

**THTR 529b – Textual Studies for Performance**

63240D/Units: 4

Spring 2023 — WED, FRI — 12:00-1:50

**Location: KAP 141**

**Instructor: Boni B. Alvarez**

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Office:** MCC 212

**Contact Info:** bbalvare@usc.edu

(I will reply as soon as I can, but please allow 24 hours for a response.)

**Course Description**

This course is a continuation of THTR 529a. We will read a variety of contemporary plays: contemporary classics; recently premiered American plays; and new plays that are still in process.

**Learning Objectives**

- The course will mirror a professional rehearsal room. Students will approach texts as performers on the first days of rehearsal, breaking down the plays via critical table work.
- These close readings of dramatic texts serve as a fundamental tool for rehearsal and performance. These readings will also help strengthen students' cold reading skills.
- This course cultivates the students' abilities for dramatic analysis and literacy. Key points of investigation: the world of the play; the author's intentions – in the overall writing of the play and with each individual scene; what is the play attempting to accomplish and what is its overall impact?
- Students will develop critical methods to broaden their understanding of the play at hand. Emphasis is placed on reading the play through the actor's lens – how texts inform characterization, physical and vocal choices.

**Required Readings** – All materials will be distributed electronically.

- Alfaro, Luis. *Mojada*
- Christopher, J. Julian. *Julio Down By the Schoolyard*
- Craig-Galvan, Inda. *The Great Jheri Curl Debate*
- Deen, Mashuq Mushtaq. *Draw the Circle*
- Diaz, Noah. *Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally*
- dickerson-despenza, erika. *cullud wattah*
- Femia, Gina. *Annie and the Fat Man*
- Fornes, Maria Irene. *Mud*
- Macdonald, Maya. *brunch*
- Williams, A. Zell. *Diversity*

**Content Warning:** The required readings deal with intense and disturbing subject matter. This course ascribes to the adage that a playwright’s artistic purpose is to hold up a mirror to the world they live in, illuminating the potential of extreme dramatic situations – those that force us to ponder the fundamentals of human existence. Please consider this syllabus itself an overall content warning and your participation in the course an explicit consent to experiencing difficult and/or troubling art.

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

**Table Work – 50%**

Students must actively participate as readers and be prepared when ancillary materials are required for analysis. Participation is not only speaking, but listening and responding thoughtfully. Students should actively employ professional decorum and empathy.

Table Work includes short research assignments on playwrights, productions, and relevant dramaturgy.

**Midterm Assignment – 25%**

Students will write an original monologue inspired by Maria Irene Fornes’ *Mud*. Monologues are an exercise in character analysis, a deeper dive into the characters of the play – an imagining of a character’s inner monologue in the context of a specific moment from the play. Monologues must be 2-3 minutes in length and will be presented to the class.

**Final Assignment – 25%**

A creative assignment in which students design and build a presentation on a specific character from one of the plays studied over the course of the semester. The presentation can be thought of as an ‘inspiration board’, but should be three-dimensional in its scope. Elements of consideration: inhabiting the character; character arc; thematic and physical world of the play; design elements; theatricality, etc.

**Grading Breakdown**

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Table Work	50
Midterm Assignment	25
Final Assignment	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

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

- A+: 100-98      A: 97-94      A-: 93-90      B+: 89-87      B: 86-84      B-: 83-80
- C+: 79-77      C: 76-74      C-: 73-70 (failing grade for graduate credit)
- D+: 69-67      D: 66-64      D-: 63-60

When a student's mathematical GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted towards the higher end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been excellent or good and toward the lower end for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

### **Additional Policies**

Assignment Submission: NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

MISSED CLASSES – It is your responsibility to obtain information about missed class discussions and assignments from your colleagues.

### **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.

<b>WK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>WEEKLY SCHEDULE</b>
1	WED 1/11 <u>FRI 1/13</u>	Introductions; Fuchs' 'Visit to a Small Planet' <i>Fornes' Mud</i>
2	WED 1/18 <u>FRI 1/20</u>	<i>Mud</i> (cont) <i>Alfaro's Mojada</i>
3	WED 1/25 <u>FRI 1/27</u>	<i>Mojada</i> (cont) <i>Mojada</i> (cont)
4	WED 2/1 <u>FRI 2/3</u>	Craig-Galvan's <i>The Great Jheri Curl Debate</i> <i>The Great Jheri Curl Debate</i> (cont)
5	WED 2/8 <u>FRI 2/10</u>	<i>The Great Jheri Curl Debate</i> (cont) Christopher's <i>Julio Down By the Schoolyard</i>
6	WED 2/15 <u>FRI 2/17</u>	<i>Julio Down By the Schoolyard</i> (cont) <i>Julio Down By the Schoolyard</i> (cont)
7	WED 2/22 <u>FRI 2/24</u>	<b>MIDTERM PROJECTS</b> dickerson-despenza's <i>cullud wattah</i>
8	WED 3/1 <u>FRI 3/3</u>	<i>cullud wattah</i> (cont) <i>cullud wattah</i> (cont)
9	WED 3/8 <u>FRI 3/10</u>	Macdonald's <i>brunch</i> <i>brunch</i> (cont)
	WED 3/15 <u>FRI 3/17</u>	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b> <b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>
10	WED 3/22 <u>FRI 3/24</u>	Diaz's <i>Richard &amp; Jane &amp; Dick &amp; Sally</i> <i>Richard &amp; Jane &amp; Dick &amp; Sally</i> (cont)
11	WED 3/29 <u>FRI 3/31</u>	<i>Richard &amp; Jane &amp; Dick &amp; Sally</i> (cont) Femia's <i>Annie And The Fat Man</i>
12	WED 4/5 <u>FRI 4/7</u>	<i>Annie And The Fat Man</i> (cont) <i>Annie And The Fat Man</i> (cont)
13	WED 4/12 <u>FRI 4/14</u>	Williams' <i>Diversity</i> <i>Diversity</i> (cont)
14	WED 4/19 <u>FRI 4/21</u>	<i>Diversity</i> (cont) Deen's <i>Draw the Circle</i>
15	WED 4/26 <u>FRI 4/28</u>	<i>Draw the Circle</i> (cont) <b>FINAL ASSIGNMENT</b>

## 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](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto: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.

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### 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.

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### 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>

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### Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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*

[suicidpreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidpreventionlifeline.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](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.