

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR-456: Latinx Theatre

4.0 Units

Fall 2022—Tuesdays/Thursdays—10:00AM-11:50AM

Location: GFS222

Instructor: Luis Alfaro, Associate Professor

Office: JEF Upstairs #207A (Jefferson & McClintock)

Office Hours: Mondays 9:00-11:00AM & 3:00-5:00PM

Contact Info: luisalfa@usc.edu/323.369.8306

Course Description and Overview

A twice-weekly workshop focusing on how Latinx identity is shaped within dramatic literature and performance. Topics such as culture, memory, sexuality, violence, and the Latinx body onstage will all be incorporated into the study of Latinx theatre and performance from the 1980s to the present. Ultimately this course asks the following questions: What makes a play a Latinx play? What are the primary markers of the genre of Latinx Theatre? How is *Latinidad* depicted both inside and outside the genre? The class will look at both dramatic literature and performance. Interviews with living authors of work being examined will be part of this course. Workshop sessions with practitioners that include mask work, text analysis, acting approaches, *teatro* specific movement and performance will be included.

Learning Objectives

Identify key Latinx playwrights, works and themes & characteristics of Latinx theatre & performance. Interpret key dramaturgical elements used to construct *Latinidad*. Analyze how race, gender, sexuality, citizenship & generation are relevant in the dramatic depiction of Latinx work. Be able to communicate perspectives and evaluation in a clear and organized manner in class discussions and writing.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite(s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: None

Goals

Students will read contemporary Latinx plays, write dramaturgical responses addressing subject matter & themes, as well as interview living playwrights, actors and workshop leaders immersed in Latinx style, content & discipline.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The Refugee Hotel, Carmen Aguirre, (2019)

The Happiest Song Plays Last, Quiara Hudes Alegria, (2010)

Anna in the Tropics, Nilo Cruz, (2003)

The Mother of Henry, Evelina Fernandez, (2019)

Mud, Maria Irene Fornes, (1985)
American Mariachi, Jose Cruz Gonzalez, (2019)
Karina Played Pachanga Music, Israel Lopez Reyes, (2017)
The River Bride, Marisela Trevino Orta, (2013)
Our Dear Dead Drug Lord, Alexis Scheer (2018)
Zoot Suit, Luis Valdez, (1979)
Destiny of Desire, Karen Zacarias, (2018)

Publications

The Presence of the Actor

Joseph Chaikin

Publisher: Theatre Communications Group (TCG):

ISBN-10: 1559360305 / ISBN-13: 978-1559360302

[professor will provide]

Towards a Process of Generous Criticism

Liz Lerman

[professor will provide]

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

This class is process oriented. We read plays in class, we have active discussions, workshop sessions and create assignments from these plays. I will also give you plays to read on your own to report on.

The discipline and timing of meeting and turning in assignments is important towards your grade. Turning in assignments late, or not at all, will affect your grade.

FOR SDA Assignments: Students will be required to complete written “homework” assignments. Students are expected to present their work in class. Students will be expected to focus out of class time for the preparation of their performances.

Students must complete a final exam and to come to the final wrap-up class during the scheduled final exam period in order to pass the course. You cannot leave early. If you have a conflicting final exam, you should let me know at the beginning of the semester. Class assignments will be regarded as written exams.

FOR SDA GRADING CRITERIA: *The grading guidelines shall clearly articulate the specific and expected standards which constitute work of excellent, good, and fair quality with regard to the course in question.*

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.

Grading Breakdown

The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING as published elsewhere in this handbook are:

- *Each course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student's progress in the course.*
- *Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines. Studio Courses must delineate how participation will be graded (in class exercises, scene study, etc.)*
- *There shall be no unexcused absences.*
- *No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.*

School of Theatre classes use the University's grading 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- [Fail Grade for Graduate Credit]

67-70%=D+

66-64%=D

61-63%=D-

Criteria of evaluation will be based on the individual students' potential for learning and creation, and grades will not be competitively based, i.e. who writes the "best" work in the class.

Students are expected to show up on time; present assignments when they are due and actively participate with in-class dramaturgical analysis and discussion of fellow class-mates work. Class time is impossible to make up - one must be there to participate. Reliability and enthusiasm count.

Grade Evaluation

<u>Student Responsibility</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
Weekly Class Dramaturgy	100	20%
Evaluation Papers (at least 3, pull best of)	100	50%
Mid Term Exam	100	10%
Final Exam	100	20%

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week #1 – *It's a Bust*

[Setting up the room. What are the ways you want to work in? How can we listen and respond to each other? Professor Alfaro presents a lecture on making work.]

Week #2 - *Let's Talk*

[Israel Lopez Reyes, Karina Played Pachanga Music.]

Week #3 – *Tension & Metaphor*

[Finish discussion and write a one page paper of Karina Played Pachanga Music.]

Week #4 – *Environment & Dramaturges*

[Reading *Destiny of Desire*. Talking about form. Telenovela. Write a three page paper on the form used in the play or on one of the subject matters associated with it.]

Week #5 – *Character in Action*

[Read *The Mother of Henry*. Create a Dramaturgy packet for the play. Group assignment.]

Week #6 – *Character & the Avant Garde*

[Introducing classic experimental work. *Mud* by Maria Irene Fornes. Viewing *The Rest I Make Up*.]

Week #7 – *Guest Interview*

[Interview a guest playwright.]

Week #8 – *Guest Interview*

[Interview a guest playwright.]

Week #9 – Classic Text

[Reading a mainstream classic Latinx text. *Anna in the Tropics* by Nilo Cruz.]

Week #10 – Learning About Form

[Hands on Workshop with facilitator on Mask Work in Latinx plays.]

Week #11 – Learning About Form

[Hands on Workshop with facilitator on El Teatro Campesino approach to Latinx plays. Writing a Group Acto.]

Week #12 – Going back to the Modern

[Comparing 'historical' expression with contemporary work. *Happiest Song Plays Last* by Quiara Hudes *Alegria*.]

Week #13 – Looking at our written work. Re-examine, Re-writing our narrative.

[A paper on what you have learned so far. Do you have a different opinion now that you have read and examined these plays?]

Week #14 – *Guest Interview*

[Interview a guest playwright.]

Week #15 – Evaluation Session

[Yay, you did it or Boo, you didn't... Let's examine the work collectively. How did we do as a group? Where did we find inspiration in each other or as a collective?]

Course Notes

Announcements and course assignments will be posted to Blackboard as well as given in class. Students must check USC email accounts and Blackboard regularly, which means at least once every 24 hours for email, and at least once a week for Blackboard or when directed by the instructor (these come as Blackboard notifications via USC email). Please keep up to date with your class-related emails and Blackboard postings.

You are expected to attend all classes except in the case of doctor-documented illness or family crisis.

Please do not be late; if you are tardy, your weekly assessment grade is compromised.

Please do not use cell phones in class for any reason.

Please do not have personal conversations during instruction time because it interferes with the presentation of other students' work and with classroom instruction.

Final Examination Date:

Thursday, December 8, 2022 from 11:00AM-1:00PM in GFS222

***NOTE:** All undergraduate classes must meet for the Final Examination as established by the University. You may not hold your final examination on the last day of classes.*

Holidays

First Day of Class, Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Labor Day, Monday, September 5, 2022

Fall Recess, Thursday & Friday, October 13-14, 2022

Veterans Day, Friday, November 11, 2022

Thanksgiving Holiday, Wednesday-Sunday, November 23-November 27, 2022

Last Day of Class, Thursday, December 1, 2022

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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

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

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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.

Luis Alfaro is a Chicano playwright born and raised blocks from USC in the Pico-Union district of downtown Los Angeles.

Alfaro is the associate artistic director of Center Theatre Group, the resident theatre company of the Music Center of Los Angeles County, home of the Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson Theatre and Kirk Douglas Theater.

Alfaro is the recipient of a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, popularly known as a “genius grant,” awarded to people who have demonstrated expertise and exceptional creativity in their respective fields.

He has also received recognition from: the PEN America/Laura Pels International Foundation Theater Award for a Master Dramatist; United States Artist Fellowship; Ford Foundation’s Art of Change Fellowship; Joyce Foundation Fellowship; Mellon Foundation Fellowship, and the Annenberg Artist-in-Residence for the city of Santa Monica; among others. He is the only playwright to have received two Kennedy Center ‘Fund for New American Play’ awards in the same year.

Alfaro spent six seasons as the inaugural playwright-in-residence of the 90-year-old Oregon Shakespeare Festival (2013-2019); a member of the Playwright’s Ensemble at Chicago’s Victory Gardens Theatre (2013-2020); a resident artist at the Mark Taper Forum (1995-2005); an inaugural member of the Latinx Playwrights ‘Circle of Imaginistas’ at the Los Angeles Theatre Center (2021); and has worked with the Ojai Playwrights Conference since 2002.

His plays and performances include *Electricidad*, *Oedipus El Rey*, *Mojada*, *Delano*, *Body of Faith*, *Straight as a Line*, and have been seen at regional theatres throughout the United States, Latin America, Canada and Europe.

Alfaro spent over two decades in the Los Angeles Poetry and Performance Art communities.

He is an associate professor with tenure at the University of Southern California (USC). Previously, he taught at California Institute of the Arts (Cal-Arts), and in the Writers Program at UCLA Extension.

He has an Emmy-nominated short film, *Chicanismo* (Best Experimental Film, San Antonio CineFestival, Best Short, CineAccion San Francisco) and an award-winning recording, *down town*, on SST/New Alliance Records (Best Spoken-Word Release, National Association of Independent Record Distributors).