

USC School of Dramatic Arts

Theatre 125: Text Studies for Production

Section #62642 -- 4 units
FALL 2022 -- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-1:50 p.m.
KAP 164

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Catalogue Description

Focuses on the questions, artistic choices, methodologies, and approaches of an actor/director/designer in the preparation of a production score prior to rehearsal.

Section Overview

In this course section, we will together examine the production parameters of 5 plays that represent a range of historical and contemporary styles in drama and theatrical production. Each play reflects its own era and also encompasses themes of continuing relevance such as: home, family, love, war, political power and cultural, racial and gender differences. Three basic goals will frame our examination of the plays: (1) to inspire an appreciation of how historical and contemporary plays reflect the production modes, as well as the attitudes and concerns of their own times, while simultaneously informing our artistic creativity today; (2) to analyze plays as scores for performance; and (3) to consolidate and advance your skills in dramatic analysis by introducing concrete tools that will aid you in your practice of the dramatic arts.

Learning Objectives

- Build knowledge and appreciation of the ideas and controversies addressed by the selected texts in their multicultural, historical, and theatrical diversity.
- Investigate the relationship of text to performance and production.
- Create a personal toolbox for analyzing plays by exploring and applying a range of analytical, research, and practical methodologies.
- Probe how a play's ideas, whether from the past or present, can enrich our own identities.
- Sharpen critical thinking through readings and analytical assignments.
- Write clearly and cogently in pursuit of a thesis, using appropriate textual and critical evidence.

Learner Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge about the range of texts, production modes, and themes studied in class.
- Demonstrate understanding of the critical methodologies studied in class through their application to plays in class discussions and written assignments.
- Develop expertise on one topic treated in the course through a researched presentation, delivered to the full class.
- Practice critical thinking through class discussions and written assignments.
- Practice artistic creativity through class exercises, discussions, and written assignments.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- The platforms for this course are Blackboard, Zoom, the USC email system, and the USC room as assigned.
- Research can be conducted through electronic resources at the USC Library.
- A device that has a webcam, microphone, and internet access, as well as standard office software (including a power point for presentations and document/pdf software for written work) is necessary for this course.
- Presentations in class will be shared through zoom.
- Written work must be submitted as **Word docs or as PDFs** in order that files will open properly on Blackboard.

Class Session Notes

This course will be conducted in person and will follow the policies and protocols for health and safety as established by USC and by LA City and County Officials. Zoom will be used for in-class presentations and for emergency purposes only. (See also **Course Norms and Expectations** below).

- **PARTICIPATION:** You are expected to participate fully in all classes, whether on-ground or online. If at any time you are unable to attend class, email me and the CA immediately. Participation and good communication about absences is mandatory **to achieve full credit** for the course.
- **WHEN ON-GROUND:**
 1. Arrive promptly and in compliance with health and safety protocols
 2. Bring reading and course materials with you to class.
 3. Be ready to participate.
 4. As per USC policy, only absences for religious holidays are excused. All other absences count. Should you need to miss class due to illness or emergencies, I, your peers, and the CA will be available to help you catch up on any missed work. (See **Attendance** below.)
 5. Feel free to communicate with me about any difficulties you may be experiencing in class.
- **IF ON-LINE:**
 1. Keep your camera on (so we all can see you), mute your microphone (to avoid feedback) unless you are speaking, and log on as individuals. If you have bandwidth or connectivity problems that make it best to keep your camera off, please speak with me or our CA about it.
 2. All times for Zoom links are given in LA time, so adjust accordingly if you are in another time zone.
 3. If for any reason my internet goes down during a class session, I will reconnect as soon as I am able. If your internet goes down, communicate with me or our CA as soon as possible.

Course Norms and Expectations

- **PREPARATION:** You are expected to arrive in class with your text and **having read and thought about the assignment** for that day.
- **ENSEMBLE:** We will function as an ensemble for this term's seminar. You are therefore expected to respect all members of the class; to work collaboratively with each other; and to show responsibility toward each other by fulfilling the course assignments.
- **ATTENDANCE:** Attendance and punctuality are mandatory to build our ensemble. *You will forfeit your right to participate in class if you arrive late or come unprepared.* If you are ill, please do not come to class. I and your peers will help you catch up. Absences for auditions or professional work will also be counted as regular absences. (See also **Extracurricular Commitments and ISPs** below.) If you are unable to attend a class or will be late for any reason, email me and the CA in advance.
- **ASSIGNMENTS:** While the content of each class session may be adjusted to accommodate the pace of class, due dates for graded assignments will not change. No late work will be accepted and students are expected to manage their time in accord with the due dates. If you have an unforeseen emergency, email me or the CA immediately.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Courtesy dictates that you put your cell phone away and do not surf the web on your laptop during class sessions.
- **A pattern of lateness and/or absence and/or a lack in any of the expectations outlined here can significantly impact your final grade.** (See **Grading Breakdown** below.)

Required Texts for Section #62666R

The following 6 texts have been ordered for you at the Bookstore.

- **Course Reader: You will need the *Reader* for the second class.**
- Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Peter Meineck (Hackett ISBN 0-87220-390-5) **Be sure to get this translation.**
- Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (The Oxford Shakespeare ISBN 978-0-19-953609) **If you have another edition of this play, you may use it.**
- Alice Childress, *Wedding Band* (Samuel French ISBN 978-0-573-61769-0)
- Leslie Ayvazian, *Nine Armenians* (Samuel French ISBN 0-8222-1602-7)
- Quiara Alegría Hudes, *Water by the Spoonful* (TCG ISBN 978-1-55936-557-4)

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).

Assignment Submission Policy

- Required dates, submission information, and the list of presentation topics will be posted on Blackboard. Weekly announcements will help keep you on track and alert you to any necessary adjustments to the schedule.
- All presentations are scheduled for class sessions.
- Written work will be submitted as a doc or PDF through Blackboard.
- No late work will be accepted for graded assignments.
- **If you have conflicts or issues with the timely submission of assignments, contact Dr. Carnicke or Ms. Sabo in advance of the deadlines.**

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Breakdown

A: Research -- 20% of Final Grade

ONE In-Class Presentation (5 minutes maximum). Topics and due dates will be distributed during the first week of the term. Presentations are intended to provide background information on the course material and to spark class discussions. Therefore:

- (1) You will be held to the time limit.
- (2) You should plan a low-tech talk. If you wish to use a power point, be prepared to share your computer screen through zoom. If the technology fails, you must be flexible enough to go on without it.
- (3) A one-page written outline or your power point will be due at the time of the presentation, together with a bibliography of 3 to 5 sources that you consulted as your research.

B: Four Assignments -- Posing Productive Questions -- 20% of Final Grade

For each of these assignments, submit 4 cogent questions for which you do not have firm answers about the play(s) under discussion and for each question, suggest an analytical tool from our class that you think might help find an answer. These questions should productively provoke you and your peers to examine the play(s) under discussion more deeply. Specific directions and prompts for these assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

C: Two Analytical Papers – Seeking Answers – 40% of Final Grade

For each of these papers, write a paper (3-4 double-spaced pages), answering one of the questions you have posed in your assignments (above), using one of the analytical tools examined in class to help you. Specific prompts for these papers will be made available in class and on Blackboard.

D: Final Examination -- An Analysis of a Play for Production—20% of Final Grade

ONE PAPER (4 pages) that consists of the following: A) 2 pages of analysis based upon one of your productive questions about the last play read in the term; and B) 2 pages that address the production possibilities inherent in the last play. For B, you will have the option of writing from the perspective of (1) an actor preparing for a major role; (2) a director planning the overall production; (3) a scenographer who will design the set, costumes, and lighting for the production; (4) a dramaturg who has been asked to write program notes for the audience; or (5) a producer seeking funds to stage the play. Specific prompts for this paper will be distributed at the last class.

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs online 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 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.

Grading Breakdown and Scale

The graded assignments will be weighted as detailed above. The final course grade is determined according to the following scale:

Excellent:	A	95-100
Excellent:	A-	90-94
Good:	B+	87-89
Good:	B	83-86
Good:	B-	80-82
Average:	C+	77-79
Average:	C	73-76
Average:	C-	70-72
Poor:	D+	67-69
Poor:	D	63-66
Poor:	D-	60-62
Failing:	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 there is poor understanding of the class content by term’s end; and/or gaps in the successful completion of work; and/or a lack of responsibility toward the class ensemble.

When the raw average of all assignments falls between two grades, the final grade will reflect the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance, participation and responsibility to the class have been good, but will reflect the negative end of the scale when attendance, participation and responsibility have been lacking.

If you have a pattern of repeated absences, a lack of participation in class discussions/exercises and late submission of assignments/papers, your final grade will be lowered further by as much as one half to one full grade.

Grading Timeline

Every effort will be made to grade work in a timely fashion. Grades and Feedback will be available through Blackboard.

Additional Course Policies

1. If you need any learning accommodations, be sure to contact the USC Office of Disabilities (see **Support Systems** below) and present a letter with your approved accommodations to Dr. Carnicke in the first weeks of the semester and before any assignments are due.
2. If you are not a native speaker of English and/or you are an international student, make an appointment with Dr. Carnicke in the first two weeks to determine whether language accommodations might be necessary.

3. If you have a religious holiday or any other conflict, inform Dr. Carnicke or Ms. Sabo during the first two weeks.
4. Any work that does not fulfill the required assignment is an automatic F.
5. If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned before the deadline for dropping the course with a grade of W.
6. I will be happy to discuss your work at any time during the semester, and I encourage each of you to meet with me at least once before the scheduled exam.
7. For USC Policies, see below.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown (All Dates are Subject to USC/SDA Changes.)

NOTE: For each unit of in-class contact time, USC also expects, on average, two hours of out of class student work per week over a semester. This course is 4 units of in-class time with an expected eight hours on average of out of class work per week.

Module 1: The Course and Its Goals (1½ weeks)

Tu Aug. 23	Introductions to the course and each other Distribution of class presentation topics and dates. READ for Today: The Syllabus
Th Aug. 25	Getting Started—the figure/ground relationship between audience and play READ for Today: “The Dragon” on Blackboard; Do a quick online search for facts about the Leningrad Siege during WW II and the recent Siege of Mariupol in Ukraine.
Tu Aug. 30	What is a Play? READ for Today: Excerpts by Constantin Stanislavski; Anne Bogart, Martin Esslin, and Bernard Beckerman in the <i>Course Reader</i>

Module 2: The Amphitheatre (2½ weeks)

Th Sept. 1	The Play as a score for performance. In-Class work with the first choral ode in <i>Agamemnon</i> . Presentations on Aeschylus and ancient Greek theatre. READ for Today: Excerpts by Raymond Williams on “Antigone.”
Tu Sept. 6	The story, plot and overarching perspective in <i>Agamemnon</i> READ for Today: “Agamemnon” in <i>Oresteia</i> by Aeschylus
Th Sept. 8	Action, Counteraction and Event in an etude on <i>Agamemnon</i> Presentation on Aristotle. READ for Today: Aristotle’s “The Poetics” (sections I-IX) in the <i>Course Reader</i>
Friday, Sept. 9:	Last day to add, to select audit, or to change P/NP to a letter grade.
Tu Sept. 13	Presentation on Sir Peter Hall. Discussion of Hall’s contemporary production of <i>Agamemnon</i> VIEW for Today: <i>Agamemnon</i> , directed by Sir Peter Hall, via USC Library digital services (Alexander Street). Viewing instructions are on Blackboard.
Th Sept. 15	DUE: Assignment 1—Posing Productive Questions on <i>Agamemnon</i> Seminar discussion grounded in your questions.

Module 3: Four Boards and a Passion (3½ weeks)

- Tu Sept. 20 **Presentations** on Shakespeare and the Globe
READ for Today: All excerpts in the *Course Reader* concerning Shakespeare's biography and production and acting at the Globe Theatre.
VIEW by Thursday: *Twelfth Night* at the Royal Shakespeare Company, starring Dinutia Gohil (Viola) and Esh Madi (Sebastian), via USC Library digital services (Digital Theatre Plus). Viewing instructions are on Blackboard
- Th Sept. 22 **Background Presentations** on *Twelfth Night* and the Royal Shakespeare Company
Discussion of Twelfth Night based upon the assigned viewing. Bring your play to class because we will read scenes as needed.
- Tu Sept. 27 Establishing the Themes of a Play
READ for Today: First and last scenes of *Twelfth Night*
- Th Sept. 29 Shakespeare's handling of Rising and Falling Action
READ for Today: *Twelfth Night* as assigned in class.
- Tu Oct. 4 Concluding discussion and etudes on *Twelfth Night*
- Th Oct. 6 **DUE: Assignment 2—Posing Productive Questions on Twelfth Night**
Seminar discussion grounded in your questions.
- Friday, Oct. 7—Last day to drop without “W”
- Tu Oct. 11 **DUE: Paper 1 on either Agamemnon or Twelfth Night**
Seminar Discussion: What did you discover further about either *Agamemnon* or *Twelfth Night* by writing your paper?
- Th Oct. 13 FALL BREAK—no class. HOORAY!

Module 4: Modern Theatrical Realism in the U.S. (4½ weeks)

- Tu Oct. 18 **Presentations** on theatrical Realism, Childress, and the ANT.
- Th Oct. 20 **Background Presentation** on *Wedding Band*.
Discussion of *Wedding Band*
READ for Today: *Wedding Band* by Alice Childress
- Tu Oct. 25 Continued study and etudes on *Wedding Band*.
- Th Oct. 27 **Presentations** on Black Activists in American Theatre.
- Tu Nov. 1 **Presentations** on the Armenian diaspora and Armenia theatre artists in the US; discussion of *Nine Armenians*
READ for Today: *Nine Armenians* by Leslie Ayvazian
- Nov. 3/8 Continued study and etudes on *Nine Armenians*
- **Th Nov. 10 **DUE: Assignment 3—Posing Productive Questions on Wedding Band and Nine Armenians**
Seminar discussion grounded in your questions.

Friday, Nov. 11—Last Day to drop with a mark of “W”

Tu Nov. 15 **DUE: Paper 2 on either Wedding Band or Nine Armenians
Seminar Discussion: What did you discover further about either *Wedding Band* or *Nine Armenians* by writing your paper.

Module 5: Applying What We've Learned to a 21st Century Pulitzer Prize Winner

Th Nov. 17	Presentations and Figure/Ground Relationship in <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> READ for Today: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> by Quiara Alegría Hudes
Tu Nov. 22	Story, plot and overarching Perspective in <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>
Th Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Day—no class
Tu Nov. 29	Action, counteraction and event in a selected scene from <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> DUE: Assignment 3—Posing Productive Questions on Water by the Spoonful
Th Dec. 1	Course Conclusions and Preparation for the Final Examination

Tu Dec 13 11-1, 2-4 pm

FINAL EXAMINATION

DUE by 4 pm on Blackboard: A Paper on Water by the Spoonful as described in the Assignments. Both Parts A and B must be completed to receive full credit.

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 *Scamps* 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 *Scamps* 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 GFS 120 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) 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 follow all health and safety protocols that are established by USC and LA County during the semester. 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 USC's instructions. 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 progress in class so that your education is not disrupted.

If face coverings (masks) are mandated indoors including in classrooms, they 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/>).

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

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.