

THTR 529a Textual Studies for Performance

63188 Fall 2022 Wed & Fri 12 – 1:50 pm

Location: KAP 166

Instructor: Paula Cizmar

Office: JEF 201, 950 W. Jefferson, Los Angeles 90089

Office Hours: Available: Wed 3- 6 pm;

Thurs Noon – 2:30 pm; please note that office hours are by appointment only; please contact me via email or phone, at least 24 hours in advance, to set up a Zoom appointment.

Contact Info: cizmar@usc.edu; 323.376.1216 mobile

www.paulacizmar.com

ITHelp: USC Information Technology Services

<http://itservices.usc.edu>; School of Dramatic Arts – Mr.

Prakash Shirke. Contact Info: shirke@usc.edu; 213.740.1288.

Be flexible. Times and places may change as the semester develops.

Alert 2022: This syllabus contains policies that take covid and its variants into consideration. In brief: No food or drink in class. Masks are recommended in class. University policy may change as infection numbers grow, and masks may be required. Stay attuned to University communications.

Catalogue Description

THTR 529a *Close textual reading of dramatic texts as a fundamental tool for rehearsal and performance.*

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 acquiring techniques for looking deeply into a script and transforming it into a stage production in which all artists are operating collaboratively and attempting to tell the same story, creating the same world. 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 process and methodologies that 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 their own. In addition, because we are looking at texts that are both classical and contemporary, we can explore the foundations and mysteries of our ancient art form while also building a new wave of theatre practice for the future.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed to equip students with basic analytical tools and interpretive perspectives that will enhance future performances and instill a professional and artistic approach. Students will:

- Attain insight into how dramatic texts work;
- Develop the ability to explore the author's intent and view how the author's text provides the material needed to create a successful performance;
- Develop the ability to recognize and interpret subtext, metaphor, and imagery;

- Analyze dramatic works deeply and view them as dramatic scores/maps to a production on stage or onscreen or in multiplatforms;
- Gain experience in doing the necessary research to explore the text;
- Gather knowledge about classical texts while also becoming acquainted with the newest voices and newest writing techniques;
- Improve mindfulness of the collaborative relationships between theatre artist, text, theatre event, and the audience.

Prerequisites: None

Course Notes

The course is structured as a seminar in which student discussion and analysis are primary.

- The reading list comprises six plays—three classic and three contemporary—that are in conversation with each other.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- *Hecuba* by Euripides. Translated by Frank McGuinness and Fionnuala Murphy.*
- *Antigone X* by Paula Cizmar (adapted from Sophocles).
- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. Oxford University Press edition.**
- *Peerless* by Jihae Park.
- *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov. Trans. by Richard Nelson. TCG edition.**
- *El Nogalar* by Tanya Saracho.

*Note: The script for *Hecuba* is available from instructor as a PDF.

**Please note that we are using specific editions; the Oxford University Press edition of the Shakespeare play contains exceptional notes that will help guide you and offer deeper insights; the Richard Nelson translation of Chekhov contains a perspective that is important to consider, plus the language is specific. Look for the TCG Classic Russian Drama series. (Available at USC Bookstore.)

Supplementary materials for each topic to be studied will be found on Blackboard.

A note about content: Much of the course material contains intense, gritty, and, for some, potentially offensive materials. Please consider this syllabus a “trigger warning” and gauge your receptibility to controversial artworks before you join the MFA program. Your voluntary participation in the course constitutes an explicit consent to experiencing difficult and/or troubling art.

Communication

The class sessions will occur in the classroom, with backup provided by Blackboard. Office hours will be conducted via Zoom. Communication is a fundamental part of both the artistic and learning process. It is always my intention to embrace these visionary goals:

- SUSTAINABILITY
- CONNECTION
- TRANSFORMATION

What does this mean?

BY embracing SUSTAINABILITY, we will save on time, energy, and paper. You will turn in your work electronically on Blackboard. Whenever possible, handouts and course materials will be paperless, available online via Blackboard.

CONNECTION means that we will make contact in several ways—with each other, with the creative community, with the world at large. In addition to in-class discussion, we'll connect with each other via email, text message, and Zoom. Be sure to check your USC email daily; stay on top of potential changes to times and scheduling, reminders about projects and resources, etc. We'll also stay attuned to what's going on in American theatre, and we'll look at what's going on in the world—and explore how we can use art for growth and healing.

TRANSFORMATION means that we will be looking at theatre as a way to effect transformation in our lives, and in the lives of others; we'll look at creating theatre from a place of empathy, from a place of heart-driven concern for humanity; we'll look at culture and trends and attempt to define and redefine theatre for the 21st century.

Technical Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

It is necessary for each student to become adept in the use of Blackboard and Zoom. See the links below for information on how to use this technology.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

USC technology rental program

If we need to deliver class online due to an emergency: 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. Check with the tech support services listed above.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Grading Scale for SDA: **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of acceptable quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

USC GRADING SCALE

Overall grading is determined on the following scale:

96-100%=A	95-91%=A-	
88-90%=B+	85-87%=B	81-84%=B-
78-80%=C+	75-77%=C	71-74%=C-
67-70%=D+	66-64%=D	61-63%=D- F = 60 and below

[Failing Grade for Graduate Credit = C-]

- “Excellent” indicates that the student couples clear understanding of the class material with original and creative insight, as demonstrated by their work; “Good” means that the student demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and has done the work well; “Acceptable”

indicates that the student demonstrates a general understanding of the material but with some gaps; "Poor" indicates that there are identifiable gaps in the student's understanding of the class material; "Failure" is the result of the student not having completed his or her assignments coupled with poor understanding of the material.

- When the average 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 good, and will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

Grading Timeline

Please bear in mind that you earn your grade based on the timely completion of your work, plus the quality of your work. Late assignments are marked down due to missed deadline.

Assignments are accepted only within one week of due date. After that, they are considered a missed assignment, which counts as zero.

Attendance Policy for MFA Acting Program (to be followed by all in this class):

- 4 excused absences and/or lateness for the semester. Late=absence. You are kept out of class if you are late. Grace period=5minutes. You have 5 minutes where the class will hold and wait for you.
- If you are out with COVID you must have tested positive. At home Rapid tests are now the University standard. You do not need to wait for PCR.
- Half a point marked down once a student reaches their limit per absence/late day per semester. For example: Absence/lateness #5 you have an A- at best. #6 B+ etc.
- Minimum passing grades for graduate credit is a "C". Students who receive a B- in any course will be placed on probation for the following term.

For a specific policy on isolation due to covid, please reference the following if you test positive:

ISOLATION INSTRUCTIONS

Current public health guidance is that a full isolation period is 10 days, with a minimum of 5 days. Isolation means you cannot leave your residence (or have guests at your residence), except to seek medical care.

Day Zero (0) is your date your symptoms began, or if you are asymptomatic, the date of your positive test. Day One (1) is the first full day after Day Zero. Isolation instructions:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/covidisolation/>

You may end isolation on day 6 with a negative antigen test.

You may meet requirements to end isolation earlier if the following criteria are met:

- You have no fever for 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medicines).
- Your symptoms are improving.
- You are able to take an Antigen/NAAT/LAMP test on Day Five (5) or later, and the results are negative.

You will receive an automated message from Student Health on the morning of Day Six (6) to let you know how to book an antigen test appointment through MySHR. Antigen tests are subject to supply availability.

You are required to make a truthful assessment of your condition and complete an attestation.

During days 6-10, you must exercise additional precautions:

- Wear a well-fitting surgical mask or N95 at all times both indoors and outdoors

- Eat alone or outdoors. Individuals dining on campus must use “Grab and Go” options.

If you do not have a negative antigen test on or after day 5, you must isolate for at least 10 days, and for the last 24 hours of isolation, your symptoms must be significantly improved, including no fever. Once you have met the above criteria you may end isolation and return to campus on Day 11. A repeat or negative test is not needed nor recommended to end isolation after Day 10.

Additional Policies

1. Participation is essential and figures into your grade. Think of this course as a professional, artistic workshop; thus, as a member of such a workshop, your participation is necessary not only for the development of your own work, but for the development of your colleagues’ work as well. Theatre is a highly collaborative, community-oriented medium. Please honor your obligation to your colleagues’ work.
2. You are entering into a collaborative relationship with fellow students, and thus it is your responsibility to be available to your colleagues for feedback, analysis, and support.
3. All class members must be treated with respect.
4. You are required to attend the class and to be on time. Excessive tardiness will affect your ongoing writing and participation grade.
5. For absences, you must notify me in writing (preferably in advance). **If you are ill or showing signs of covid infection: Please stay at home. Communicate with me about this. Please see the covid and isolation instructions above.** In your absence, please prepare the assigned work that is due and turn it in immediately upon return to the class. It may become possible to create an alternative assignment for you to make up missed work.
6. All assignments, written and/or otherwise, must be prepared on time and turned in (or presented) on the deadline date. Late assignments will be marked down due to the missed deadline. Assignments not presented within a week of deadline count as missed assignments (zero credit).
7. **IF YOU MISS CLASS:** It is your responsibility to make up work you have missed and to obtain information about missed class discussions or missed assignments from Blackboard or from your classmates. I will not be repeating lectures or class discussion; office hours are not for the purposes of repeating lectures or discussions, but rather are for the purpose of helping you with areas in which you need guidance or where you are confused or where you are dealing with challenges. Class materials can be found on the Blackboard site for this course.

For your syllabus, handouts, etc., go to Blackboard. For covid-related absences: SDA will work to make the class material available to you.

8. Please check your e-mail regularly to see if there are any changes in class meeting, etc. On rare occasions, it becomes necessary to make changes to class meeting details. If I am unable to provide you with this information in the preceding class, I will send you the information via e-mail and/or text message.
9. For collaborations, you may work using a number of collaborative tools, such as Slack, Google documents, Google Drive.
10. If you desire an appointment, you are required to contact me via e-mail or text message at least 24 hours in advance, otherwise there is no guarantee I will receive your message in time to make arrangements to meet with you. Please note I have included multiple ways to contact me on page one of this syllabus.

Zoom Etiquette

If it becomes necessary to have a class session on Zoom, please remember that "Netiquette" or "internet etiquette," is important for collaborative work. Please respect the following guidelines:

- Whenever possible, please use your computer to log-in to the class rather than your phone. This will help us with the quality of visuals and audio, plus it will present fewer problems when sharing screens.
- If you have technical issues during class, please contact: USC Information Technology Services <http://itservices.usc.edu>; or School of Dramatic Arts – Mr. Prakash Shirke. Contact Info: shirke@usc.edu; 213.740.1288.
- Your camera must be on at all times, unless you are requested to hide video.
- Please attempt to log-in from an environment that does not have distracting background noise, such as pets, family members, machinery, music. If you find yourself in a situation with distracting noise, please use ear buds or headphones.
- When not speaking (for example, during a reading of a scene, when you are not playing a role), please mute your microphone. During discussions feel free to leave your mic on.
- Remember that you are in class, therefore behavior appropriate to class should be followed. Please do not walk around, leave the room, read, play games, etc. during class.
- You may use your devices for research that enhances the discussion during class, but please stay attuned to what is going on while engaged in research.
- Try to take turns speaking. Remember that Zoom creates problems when voices overlap.
- The chat box will be available to you to use during class, however please don't abuse it. For example, remember that everyone can see what you type in the chat. Therefore your comments should not contain private messages to another class member—which can be read in the saved chat. Also, try to use chat to enhance the discussion, rather than interrupt it.
- Remember: The class session is being recorded. (This includes the chat.)
- Be respectful of others at all times.
- Remember: We're all in this together. Now more than ever.

Sharing of Course Materials Outside of the Learning Environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any course content, including synchronous and asynchronous online 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 Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week 1 **8/24 & 8/26**

Diving into the World of the Play
Introductions: Who are we? Where are we?
What is our work?
What are some of the elements of dramatic writing?

Weeks 2, 3, 4 **8/31, 9/2, 9/7, 9/9, 9/14, 9/16**

The Greeks – and The Legacy.
Read and discuss *Hecuba* and *Antigone X*.
The civic and moral questions raised by war and homecoming.
Original practice and how it grew.

Weeks 5, 6, 7 **9/21, 9/23, 9/28, 9/30, 10/5, 10/7**

Shakespeare, Witches, and Contemporary Curses
Read and discuss *Macbeth* and *Peerless*.
The language of Shakespeare.
Original practice.
Relatability, human nature, worlds out of time.

Weeks 8, 9, 10 **10/12, 10/19, 10/21, 10/26, 10/28**

(no class 10/14 – fall recess)

Chekhov and Why We Can't Have Nice Things
Read *The Cherry Orchard* and *El Nogalar*.
The tragicomedies of the inconsequential—or is it?
Characters and their blindspots.

Weeks 11 – 15 **11/2 – 12/2**

(no class 11/23 and 11/25 – Thanksgiving)

Catching Up and Continuing the Discussion
Introduction to New Theatre for Right Now
Prep for potential NTRN event. (Subject to change; TBD)

Final

Friday 12/9

Final Project Summative Experience DUE by 12/9/2022 by 11 am per USC scheduled Final Exams.

NOTE: This is subject to change due to the nature of our final project, which will be explored in the class as a group.

REMINDER: Use Blackboard as a resource. Class materials, information, handouts, additional essays, source materials, etc., are posted on the class site on Blackboard.

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.

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.

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 stay up to date with University policies on coronavirus, including screenings and testing, etc. The University sends out guidelines on a regular basis, and we must all expect things to change as the number and type of infections change. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of covid, 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 University health and safety instructions. If you test positive, if you are feeling ill, or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, please stay home to protect others. SDA will work to assist you and help you continue to participate in class in some alternative way so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC recommends that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. I will be wearing a mask. As the semester proceeds, the recommendation may become a requirement. If it does, face coverings should cover your nose and mouth. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by airborne particles. 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.