for Script Analysis,” steps, 1-6.</p> <p>Read David Ball, <i>Backwards and Forwards</i>, Part I “Shape”</p>	<p>Non-Western Historical Dramaturgy Essay due</p>
Feb 9	<p>As a dramaturg, what are some of the questions you would ask the play?</p>	<p>Read Lope de Vega, <i>Fuenteovejuna</i></p>	<p>Assign Hamlet Project Due: Mar 7</p>
Week 6 Feb 14	<p>Discussion of Dramatic Conflict, needs, triggers, obstacles, resistance in <i>Fuenteovejuna</i></p>	<p>Research and answer some of the questions from Ball and Chemers</p> <p>What new questions does that research raise?</p> <p>Read Chemers, Ch. 4, steps 7 – 12.</p>	<p>Second Journal entry due</p>

Feb 16	Another way to look at play analysis and apply to <i>Fuenteovejuna</i>	Read Lee Devin, “Conceiving the Forms: Play Analysis for Production Dramaturgy in DiAT	
Week 7 Feb 21	Presidents' Day NO CLASS		
Feb 23	Adaptation and “WTPN?” (Why this play now?) How does your research contribute to your feeling about WTPN?	Research and answer some of the questions from Feb 24. What new questions does that research raise Read <i>Measure for Measure</i>	
Week 8 Feb 28	Adapting a script and adapting staging Discuss problems with <i>M for M</i> and how Jonas approaches them	Read Susan Jonas chapter, in <i>Dramaturgy in America</i> , “Aiming the Canon at Now: Strategies for Adaptation.” In DiAT	
Mar 2	Group work. Apply Jonas's theory to Lope de Vega's <i>Fuenteovejuna</i>		
Week 9 Mar 7	Bringing Multiculturalism to Historical plays Discuss Ramirez's chapter. How might her ideas be applied to any of the Shakespeare plays we have read? How might it apply to <i>Fuenteovejuna</i> ?	Read Elizabeth C. Ramirez, “Multicultural Approaches in Dramaturgy: A Case Study,” in DiAT	Hamlet Project due (Midterm)
Mar 9	Active discussion of multiculturalism at SDA Be ready to discuss where you can see ways to approach it in Lope de Vega's <i>Fuenteovjuna</i>	Read Harriet Power, “Reimagining the Other: A Multiracial Production of <i>Mad Forest</i> ” DiAT Go over the plays produced recently at SDA. Look for how multi-culturalism is or is not a factor in those productions. Come prepared to discuss how successful we have been and where we can improve.	
SPRING BREAK			
Week 10			

Mar 21 Mar 23	<p>Discuss Cram's adaptation of Lope de Vega's play. How does she engage with her source? How does she break from it? What questions do you need to ask and research? How do they relate to and differ from your questions for the original?</p> <p>What questions is Cram asking? What questions do you have for her about the script? WTPN?</p> <p>Praxis</p> <p>Being a dramaturg</p> <p>What are different types of dramaturgy and what do they entail? What openings do you see for dramaturgs? Dramaturgy for performance art? For musicals? For opera? For dance? For devised works? For communities?</p>	<p>Read Cusi Cram, <i>Fuenteovejuna</i></p>	<p>Third Journal entry due</p> <p>Assign Production Review due 4/4</p>
Week 11 Mar 28 Mar 30	<p>Writing as a dramaturg in house</p> <p>3/31 Writing as a dramaturg outside of a theatre company</p> <p>Assessing Productions</p> <p>Writing a production Review</p>	<p>Read Chemers, Ch. 6 "Why This Play Now?"</p> <p>Read Romanska, ed., Part VI "Dramaturgy among Other Arts: Interdisciplinarity, Transdisciplinarity, and Transvergence." On Blackboard.</p>	
Week 12 Apr 4 Apr 6	<p>Writing as an inhouse dramaturg</p> <p>Script Coverage, Press Releases,</p> <p>Program Copy, Study Guides</p>		<p>Production Review due</p> <p>Assign Script Coverage due 4/20</p>

	???		
Week 13 Apr 11	Brent Blair?		Fourth Journal entry due
Apr 13	Collaborations Dramaturgs and playwrights New Play dramaturgy	Read "How to Talk to a Playwright" a panel discussion in DiTA Chemers, Ch. 7 "New Plays"	
Week 14 Apr 18	Dramaturgs and Directors	Chemers, Ch. 8 "The Company"	
Apr 20	Outreach: How to draw an audience into the play	Read in Romanska Chs. 78 - 83	Script Coverage Due
Week 15 Apr 25	Education and lobby displays		Fifth Journal entry due and Journals must be completed
Apr 26	Summing up So, what is a dramaturg? Looking back: your journals	Read Geoffrey S. Proehl, "The Images Before Us," in DiTA	
FINAL	Final Project: Outreach: Program Copy, Educational Packet, or Lobby Display		Date: Monday, May 9, 8 – 10 am on Zoom

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. 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>.

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).

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Office of Student Accessibility (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 STU 301 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) 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:

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