

## THTR 566 Dramatic Writing Studio, Section 63213D

Units: 4

Fall 2023, Session 001—Mondays—Time: 12-2:50 PM

Location: WPH 200

(<https://maps.usc.edu/?id=1928&reference=WPH#lct/53723,53722,55414,55415,55418?m/5526>)

Instructor: Velina Hasu Houston, MFA, PhD; Pronouns: she/her/hers/kanojo, Race: MR/O, Blood Type: O+

Contact Info: [greentea@usc.edu](mailto:green tea@usc.edu), 24- to 47-hour response time

Office: USC School of Dramatic Arts

Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2 p.m. by appointment via email to instructor (*please note other times easily can be negotiated*); as a mutual courtesy, 24-hour cancellation via email to the instructor expected.

Teaching Assistant: None.

IT Help: USC Information Technology Services, <http://itservices.usc.edu>

### Catalogue Description

The USC description of THTR 566 as stated in the USC catalogue is: “Investigates gestalt of the student dramatic writer’s professional development from the empty page and writing fundamentals to the first-draft script, business affairs, and dramaturgical advancement.”

### Course Description

THTR 566 Dramatic Writing Studio is a course in the Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing program (MFADW), University of Southern California (USC). It focuses on the gestalt of the professional development of the dramatic writer at the level of graduate student level education. It includes writing maturation, and professional development to prepare to engage meaningfully in the profession and society. Students will develop an awareness and appreciation of professionally viable writing that has preceded their efforts and – via this appreciation and effort –will continue, within the course and beyond, to develop their literary abilities and advancement in the discipline. Starting from the empty page, students must craft first-draft, professionally promising plays. Students must develop their plays over the course of the semester, and are expected to engage fully and deeply. THTR 566 continues through students’ MFADW residency, providing the opportunity to develop a portfolio of plays with which to make an impact on the profession. The course includes MFADW students from Years One, Two, and Three, but, at the discretion of the instructor, may include graduate students from other writing-related programs at USC. The course takes place each fall and spring, combining the MFADW cohort and any invited students from other programs in a writing collective to enrich and deepen artistic and human experience.

This semester, this journey will be taken via a professional opportunity that will culminate in a festival of readings of the plays that students will write.

### Labor and Land Acknowledgments

I acknowledge that much of what we know of the U.S. today has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans who suffered trans-Atlantic trafficking, chattel slavery, violence, and Jim Crow; and continue to suffer anti-Blackness. I am thankful of and honor their sacrifices.

I acknowledge the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands). I acknowledge my presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples; and pay my respects to their ancestors, elders, and relations, past, present, and emerging.

In the name of mutual respect, let us strive to neither mis-pronoun nor mis-race one another.

### Learning Objectives

- 1) Use of primary research (in which you are the collector and cultivator of information) and secondary research (in which you are engaging with existing information and assessing it with regards to your creative process) methods as sources for creativity and as sources for deepening understanding of creative choices.
- 2) Investigation of artefacts to generate and develop an idea for a new play including interviews, asking questions, examining comprehensively, and making choices that support your artistic creation.
- 3) Supplementing the visual source with other sources that inform artistic creation (secondary research such as reading of materials related to the questions embedded in your artistic process, i.e. time period, politics of society at that time, sociological status of your proposed characters, etc.).
- 4) Improving your play over the course of the semester via constructive peer and mentor dramaturgy, and meaningful revision.
- 5) Engaging in reading plays and assessing them in a literary vein.

**Prerequisite(s):**

Completed Bachelor's degree.

**Co-Requisite(s):**

Courses required for the MFADW curriculum per the USC School of Dramatic Arts Office of Admissions & Student Services.

**Concurrent Enrollment:**

Concurrent Enrollment is course(s) that must be taken simultaneously, if any, and are decided by the department/program. For this course the only concurrent courses required are those for the MFADW curriculum per the USC School of Dramatic Arts Office of Admissions & Student Services.

**Recommended Preparation:**

These suggestions are advisable, not mandatory. Read and see and/or attend readings of as many plays as possible; plays that are diverse by ethnicity, color, gender, culture, sexuality, religion, ability, class, and age, etc. For example, it is suggested that the plays are diverse by the period in which they were written, i.e. historical, modern, or contemporary; and by their styles, i.e. traditional or non-traditional, comedy or drama. Beyond plays, read or witness in recitals/readings literary works from other genres such as poetry, prose, journalism, or film (independent and non-independent). Last but not least –live useful, meaningful lives. As Ernest Hemingway stated, ““In order to write about life, first you must live it.”

**Course Notes**

Course Notes include important information about 566.

- **Peer and Mentor Dramaturgy.** Constructive criticism is used for all dramaturgical feedback. The objective is to provide meaningful feedback, such as one might wish to receive oneself, that helps a writer to refine their work. Successful criticism means being constructive, but also candid about strengths and weaknesses. It doesn't help to provide commentary that's generic or unspecific; destructive, or rapturously glorifying (nothing is perfect). It helps to be specific, too, i.e., page number, dialogue, exact scene.
- **Blackboard (BB).** Regularly check the BB site for this course. Please do not use unfamiliarity or trouble with BB to claim lack of awareness about course matters. See note below under "Required Readings" (course research readings are sometimes posted to BB under "Content.") If students are unfamiliar with or having trouble with BB, they must correct these issues: <http://itservices.usc.edu/blackboard/> and <https://blackboard.usc.edu/webapps/login/>. Note that as of end of the spring term 2024, USC will begin using a different learning management system. Blackboard will be replaced by Brightspace. For more information about Brightspace, go to: <https://lmsreplacement.usc.edu/>.
- **Professional Manuscript Formatting.** Professional play manuscript formatting is required for any course work submitted, including pages [i.e. Final Draft stage format or similar]. Dramatists' Guild formatting guidelines are posted on its website: <https://www.dramatistsguild.com/>. For the entire play manuscript, do not exceed eight (8) pages (excluding title, cast of character, or copyright information pages). For each page beyond 8, *2 points will be subtracted from the grading assessment*.
- **Copyrights.** Students are encouraged to copyright their plays at the end of the term (Electronic Copyright Office: [https://eco.copyright.gov/eService\\_enu/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=eco.copyright.gov](https://eco.copyright.gov/eService_enu/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=eco.copyright.gov).) Note that the law disallows adding a copyright page until one has received copyright registration from the US Library of Congress. Writing also can be protected via the Writers Guild of America-West Registry (<https://www.wgawregistry.org/>), but students must be mindful of the differences between the two types of protection: <https://www.writersstore.com/wgaw-registration-vs-copyright-registration/>.
- **Mobile Phones.** Please do not have them out during class. You can check messages, text, email, or make phone calls during breaks, or before or after class.
- **Final Exam Courtesy Notice.** The final is on December 8, 2023, 11 am-1 pm PST. Final exam dates and times are set by USC, and students are required to participate. Note date and time in calendars now. Do not make plans that prohibit completion. For THTR 566, the final exam is equivalent to the accomplishment of the final project; therefore, the final exam dates refers to two things: submission of the final project and, as USC requires, meeting at the time of the final exam.

**Communication**

- If you have questions or concerns, please contact the instructor via USC email during the business week, Monday-Friday, 9 am-5 pm PDT/PST. The instructor will strive to reply to emails within 47 hours during the business week. The instructor may not respond to emails sent outside of these guidelines and may not respond to emails sent from non-USC accounts. For information on student email policy, see <https://online.usc.edu/files/2017/11/student-grievance-policies.pdf>, Part F, Section 2. Note the university requires that all emails going outside of the USC system must be encrypted by the sender, which can elongate reception and response times.

- In the event of a matter that cannot be addressed in the time frame noted above, students must email instructor from their USC email account. **In the subject line, indicate course number, full name, and matter to discuss, i.e. "THTR 566, Patsy Mink, Play Exploration."** Simple questions will be answered by email, but, for more complex discussions, an appointment will be scheduled.
- To promote independence and critical thinking, students are encouraged to utilize the following process for obtaining answers to course-related questions before contacting the instructor. First, consult the course syllabus. If the answer is not found, next consult a classmate. If these methods are exhausted and the answer still is unsatisfactory, email the instructor. In the email, please indicate the steps taken to seek the answer. Please be certain to follow email communication procedures noted above.

#### Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- Be aware that USC practices digital equity; students can acquire hardware and software needed for class if they do not have it (see policies below; students who require a laptop to complete in-class work can check one out through the Laptop Loaner Program <https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/laptoploaner/>).
- Devices such as laptop computers are welcome in class, BUT students must leverage their devices for course purposes only, i.e. sharing of pages, reading articles to which instructor refers them – no checking of email or navigating social media. Students who use devices not indicated by course need will be asked to put them away and receive a zero for their in-class work grade for the day. Students with legal requirements to use devices when not indicated by course needs should let the instructor know of their need privately and accommodations readily will be made.
- Please make sure devices are silenced so as not to disturb classmates. Students whose devices make noise during class or are used for purposes others than those stated, will be asked to put them away and receive a zero for the in-class work grade for the day.

#### USC Technology Support Links:

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#) Again, note that as of end of the spring term 2024, USC will begin using a different learning management system. Blackboard will be replaced by Brightspace. For more information about Brightspace, go to: <https://lmsreplacement.usc.edu/>.

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

#### Deliverables

These are the 8 items expected of you by the end of the term for the successful completion of this course.

- 1) Investigation of Archives (Site Visit)
- 2) 1-2 Page Synopsis of Intended Play
- 3) Oral Presentation on Character Development
- 4) First Draft of Play (Artistic Creation)
- 5) Second Draft of Play (Artistic Creation)
- 6) Dramaturgical Report
- 7) Final Project
- 8) Final Exam.

#### Required Readings

- *A Theory of Adaptation 2nd Edition* by Linda , Routledge, (Pages 1-27) (In USC Bookstore.)
- *Worn: A People's History of Clothing* by Sofi Thanhauser, Vintage (this will be for your final exam, but will aid you in your semester project so it's suggested you read it sooner rather than just before the exam). (In USC Bookstore.)
- Individually assigned plays (available for purchase online at such sites as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [https://www.dramatists.com/?gclid=EA1a1QobChMI66HNgNzJgAMVr8zCBB3Fpw\\_HEAAYASAAEgJqQfD\\_BwE](https://www.dramatists.com/?gclid=EA1a1QobChMI66HNgNzJgAMVr8zCBB3Fpw_HEAAYASAAEgJqQfD_BwE), and others.

#### Individually Assigned Plays

Each student will be assigned a play to read. Because of that, the plays have not been ordered as required books. Instead, students may buy a copy of the play assigned to them, which is a less expensive route. Each student will read the assigned play and provide a written Dramaturgical Report on the play that includes: a synopsis of the play, a character breakdown that includes the character's name and description, a timeline of the time period of the play, a list of the key events of the play. The

entire report should be seven pages or less in a standard 12-point font with standard top/bottom/left/right margins. Here is a list of the plays and the students assigned to them.

- 1) *Funnyhouse of a Negro* by Adrienne Kennedy - Jason Grasi
- 2) *The Music Lesson* by Wakako Yamauchi - Moriya Dichter
- 3) *Sarita* by Maria Irene Fornes - Claire Bernstein
- 4) *Marisol* by Jose Rivera - Marilyn Schotland
- 5) *Grandchildren of the Buffalo Soldiers* by William S. Yellow Robe, Jr.- Eliza Kuperschmid
- 6) *Buried Child* by Sam Shepard - Cynthia Galaz Sotelo
- 7) *The Death of a Miner* by Paula L. Cizmar - Joseph Valdez
- 8) *Bloodletting* by Boni B. Alvarez - Alessandra Viegas

### **Recommended Reading Materials**

*The Art of Dramatic Writing: Its Basis in the Creative Interpretation of Human Motives*, Lajos Egri

*Beloved* by Toni Morrison

*The Devil's Highway: A True Story* by Luis Alberto Urrea

*1Q84* by Haruki Murakami

*Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke

*Bodies That Matter* by Judith Butler

*The Twilight Years* by Sawako Ariyoshi

*Kindred* by Octavia E. Butler

*The Makioka Sisters* by Jun'ichirō Tanizaki

*Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault

*Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

*Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

*The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson

*The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese

*Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee

*Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage* by William Loren Katz

*Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies*; Ed. by Spickard, Rondilla, Guevarra

*The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin

*Ain't I a Woman* by bell hooks

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou

*The Trees* by Percival Everett

### **Artistic Creation**

The play for this class will be created via a live professional experience, which is titled "Clothes Makes the Woman."

### **CLOTHES MAKE THE WOMAN**

There is a story in everything worn. Find it. Create from it your own.

Since the middle ages, the phrase or similar phrases related to "clothes make the man" have appeared in literature. Clothes, however, also make the woman.

In a historical context, clothes may be artefacts that reveal dimensions of a time period, what a woman was like, why she had to dress a certain way, why she chose to dress a certain way, how she was perceived, and the impact that the clothing had on her identity and overall existence. Clothes can be indicators of culture, race, socioeconomic circumstances, and gender-based politics that speak to the actualities of a particular historical period.

The "Clothes Make the Woman" project will engage the clothes archives of The Ebell of Los Angeles, and the artistic creation of the eight graduate student playwrights in the THTR 566 course taught by Velina Hasu Houston in the University of Southern California's graduate dramatic writing program.

With the assistance of Ebell archivists, students will view the Ebell's historical clothing archives as sources of inspiration for ten-minute plays that they will create in the course.

This work will culminate in a festival of readings held at The Ebell of Los Angeles on November 27, 2023, 7 pm. The plays will be presented as readings with clothing from the archives on display. The project focuses on four decades from the 1930s to the 1960s with these structures:

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Student Playwrights</u>
1930s	Joseph Valdez, Marilyn Schotland
1940s	Cynthia Galaz Sotelo, Claire Bernstein
1950s	Eliza Kuperschmid, Alessandra Viegas
1960s	Moriya Dichter, Jason Grasi

When you view the archives, please focus on your designated decade for your inspiration. Two classes are dedicated to this required on-site archival investigation: 8/28 and 9/11, 12:30-2:30 pm PST, 743 S. Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90005.

### **Grading Breakdown, Grading Scale, & Assignment Rubrics/ Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Please note all assignments are evaluated on a 100 = A rubric\*and becomes the noted percentage of the final grade. Please remember: grades are not given, but earned. Furthermore, be mindful of the fact that students earn grades individually and are not graded on a scale against other students. The grading rubric for this class is as follows:

96-100%=A	88-90%=B+	81-84%=B-	75-77%= C	67-70%=D+	61-63%=D-
95-91%=A-	85-87%=B	78-80%=C+	71-74%= C-	66-64%=D	
[Failing Grade for Graduate Credit = C-]					

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POINTS*</u>	<u>% OF FINAL GRADE</u>
Site Visits: Investigation of Archives	100\100	10%
Synopsis/Character Development Oral Presentation	100\100	10%
Dramaturgical Report	100/100	10%
1 <sup>st</sup> Draft of Play/2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft of Play/Final Project	100\100	50%
Final Exam	100\100	20%
TOTAL.....		100%

### **Grading Timeline**

Instructor strives to grade work 1-2 weeks upon submission, if submission is turned in on time as noted in this syllabus.

### **Assignment Submission & Attendance/Participation Matters**

Assignments are to be submitted on due dates noted in Course Schedule. No late assignments accepted; if an assignment is not received on time, then a grade of "0" will be recorded. Submissions submitted as doc/docx indicate that the student desires detailed comments. Submissions submitted as PDFs indicate that the student desires comprehensive, summary comments. In either case, submissions must be in keeping with email communication protocols noted above. Please be mindful of these protocols or work is considered unsubmitted. Due dates for all submissions are included in the course schedule below. Students are not graded on attendance, however, if a class is missed, students cannot engage in weekly course work. Excused absences are permissible for illness, family/personal crisis, or religious purposes for a practiced religion. Students with an excused absence may complete assignments within forty-eight (48) hours and submit according to syllabi protocol. All assignments are expected to be completed individually.

### **Course evaluation**

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. The process is anonymous. USC will send an email to students' USC email addresses asking them to fill out course evaluations. Results are sent to instructors. Please participate.

### **Schedule of Classes**

*(Deliverables are highlighted.)*

8/21	Introduction to semester's journey, exploration of storytelling in dramatic writing, business affairs of the playwright including script protection, resumés, writing samples, formatting, pitching, agents/ managers/ entertainment attorneys, marketing. Accounting of semester play project and site visits. Required site visits will occur during class time on 8/28 & 9/11. For these two research-focused classes, we will meet on 8/28 and 9/11 from 12:30-2:30 pm on-site at The Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 S. Lucerne Blvd., Los Angeles 90005. You will view the clothing archives, which will be presented to you by archivists Loyce Braun and Chloe
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	Ginsburg who have curated them by decades. You will designate clothing that inspires you, explore its history, cultivate the idea for your play, and create a 1-2 page synopsis to present to the class on 9/18 and to submit via email to the instructor on 9/18.
8/28	On-site visit, 12:30-2:30 pm: 743 S. Lucerne Blvd. Mining the source: archival investigation. Interactive discussion on findings and creative intentions.
[9/4	<i>University holiday. (Labor Day) No class.]</i>
9/11	On-site visit, 12:30-2:30 pm: 743 S. Lucerne Blvd. Mining the source: archival investigation, continued.
9/18	One- to two-page synopsis of the intended play (guidelines: three characters, no more than eight pages, 12-point standard font such as Times/Times New Roman, Helvetica, standard top/bottom/left/right margins).
9/25	In-class workshop: character development of the characters in your plays using teams to mine each writer's source with oral communication of findings.
10/2	Continued in-class workshop focusing on character development.
10/9	First drafts due. Readings of three plays with dramaturgical discussion.
[10/12-13	<i>University holiday. (Fall Recess) No classes.]</i>
10/16	First drafts. Reading of two to three plays with dramaturgical discussion.
10/23	First drafts. Reading of two to three plays with dramaturgical discussion.
10/30	Second drafts due. Readings of three plays with dramaturgical discussion.
11/6	Second drafts. Reading of two to three plays with dramaturgical discussion.
11/10	University holiday (Veterans' Day)
11/13	Second drafts. Reading of two to three plays with dramaturgical discussion.
11/20	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Arts Panel (online).
11/22-26	<i>University holiday (Thanksgiving)</i>
11/27	Dramaturgical Reports and Final Projects due by 5 p.m. P.S.T. at <a href="mailto:green tea@usc.edu">greentea@usc.edu</a> . Festival of readings of plays, 7 pm, Ebell of Los Angeles, 743 S. Lucerne Boulevard, Los Angeles, California.
12/2-5	USC Study Days
12/8	Final Exam, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## Rubric for Evaluating Final Project/Final Exam

### USC MFADW FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION

Course Number/Name: THTR 566 DRAMATIC WRITING STUDIO

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grading Guidelines from Syllabus:

USC definitions of grades: “A” for work of excellent quality, “B” for work of good quality.

Grading is determined on the following scale:

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

[Failing Grade for Graduate Credit = C-]

The class presentation grade is evaluated on this scale with the grade breaking down as follows: 25% Quality of structure/through-line/ plotting (story execution), 25% Quality of character development and execution, 25% Quality of dialogue crafting and execution, 25% Quality of overall creative achievement/ professional promise of project/ theatricality/ originality of vision/ presentation.

- \_\_\_\_\_Quality of storytelling (through-line/execution/stylistic elements)
- \_\_\_\_\_Quality of character development
- \_\_\_\_\_Quality of dialogue development
- \_\_\_\_\_Quality of overall creative achievement/ originality of vision/ presentation.

Dramaturgical notes are provided throughout the semester. Please retain and refer to them in the plays’ continued refinement.

In addition, the following assessments are used to evaluate student work: central concepts of dramatic writing, including:

- Expertise in character development, including desire, the multidimensional elements of character, and the “geography” of mapping character; and the ability to tackle the “unanswerable” – the problems and questions that cannot be merely quantified or completely described or finished – on stage through the actions and consequences of the characters.
- Expertise in story development including an understanding of progressive action and the nature of conflict.
- Ability to cultivate a distinctive and authentic voice and vision.
- Ability to research dimensions of character and story in order to authenticate dramatic representations.
- Ability to write dramatic dialogue and discern the distinctions between dialogue and conversation including the ability to use all the dimensions of language to enhance the expression of the sensory and emotional life of the play.
- Ability to comprehend and utilize metaphor and imagery to expand the subtext and the deeper implications of the dramatic work. Awareness of dramatic writing’s capacity for connecting to all disciplines in the investigation of the critical questions of humanity.
- Ability to understand and utilize stage time as something other than real time, as something to be foreshortened or elongated as well as elevated, depending on event and point of view.
- Ability to reflect the world through the prism of the play, so that the writing is suitably and deliberately questioning and open-ended, allowing for colloquy between artist and audience that can change and adapt over time.
- Ability to think in terms of total theatre – utilizing music, dance, media, sports, and other elements – to create a world on stage all its own; and own the courage to explore form with intelligence and creativity.
- Ability to understand the process of presentation and production, and the responsibilities of the writer as a collaborator in that process, including the ability to absorb and apply constructive criticism and revise and refine the work towards greater professional excellence as well as the ability to adapt, learn, initiate, and be proactive creatively and intellectually.

## **ADDENDUM TO COURSE SYLLABUS – ADDENDUM A**

The following information is recommended or required by USC.

Please review them for your benefit and be aware of the resource information provided. This syllabus and your enrollment in THTR 566, fall semester 2023, means you are aware of the information below and understand its impact on you. Thank you.

### **Required Information, Advisory Information, and Additional Policies and USC Standards**

#### **REQUIRED INFORMATION**

##### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

#### **ADVISORY INFORMATION**

##### **Classroom Norms on Respect, Constructiveness, and Inclusivity.**

These are required vis-à-vis the USC syllabus template for 2023-2024.

- Listen actively, carefully, and attentively without interrupting, even when you disagree with what is being said.
- Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker's comments.
- Challenge one another, but do so respectfully. Only make statements about an issue, person, or group if you are prepared to make the statement directly and respectfully to a person to whom the issue is important. Try to see the issue from the other person's perspective before stating your opinion. Consider the difference between responding to express yourself and responding to get an idea across to people who have different preconceptions than yours.



- No name-calling, yelling, put-downs, or use of inflammatory language. We will not demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences. Recognize and/or remember that we have different backgrounds.
- Be aware of the fact that tone of voice and body language are powerful communicators. Some postures or facial expressions (e.g., crossed arms, eye rolls, loud sighs) can silence, provoke, intimidate, or hurt others.
- Refrain from responding to others’ statements by applause, groans, or other noise.
- Refer to classmates by name and make eye contact with them.
- Make no assumptions about others. Be careful not to generalize about people.
- Don’t engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Don't present objections as flat dismissals (leave open the possibility that there's a response).
- Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups.
- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Build on one another’s comments; work toward shared understanding.
- Think before you speak.
- Either support statements with evidence or speak from personal experience.
- Ask questions when you do not understand; do not assume you know what others are thinking.
- Ask for clarification if you are confused, uncertain, or uncomfortable.
- Use “I” statements to state your views. For example, “I notice that when I’m with my friends we pay attention differently” is more constructive than “When you’re with friends you pay attention differently.”
- Let other people speak. Once you are done speaking, let at least two other people talk before you speak again. Don't dominate the discussion.
- Do not remain silent. Make sure to contribute to the discussion.
- Know that it is okay to be emotional about issues and to name those emotions.
- It's okay to ask a question that you think may be unsophisticated or uninformed.
- Don't worry about impressing people.
- Try not to silence yourself out of concern for what others will think about what you say.
- Don't use unnecessarily offensive examples. If you are offended by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately. If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, speak up and don't leave it for someone else to have to respond to it.
- Consider anything that is said in class strictly confidential or it challenges the ability to cultivate an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. Maintain confidentiality (what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom.)
- Acknowledge points made by previous questioners.
- Consider who gets left out, who is marginalized, under-represented, or erased by particular claims. So, for example, we could say, “That’s an image of an ideal family,” or we could say, “That may be an image of an ideal family for many middle-class white heterosexuals.”
- Be careful about putting other students on the spot. Do not demand that others speak for a group that you perceive them to represent.
- Be aware of different communication style – the ways we communicate differently based on our backgrounds and current contexts--and look for ways to expand your communication tool kits.
- Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.
- Start your statement with a short one-sentence summary of the point you are making.

### **Zoom Etiquette**

"Netiquette" ("Internet etiquette") describes the recommended communication and behavior of online communication. If a student has a concern or question about any Netiquette guideline, please contact the instructor via USC email according to the parameters above.

### **Asynchronous Considerations**

- Respectful greetings.

- Sign names to emails, posts, and replies.
- Email subject line format: THTR 566, Your Name, Succinct Statement of Need.

#### Synchronous Considerations

- Please wear appropriate attire, i.e. clean, presentable clothes – no pajamas.
- Please mute microphones when not speaking. You highly are encouraged not to mute your videos so you are visible in the course.
- You may eat in a mannerly fashion or consume non-alcoholic beverages, as long as doing so does not interfere with active listening and engagement in class discourse.
- Please consider noise levels, background objects and artwork, pets, family members, etc., during online course time.
- Students may use the chat box during class, but any assignments or questions for instructor must be sent via email communication protocols noted above.
- Whenever necessary, please use the “Raise Hand” feature on Zoom. In addition, if students have something to say and feel the opportunity to do so has not been provided, let the instructor know via the “Raise Hand” feature.

#### Discussion Norms

##### **Respect**

- Listen actively and attentively. Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker’s comments.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said.
- Respect each other’s views. Challenge one another, but do so respectfully.
- Always use a respectful tone.
- Avoid inflammatory language.
- Avoid put-downs (even humorous ones).
- No name-calling or other character attacks.
- No interrupting or yelling.
- Be aware of the fact that tone of voice and body language are powerful communicators. Some postures or facial expressions (e.g., crossed arms, eye rolls, loud sighs) can silence, provoke, intimidate, or hurt others. Others (e.g., facing and looking at the speaker, staying quiet, nodding) can show you are listening respectfully
- Refrain from responding to others’ statements by applause, groans, or other noise.
- Signal agreement with another student’s statement by silent applause.
- Make eye contact with other students and refer to classmates by name.
- Make no assumptions about others
- Trust that people are always doing the best they can.
- Be courteous. Don’t interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Don't be incredulous.
- Don't roll your eyes, make faces, laugh at a participant, etc., especially to others on the side.
- Don't start side conversations parallel to the main discussion.
- Only make statements about an issue, person, or group if you are prepared to make the statement directly and respectfully to a person to whom the issue is important.
- Don't present objections as flat dismissals (leave open the possibility that there's a response).

##### **Constructiveness**

- Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups.
- Focus on ideas, not personalities.
- Respect others’ rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own.

- If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Build on one another's comments; work toward shared understanding.
- Objections are fine, but it's also always okay to be constructive, building on a speaker's statement or strengthening their position. Even objections can often be cast in a constructive way.
- Think before you speak.
- Link claims and assertions to appropriate evidence whenever possible.
- Either support statements with evidence, or speak from personal experience.
- Do not offer opinions without supporting evidence.
- Refer to the text to support your ideas.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.
- Ask questions when you do not understand; do not assume you know what others are thinking.
- Ask clarifying questions if you do not understand a point raised.
- Try to see the issue from the other person's perspective before stating your opinion.
- Consider the difference between responding to express yourself and responding to get an idea across to people who have different preconceptions than yours.
- Build on your classmates' comments. Acknowledge them, even if you disagree with them.
- Speak from your own experience, without generalizing.
- Use "I" statements to state your views. For example, "I notice that when I'm with my friends we pay attention differently" is more constructive than "When you're with friends you pay attention differently."
- Listen and also share. Share briefly from your own experiences when appropriate, rather than simply your positions.
- Be careful not to generalize about people.
- Avoid blame and speculation.
- Respond to what is said in class, without attributing motivation to the speaker (this can be very challenging).

### **Inclusivity**

- Don't dominate the discussion. Let other people speak. Once you are done speaking, let at least two other people talk before you speak again. Try not to let your question (or your answer) run on.
- Step Up, Step Back. Be mindful of taking up much more time than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.
- Everyone in the group should participate in the conversation. Allow everyone the chance to talk. If you have much to say, try to hold back a bit; if you are hesitant to speak, look for opportunities to contribute to the discussion.
- Know that it is okay to be emotional about issues and to name those emotions.
- It's okay to ask a question that you think may be unsophisticated or uninformed.
- Don't worry about impressing people.
- Try not to silence yourself out of concern for what others will think about what you say.
- Don't use unnecessarily offensive examples.
- If you are offended by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately.
- If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, speak up and don't leave it for someone else to have to respond to it.
- Consider anything that is said in class strictly confidential. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. Maintain confidentiality (what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom.)
- Do not remain silent. Make sure to contribute to the discussion.
- If you think something is missing from the conversation, don't wait for someone else to say it; say it yourself.
- Acknowledge points made by previous questioners.

- Support good ideas that other people have, even if they are different from your own.
- We will not demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.
- Recognize and/or remember that we have different backgrounds.
- Consider who gets left out, who is marginalized, under-represented, or erased by particular claims. So, for example, we could say, “That’s an image of an ideal family,” or we could say, “That may be an image of an ideal family for many middle-class white heterosexuals.”
- Be careful about putting other students on the spot. Do not demand that others speak for a group that you perceive them to represent.
- Be aware of different communication styles--the ways we communicate differently based on our backgrounds and current contexts--and look for ways to expand your communication tool kits.
- Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

#### **Procedure**

- Wait to be recognized by the instructor or discussion leader before speaking.
- State your name before making your statement, so other students can reference your statement properly.
- If responding or reacting to a statement by another student, indicate by name the student whom you are referencing.
- Make a single point each time you speak, rather than making a series of statements at once.
- Start your statement with a short one-sentence summary of the point you are making.

#### **AI Generators Guidelines**

While I am not against the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs with regards to working on assignments, I believe there are ethical questions if applied to the completion of assignments vis-à-vis the work that we are focused on: storytelling. The creation of a story should be original to your thinking and artistic creation. You also should be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus, they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is not to be used in this course because they are not needed in your original artistic creation. If you decide to use AI-powered programs to complete the work for this course regardless of this policy statement, be aware that, with regard to University values, using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. If you do use AI tools in the development of any aspect of your play, you must cite them ([USC Libraries AI Generators Citation Guidance](#)) and also be aware that the value of original thinking over AI-thinking has an impact on instructor assessment of your artistic creation in this course; originality of vision is part of the grading rubric for your final project (your play).

#### **Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies**

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation is prohibited. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. 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. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

<b>ADDITIONAL POLICIES</b>
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**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.

**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.

**EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training**

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Integrity:**

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

**Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will

be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

#### **Support Systems:**

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

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

##### [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

##### [Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

##### [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

##### [The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

##### [USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

##### [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

##### [Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

##### [Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

**ADDENDUM TO COURSE SYLLABUS – ADDENDUM B**  
**Authors’ Guild Letter Regarding Artificial Intelligence Tools and Artistic Creation**

**As a writer, you should be aware of this letter, which The Dramatists’ Guild has posted.**



[The Authors Guild](https://www.authorsguild.org/)

New York, New York

To: Sam Altman, CEO, OpenAI; Sundar Pichai, CEO, Alphabet; Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Meta; Emad Mostaque, CEO, Stability AI; Arvind Krishna, CEO, IBM; Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft

We, the undersigned, call your attention to the inherent injustice in exploiting our works as part of your AI systems without our consent, credit, or compensation.

Generative AI technologies built on large language models owe their existence to our writings. These technologies mimic and regurgitate our language, stories, style, and ideas. Millions of copyrighted books, articles, essays, and poetry provide the “food” for AI systems, endless meals for which there has been no bill. You’re spending billions of dollars to develop AI technology. It is only fair that you compensate us for using our writings, without which AI would be banal and extremely limited.

We understand that many of the books used to develop AI systems originated from notorious piracy websites. Not only does the recent Supreme Court decision in *Warhol v. Goldsmith* make clear that the high commerciality of your use argues against fair use, but no court would excuse copying illegally sourced works as fair use. As a result of embedding our writings in your systems, generative AI threatens to damage our profession by flooding the market with mediocre, machine-written books, stories, and journalism based on our work. In the past decade or so, authors have experienced a forty percent decline in income, and the current median income for full-time writers in 2022 was only \$23,000. The introduction of AI threatens to tip the scale to make it even more difficult, if not impossible, for writers—especially young writers and voices from under-represented communities—to earn a living from their profession.

We ask you, the leaders of AI, to mitigate the damage to our profession by taking the following steps:

1. Obtain permission for use of our copyrighted material in your generative AI programs.
2. Compensate writers fairly for the past and ongoing use of our works in your generative AI programs.
3. Compensate writers fairly for the use of our works in AI output, whether or not the outputs are infringing under current law.

We hope you will appreciate the gravity of our concerns and that you will work with us to ensure, in the years to come, a healthy ecosystem for authors and journalists.

Sincerely,  
 The Authors Guild and the Undersigned Writers